

Snake River Juvenile Detention Center PREA Report for 2024

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 2024. 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.

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.

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2024 REPORTS

February of 2024

A male youth reported that during his intake shower process he was not allowed a longer robe because he felt that the male officer “wanted” to see him fully nude. This is not part of SRJDC’s shower processing procedure. SRJDC staff do not complete unclothed body searches of youth. The officer stated that the youth was being disrespectful and was refusing to follow directions. The situation became a power struggle between the youth and the officer. A second male officer intervened and de-escalated the situation before anyone got hurt. The first officer received disciplinary action due to causing distress to the youth in a vulnerable situation and violating safety and security rules. He also received refresher training in communication and de-escalation to better work with youth. This PREA case was considered unsubstantiated. Due to the fact that the youth perceived that a possible assault was about to occur, but that was not the intent nor was a sexual assault going to happen

April of 2024

A male youth reported that a male officer “purposely” opened the door to the intake bathroom, while he was washing his hands, and “stared” at him for “a long time”. The youth stated that while he was at the sink, he had his pants and underwear down around his ankles and was washing a cut. The sink is located next to the door. The male officer stated that he had asked the youth if he was done using the bathroom and said it “sounded like” the youth said “yes”. However, when he opened the door, the youth had his pants down and he was shocked by the fact that he was at the sink in that state. The officer said he then shut the door. After further investigation, it was determined that this incident was unsubstantiated. Although the officer did see the youth nude from the waist down, it was not done for harassment or abuse.

October of 2024

A female youth reported that another female youth had been “flirting” with her over the weekend. The first female youth stated that the “flirting” was sexual in nature, made her feel uncomfortable, and it was repetitive. She had tried several times to tell the second female to stop, but the second female youth would not stop so she decided to report the issue. She was also concerned that staff had not heard anything and she would be considered a “rat” if others heard she reported this information. She was informed of SRJDC’s zero-tolerance policy on retaliation as well as the zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment and sexual abuse. The second female was spoken to about the situation, but it was not mentioned that it was reported by the first female. The second female admitted to the allegations and took full responsibility for the continuous “flirting”. The second female was disciplined and kept separate from the first female for the remainder of her stay. This was a substantiated allegation of sexual harassment.

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December of 2024

On 12/1/2024 at 9:00pm, a male officer reported to the PREA Coordinator that a male youth threatened to rape a second male youth if he did not get out of his seat in the classroom. The statement was made in front of several other youth. The first youth was removed from the classroom and placed on a lockdown for up to 24-hours for making the threats of violence as well as sexual harassment. No physical contact was made between the two youth.

The PREA Coordinator spoke with the victimized youth the following day. The youth had never been in a detention center and stated that he became very scared and uncomfortable. He asked to speak with his father and a counselor about the situation. SRJDC's Clinician, Inga Elkin spoke with the youth and the PREA Coordinator attempted to make contact with the youth's father as soon as the youth made the request. However, the father was unavailable, but a message was left to return the call. The youth spoke with his father that evening and the PREA Coordinator spoke with his father the following day.

The youth who made the threat was placed on a special management program to keep him away from the second youth. Due to the violent nature of the threat, there was concern that the youth might escalate his behavior and become aggressive toward other youth. This was a substantiated allegation of sexual harassment.

MORE INFORMATION

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 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>