



City of Salinas

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August 28, 2019

The Honorable Judge Lydia Villarreal
Superior Court Judge
County of Monterey
240 Church Street
Salinas, California 93901

Re: City of Salinas's Responses to 2018-2019 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report: "Rape Kit Processing in Monterey County"

Dear Judge Villarreal:

This letter is the City of Salinas's response to the Findings and Recommendations of the 2018-2019 Monterey County Civil Grand Jury Final Report: "Rape Kit Processing in Monterey County" ("Final Report"). I would first like to thank the members of the Civil Grand Jury for their time and effort taken to assist us in improving our ability to provide services to our community. In the Final Report, the Civil Grand Jury overall made a total of nine Findings and six Recommendations, with nine Findings and five Recommendations specific to the Monterey County Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs).

As requested by the Civil Grand Jury, the City of Salinas respectfully submits the following responses to the Findings and the Recommendations identified for a response in the Final Report.

Findings.

Finding 1. LEAs in Monterey County lacked awareness and provided unclear and inconsistent information as to whether there are any backlogged Rape Kits.

Response:

The City of Salinas disagrees with this Finding inasmuch as it concludes that the Salinas Police Department provided unclear and inconsistent information as to whether there are any backlogged Rape Kits. The Salinas Police Department provided requested data in response to the Grand Jury Survey, and the Chief of Police appeared before the Grand Jury to answer questions. The Salinas Police Department tracks and is aware of the status of sexual assault rape kits that have been collected in relation to investigations conducted by the Salinas Police Department.

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Finding 2. The lack of a centralized place to post information has resulted in a lack of consistency in the way that LEAs manage and track sexual assaults.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department participates in a regular meeting with other law enforcement agencies and the District Attorney's Office to coordinate sexual assault investigations. The Salinas Police Department is part of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) which works with Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), during the investigation. Any DNA evidence obtained is submitted to the Rapid DNA Service (RADS). The Salinas Police Department also reports the status of sexual assault forensic evidence through the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Tracking (SAFE-T) through the California Department of Justice as is required by PC 680.4.

Finding 3. At the beginning of this investigation, not all the LEAs were prepared to report the Rape Kit status information to the CDOJ as required by PC 680.4.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department has reported the Rape Kit status information to the CDOJ as required by PC 680.4.

Finding 4. There is advanced training available for sexual assault investigators, but LEAs are instead relying upon senior investigators to provide "on the job training to other investigators within their respective departments."

Response:

The Salinas Police Department sends all Sexual Assault Detectives to a Sexual Assault Investigator Course when assigned to the Investigations Division. All Sexual Assault Detectives currently assigned to the Salinas Police Department Investigations Division have completed the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Police, Institute of Criminal Investigation (ICI) Sexual Assault Investigator Course.

Finding 5. Training for advanced skills in the forensics of sexual assault investigations is not prioritized in the budgeting process.

Response:

The City of Salinas and the Salinas Police Department ensure that there is funding for all detectives to attend sexual assault training. This is a priority.

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Finding 6. Some LEAs rely on cross-training less experienced patrol officers to supplement understaffed investigative teams rather than prioritizing the strategic increase of well-trained investigators.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department does not supplement its investigative team with less experienced patrol officers. Sexual Assault Investigators are carefully evaluated and vetted through a selection process, then provided specialized training as previously described.

Finding 7. All jurisdictions can expedite the investigations of rape crimes through access to the RADS processing to facilitate timely resolution of rape cases.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department has access to and utilizes the RADS processing system.

Finding 8. Most LEAs in Monterey County have implemented DNA testing protocols established by the CDOJ which have reduced the likelihood of unprocessed DNA evidence.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department has implemented DNA testing protocols that are in compliance with CDOJ.

Finding 9. There is no centralized authority coordinating all LEAs in Monterey County regarding collection, processing and reporting of sexual assaults.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department complies with all state mandates and employs contemporary best practices to investigate sexual assaults. The Salinas Police Department regularly attend meetings with other Monterey County Sexual Assault Investigators including the District Attorney to share information and coordinate any investigations that may be occurring in other jurisdictions.

Recommendations.

Recommendation 2. By January 15, 2020, the governing bodies of all Monterey County LEAs should assign a representative to participate in the DA-led centralized reporting initiative.

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Response:

As was previously described, the Salinas Police Department participates in a regular meetings with the District Attorney's office regarding sexual assaults. The Salinas Police Department will continue to participate with the District Attorney's Office and other law enforcement entities in ensuring crimes are properly investigated and coordinated.

Recommendation 3. By July 1, 2019, every Monterey County LEA should report to the CDOJ the required data outlined in PC 680.4.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department reported by July 1, 2019, and will continue to report the required data to the CDOJ outlined in PC 680.

Recommendation 4. By July 1, 2019, and annually thereafter, every Monterey County LEA should report to their governing body and the public the required data outlined in PC 680.4.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department will work with the Monterey City Attorney's Office to determine what can publicly be reported and will report items related to PC 680.4.

Recommendation 5. By January 15, 2020, every Monterey County LEA should develop a funding source, such as grants, for additional expertise training and recertification within the Sexual Assault and Forensic Division.

Response:

The Salinas Police Department consistently searches for grant opportunities and leverages any successful grant awards with the Salinas Police Department operating budget.

Recommendation 6. By fiscal year 2020-2021, every Monterey County LEA should add or dedicate certified staff for Sexual Assault Investigations and include that increased cost in their budgets.

Response:

As was previously described, all Salinas Police Department detectives are California POST trained in sexual assault investigations.

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Thank You for the opportunity to respond to the Civil Grand Jury's Report.

Respectfully submitted,



Joe Gunter
Mayor

cc: City Manager
City Attorney
Police Chief