



U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Office of Professional Responsibility
Inspections and Detention Oversight Division
Washington, DC 20536-5501

**Office of Detention Oversight
Follow-Up Compliance Inspection**

**Enforcement and Removal Operations
ERO San Antonio Field Office**

**Rio Grande Detention Center
Laredo, Texas**

June 21-25, 2021

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION
of the
RIO GRANDE DETENTION CENTER
Laredo, Texas

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FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS



Acting Team Lead
Contractor
Contractor
Contractor
Contractor

ODO
Creative Corrections
Creative Corrections
Creative Corrections
Creative Corrections

FACILITY OVERVIEW

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) conducted a follow-up inspection of the Rio Grande Detention Center (RGDC) in Laredo, Texas, from June 21 to 25, 2021.¹ This inspection focused on the standards found deficient during ODO’s last inspection of RGDC from January 25 to 28, 2021. The facility opened in 2008 and is owned and operated by The GEO Group, Inc. The ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) began housing detainees at RGDC in 2014 under the oversight of ERO’s Field Office Director in San Antonio (ERO San Antonio). The facility operates under the Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) 2008.

ERO has assigned deportation officers to the facility. A warden handles daily facility operations and manages █ personnel. The GEO Group, Inc. provides food services, Correct Care Solutions provides medical care, and Keefe Commissary provides commissary services at the facility. The facility was accredited by the American Correctional Association in June 2019 and the National Commission on Correctional Health Care in November 2020. In July 2019, RGDC was audited by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and was DOJ PREA certified.

Capacity and Population Statistics	Quantity
ICE Bed Capacity ²	672
Average ICE Population ³	█
Adult Male Population (as of June 21, 2021)	█
Adult Female Population (as of June 21, 2021)	█

During its last inspection, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, ODO conducted an inspection of RGDC and found four deficiencies in the following areas: Funds and Personal Property (1); Medical Care (1); and Use of Force and Restraints (2).

¹ This facility holds male detainees with low, medium-low, medium-high, and high-security classification levels for periods greater than 72 hours.

² Data Source: ERO Facility List as of June 21, 2021.

³ *Ibid.*

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION PROCESS

ODO conducts oversight inspections of ICE detention facilities with an average daily population of 10 or more detainees, and where detainees are housed for longer than 72 hours, to assess compliance with ICE National Detention Standards. These inspections focus solely on facility compliance with detention standards that directly affect detainee life, health, safety, and well-being. In FY 2021, to meet congressional requirements, ODO began conducting follow-up inspections at all ICE ERO detention facilities, which ODO inspected earlier in the FY.

While follow-up inspections are intended to focus on previously identified deficiencies, ODO will conduct a complete review of several core standards, which include but are not limited to Medical Care, Hunger Strikes, Suicide Prevention, Food Service, Environmental Health and Safety, Emergency Plans, Use of Force and Restraints/Use of Physical Control Measures and Restraints, Admission and Release, Classification, and Funds and Personal Property. ODO may decide to conduct a second full inspection of a facility in the same FY based on additional information obtained prior to ODO's arrival on-site. Factors ODO will consider when deciding to conduct a second full inspection will include the total number of deficiencies cited during the first inspection, the number of deficient standards found during the first inspection, the completion status of the first inspection's Uniform Corrective Action Plan, and other information ODO obtains from internal and external sources ahead of the follow-up compliance inspection. Conditions found during the inspection may also lead ODO to assess new areas and identify new deficiencies or areas of concern should facility practices run contrary to ICE standards. Any areas found non-compliant during both inspections are annotated as "Repeat Deficiencies" in this report.

ODO was unable to conduct an on-site inspection of this facility, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and instead, conducted a remote inspection of the facility. During this remote inspection, ODO interviewed facility staff, ERO field office staff, and detainees, reviewed files and detention records, and was able to assess compliance for at least 90 percent or more of the ICE national detention standards reviewed during the inspection.

FINDINGS BY PERFORMANCE-BASED NATIONAL DETENTION STANDARDS (PBNDS) 2008 MAJOR CATEGORIES

PBNDS 2008 Standards Inspected ⁴	Deficiencies
Part 1 - Safety	
Emergency Plans	0
Environmental Health and Safety	0
Sub-Total	0
Part 2 - Security	
Admission and Release	0
Classification System	0
Funds and Personal Property	1
Special Management Units	0
Use of Force and Restraints	0
Sub-Total	1
Part 4 - Care	
Food Service	0
Hunger Strikes	0
Medical Care	0
Sub-Total	0
PBNDS 2011 (2013 Errata) Standard Inspected	
Significant Self-Harm and Suicide Prevention and Intervention	0
Sub-Total	0
Total Deficiencies	1

⁴ For greater detail on ODO's findings, see the *Follow-up Inspection Findings* section of this report.

DETAINEE RELATIONS

ODO interviewed 12 detainees, who each voluntarily agreed to participate. None of the detainees made allegations of discrimination, mistreatment, or abuse. Most detainees reported satisfaction with facility services except for the concerns listed below. ODO attempted to conduct detainee interviews via video teleconference; however, ERO San Antonio and the facility were not able to accommodate this request due to technology issues. As such, ODO conducted the detainee interviews via telephone.

Admission and Release: Four detainees stated they did not receive an ICE National Detainee Handbook or an RGDC detainee handbook during the admission process.

- Action Taken: ODO reviewed each detainee's property and orientation documents and found all the detainees signed the documents confirming receipt of the ICE National Detainee Handbook and the RGDC detainee handbook. ODO interviewed the RGDC intake supervisor and confirmed each detainee received both handbooks upon processing into RGDC. On June 24, 2021, the facility reissued both handbooks to each detainee.

Law Libraries and Legal Materials: Four detainees stated they did not know how to access the law library nor how to obtain copying services for legal documents.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the assistant facility administrator of programs and found detainees had access to the law library and copying services in their housing units. On June 23, 2021, the law library clerk showed each detainee how to access, request, and use the services in the law library.

Medical Care: One detainee stated he submitted a request to see an RGDC mental health provider and he was only seen twice by the mental health provider. The detainee was dissatisfied with the mental health department because he felt he should have been scheduled for more sessions with the mental health provider.

- Action Taken: ODO interviewed the health service administrator, who reviewed the detainee's medical file and referred ODO to the RGDC mental health provider. ODO interviewed the mental health counselor, who stated medical evaluated the detainee on May 27, 2021. Furthermore, the RGDC psychiatrist saw the detainee for symptoms of anxiety on June 1, 2021. On June 24, 2021, the mental health counselor evaluated and provided the detainee with anxiety coping skills. Additionally, the medical staff advised the detainee to submit a sick call request to the mental health department if his anxiety worsened.

FOLLOW-UP COMPLIANCE INSPECTION FINDINGS

SECURITY

FUNDS AND PERSONAL PROPERTY (FPP)

ODO interviewed the RGDC staff and reviewed photographs of the storage units in the housing areas and found unsecured storage units for authorized personal property (**Deficiency FPP-26⁵**). **This is a repeat deficiency.**

CONCLUSION

During this inspection, ODO assessed the facility's compliance with 10 standards under PBNDS 2008, and 1 standard under PBNDS 2011 (2013 Errata) and found the facility in compliance with 10 of those standards. ODO found one deficiency in the remaining standard. ODO has not received the uniform corrective action plan for ODO's last inspection of RGDC, which occurred in January 2021. ODO commends RGDC staff for its responsiveness during this inspection. ODO recommends ERO San Antonio work with RGDC to resolve any deficiencies that remain outstanding in accordance with contractual obligations.

Compliance Inspection Results Compared	FY 2021 (PBNDS 2008)	FY 2021 (PBNDS 2008/ PBNDS 2011) (2013 Errata)
Standards Reviewed	20	11
Deficient Standards	3	1
Overall Number of Deficiencies	4	1
Repeat Deficiencies	0	1
Areas of Concern	1	0
Corrective Actions	0	0

⁵ "Every housing area shall have lockers or other securable space for storing detainees' authorized personal property."
See ICE PBNDS 2008, Standard, Funds and Personal Property, Section (V)(E).