

Snake River Juvenile Detention Center PREA Report for 2023

The Snake River Juvenile Detention Center places emphasis on the importance of training for all staff, including detention officers, medical and mental health staff, volunteers, contractors and youths in the area of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

The Snake River Juvenile Detention Center has a “Zero-Tolerance” policy and approach in all aspects of daily functions. Any and all accusations are thoroughly investigated. The investigation agency continued to be the Twin Falls City Police Department for 2023. Management and staff will always cooperate with any investigation. Any accusation under PREA is taken seriously. The Snake River Juvenile Detention Center also has a zero-tolerance policy on retaliation against an accuser or the accused.

Information gathered during investigations is used to enhance the safety, security, policies, procedures and training within the facility. Youth residing at the Snake River Juvenile Detention Center have the right to be free from sexual harassment and sexual assault. They have the right to feel safe and secure while housed at our detention center. Our number one job is to provide youth with a safe environment free from violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. Sexual harassment can trigger a trauma response in a person who may have a history of sexual abuse in their past. We strive to make sure all the youth in our facility feel safe and secure in our facility.

Definitions:

- Substantiated: Sufficient to establish a thing as true, valid, or real.
- Unfounded: There is no credible evidence to verify the allegation.
- Unsubstantiated: There is credible evidence, but not enough evidence to verify the allegation.

February of 2023

Staff received reports from several youth that one particular male youth was making sexualized comments toward other males while housed in their rooms. The male youth was never heard by staff making any comments. However, due to several youth feeling uncomfortable with the comments, the male youth was moved to a room away from the youth to protect the others from the alleged sexual harassment. At the same time, the youth who was making the comments needed to be protected from the youth he was allegedly harassing as this

Updated January 27, 2024

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could cause anger and hostility toward him if the comments were in fact being made. The male youth did admit to making the comments. This was considered a substantiated allegation.

April of 2023

While seven youth were in one of the multi-purpose rooms for book exchange and letter writing, a female youth announced that one of the male youths raped her in the community and had a video of him being beat up for it. This caused the accused male youth to become angry at the comment and he later punched a wall causing damage to the facility as well as injury to his hand. Upon further investigation, the female youth admitted to the PREA Coordinator that she lied. She stated that she was never raped, sexually abused, or sexually harassed by anyone let alone the youth she accused. The female youth received a consequence for her false allegation. The accusation she made was an unfounded and untrue. But because she did admit to making the false allegation in front of six other youth, it is a substantiated claim that could have cause a larger safety and security issue in the facility.

June of 2023

A female youth was caught by staff looking into a male youth's room window and blowing him kisses. Youth are not allowed to look into another youth's room window as it is a violation of their privacy. This was considered a substantiated allegation due to the incident being caught by staff and also caught on camera. The female youth received a consequence for violating the detention center's zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment.

October of 2023

A female youth reported to staff that during book exchange, she was playing cards with two other youth who had a "very uncomfortable sexualized conversation" in her presence. Although there was a staff member present when the incident occurred, the female youth stated that the officer was on the other side of the room when the comments were made. The incident was not reported to the PREA Coordinator until the following day and one of the accused youths had been released from the facility. The other youth admitted there was a conversation, but stated that "it wasn't as bad" as what was originally reported. Due to the time lapse in the report to the PREA Coordinator; one of the youths being released and could not be questioned; and the other youth not completely admitting to the accusation; this was considered an unsubstantiated allegation.

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October of 2023

A male youth reported feeling uncomfortable during a pat search by a male staff member after he had a visit with a representative from the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections (IDJC). Pat searches are conducted to prevent contraband such as weapons into the secure portion of the facility. All youth who have a visit from anyone out of our direct supervision is required to be pat searched prior to returning to their room or attending structured activities. The youth stated that he felt the conversation he had with the male staff member was inappropriate and claimed that the male staff member made a gesture that the youth perceived was sexual in nature. The PREA Coordinator and Detention Manager spoke with the staff member about the situation. The staff member stated that he did not make any hand gesture, but responded to the tone he felt the youth was presenting. He felt the youth was joking around because he was laughing and therefore making light of the situation.

After speaking the staff member and reviewing cameras, the accusation was unfounded. However, the staff member was reminded that pat searches are a vulnerable time for youth and we need to maintain professionalism at all times while conducting them.

The Snake River Juvenile Detention Center completed and passed its third PREA Audit on September 23, 2022. The auditor was Aaron Keech. Our fourth PREA Audit will occur in September 2025.

For any of the other documents that must be published per PREA Compliance please refer to – <http://twinfallscounty.org/juvenile/detention/>.

For any questions you can contact Detention Manager Neil Nakamura or Assistant Detention Manager Training/PREA Coordinator Janaan Van Zante at (208)736-2588.

For additional information on the Prison Rape Elimination Act go to - <https://www.prearesourcecenter.org/about/prison-rape-elimination-act>