



**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  
Compliance Inspection

Enforcement and Removal Operations  
ERO Harlingen Field Office

Rio Grande Detention Center  
Laredo, Texas

December 13-16, 2021

**COMPLIANCE INSPECTION**  
**of the**  
**RIO GRANDE DETENTION CENTER**  
Laredo, Texas

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>FACILITY OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>COMPLIANCE INSPECTION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FINDINGS BY PERFORMANCE-BASED NATIONAL DETENTION STANDARDS (PBNDS) 2008 MAJOR CATEGORIES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DETAINEE RELATIONS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>COMPLIANCE INSPECTION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SECURITY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Funds and Personal Property .....	7
<b>ACTIVITIES .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Correspondence and Other Mail .....	8
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>8</b>

## COMPLIANCE INSPECTION TEAM MEMBERS

██████████	Team Lead	ODO
██████████	Inspections and Compliance Specialist	ODO
██████████	Inspections and Compliance Specialist	ODO
██████████	Contractor	Creative Corrections
██████████	Contractor	Creative Corrections
██████████	Contractor	Creative Corrections
██████████	Contractor	Creative Corrections

## FACILITY OVERVIEW

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) Office of Detention Oversight (ODO) conducted a compliance inspection of the Rio Grande Detention Center (RGDC) in Laredo, Texas, from December 13 to 16, 2021.<sup>1</sup> The facility opened in 2008 and is owned and operated by The GEO Group Inc. (GEO). The ICE Office of Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) began housing detainees at RGDC in November 2014 under the oversight of ERO’s Field Office Director in Harlingen (ERO Harlingen). The facility operates under the Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) 2008.

ERO does not have any staff assigned to the facility. A facility administrator handles daily facility operations and manages ■■■ support personnel. RGDC provides food services, GEO Medical provides medical care, and Keefe Commissary Network provides commissary services at the facility. The facility was accredited by the American Correctional Association in August 2019.

Capacity and Population Statistics	Quantity
ICE Bed Capacity <sup>2</sup>	■■■
Average ICE Population <sup>3</sup>	■■■
Adult Male Population (as of December 13, 2021)	■■■
Adult Female Population (as of December 13, 2021)	■■■

During its last inspection, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, ODO found one deficiency in the following area: Funds and Personal Property (1).

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

<sup>2</sup> Data Source: ERO Facility List as of December 13, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

## COMPLIANCE INSPECTION PROCESS

ODO conducts oversight inspections of ICE detention facilities with an average daily population greater than 10, and where detainees are housed for over 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/or well-being.<sup>4</sup>

ODO identifies violations of ICE detention standards, ICE policies, or operational procedures, as "deficiencies." ODO highlights instances when the facility resolves deficiencies prior to completion of the ODO inspection. Where applicable, these corrective actions are annotated with "C" under the *Compliance Inspection Findings* section of this report.

Upon completion of each inspection, ODO conducts a closeout briefing with facility and local ERO officials to discuss preliminary findings. A summary of these findings is shared with ERO management officials. Thereafter, ODO provides ICE leadership with a final compliance inspection report to: (i) assist ERO in developing and initiating corrective action plans; and (ii) provide senior executives with an independent assessment of facility operations. ODO's findings inform ICE executive management in their decision-making to better allocate resources across the agency's entire detention inventory.

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.

---

<sup>4</sup> ODO reviews the facility's compliance with selected standards in their entirety.

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

PBNDS 2008 Standards Inspected <sup>5,6</sup>	Deficiencies
<b>Part 1 - Safety</b>	
Emergency Plans	0
Environmental Health and Safety	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Part 2 - Security</b>	
Admission and Release	0
Classification System	0
Funds and Personal Property	2
Post Orders	0
Searches of Detainees	0
Special Management Units	0
Use of Force and Restraints	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part 4 - Care</b>	
Food Service	0
Hunger Strikes	0
Medical Care	0
Personal Hygiene	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Part 5 - Activities</b>	
Correspondence and Other Mail	2
Escorted Trips for Non-Medical Emergencies	0
Marriage Requests	0
Voluntary Work Program	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Part 6 - Justice</b>	
Legal Rights Group Presentations	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Part 7 - Administration and Management</b>	

<sup>5</sup> For greater detail on ODO's findings, see the *Compliance Inspection Findings* section of this report.

<sup>6</sup> Beginning in FY 2022, ODO instituted a process of rotating all standards on a 3-year basis. As a result, some standard components may not be present in all inspections.

Detention Files	0
News Media Interviews and Tours	0
Transfer of Detainees	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Other Standards Reviewed</b>	
PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013) Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention and Intervention	0
PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013) Significant Self-harm and Suicide Prevention and Intervention	0
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Deficiencies</b>	<b>4</b>

## DETAINEE RELATIONS

ODO interviewed 12 detainees, who each voluntarily agreed to participate. None of the detainees made allegations of discrimination, mistreatment, or abuse. All detainees reported satisfaction with facility services. ODO conducted detainee interviews via video teleconference.

## COMPLIANCE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### SECURITY

#### FUNDS AND PERSONAL PROPERTY (FPP)

ODO reviewed the facility's detainee handbook and found the handbook does not notify detainees of the facility's rules for storing or mailing property not allowed in their possession (**Deficiency FPP-15**<sup>7</sup>).

ODO interviewed the intake lieutenant and property officer, reviewed photos of detainee luggage in the property room, and found RGDC does not secure detainee luggage in a tamper-resistant manner. Specifically, ODO found the facility stores partially opened duffel bags, briefcases, and backpacks without locks, tie straps, or other tamper-resistant manner in the property room (**Deficiency FPP-56**<sup>8</sup>).

---

<sup>7</sup> "The detainee handbook or equivalent shall notify the detainees of facility policies and procedures concerning personal property, including: ...

- The rules for storing or mailing property not allowed in their possession." See ICE PBNDS 2008, Standard, Funds and Personal Property, Section (V)(C).

<sup>8</sup> "All detainee luggage and facility containers used for storing detainee personal property shall be secured in a manner that is tamper-resistant (such as by a tamperproof numbered tie strap) and shall only be opened in the presence of the detainee." See ICE PBNDS 2008 Standard, Funds and Personal Property, Section (V)(I).

## ACTIVITIES

### **CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER MAIL (COM)**

ODO reviewed the facility's detainee handbook and found the handbook does not notify detainees the facility will inspect incoming special correspondence for contraband in their presence nor notify detainees the facility will not open, inspect, or read outgoing special correspondence and legal mail (**Deficiency COM-13<sup>9</sup>**).

ODO reviewed the facility's detainee handbook and found the handbook does not notify detainees of the procedure for purchasing postage (**Deficiency COM-19<sup>10</sup>**).

### **CONCLUSION**

During this inspection, ODO assessed the facility's compliance with 21 standards under PBNDS 2008 and 2 standards under PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013) and found the facility in compliance with 21 of those standards. ODO commends RGDC staff members for their responsiveness during this inspection. ODO recommends ERO Harlingen work with the facility to resolve any deficiencies that remain outstanding in accordance with contractual obligations. ERO provided ODO with the uniform corrective action plan for ODO's last inspection of RGDC on June 21, 2021.

<b>Compliance Inspection Results Compared</b>	<b>Second FY 2021 PBNDS 2008/ PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013)</b>	<b>First FY 2022 PBNDS 2008/ PBNDS 2011 (Errata 2013)</b>
Standards Reviewed	11	21/2
Deficient Standards	1	2
Overall Number of Deficiencies	1	4
Repeat Deficiencies	1	0
Areas Of Concern	0	0
Corrective Actions	0	0
Facility Rating	N/A	Superior

---

<sup>9</sup> "The facility shall notify detainees of its rules on correspondence and other mail through the Detainee Handbook, or supplement, provided to each detainee upon admittance. At a minimum, the notification shall specify: ...

5. That incoming Special Correspondence and Legal Mail may only be opened in the detainee's presence, and may be inspected for contraband, but not read, and that outgoing Special Correspondence and Legal Mail shall not be opened, inspected, or read." See ICE PBNDS 2008, Standard, Correspondence and Other Mail, Section (V)(C)(5).

<sup>10</sup> "The facility shall notify detainees of its rules on correspondence and other mail through the Detainee Handbook, or supplement, provided to each detainee upon admittance. At a minimum, the notification shall specify: ...

10. The procedure for purchasing postage (if any), and the rules for providing indigent and certain other detainees free postage." See ICE PBNDS 2008, Standard, Correspondence and Other Mail, Section (V)(C)(10).