



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

P.O. Box 839966
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

May 12, 2025

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SUBJECT: Audit Report of the San Antonio Police Department Detention Center

Mayor and Council Members:

We are pleased to send you the final report of the San Antonio Police Department Detention Center. This audit began in July 2024 and concluded in March 2025. Management's verbatim response is included in Appendix B of the report. The San Antonio Police Department management and staff should be commended for their cooperation and assistance during this audit.

The Office of the City Auditor is available to discuss this report with you individually at your convenience.

Respectfully Submitted,

Buddy Vargas, CPA, CIA, CFE
City Auditor
City of San Antonio

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**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR**

**SAN ANTONIO POLICE DEPARTMENT
AUDIT OF SAPD DETENTION CENTER
PROJECT NO. AU24-032
MAY 12, 2025**

**BUDDY VARGAS, CPA, CIA, CFE
CITY AUDITOR**



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Executive Summary

As part of our annual Audit Plan approved by City Council, we conducted an audit of the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD), specifically Detention Center operations. The audit objective, conclusion, and recommendation follow:

Determine if operations are effective and in compliance with existing procedures.

SAPD Detention Center operations comply with existing policies and procedures which facilitate the effectiveness of operations. We determined that Detention Center operations are effective. Detention Officers perform searches and safeguard Arrested Person (AP) property. Use of force procedures are properly followed, incidents are logged, and all associated records are retained. AP activity is sufficiently monitored with cameras and cell checks. AP medical issues are addressed, and cells are cleaned and maintained. Also, Detention Center system user access is appropriate.

However, IT systems in place could be improved by implementing procedures to retain and analyze operational data with the goal of replacing the MAGS mainframe system with a more flexible system capable of producing meaningful reports.

SAPD management agreed with the audit finding and recommendation and has developed a positive action plan to address it. Management's verbatim response is in Appendix B on page 8.

Background

The Detention Center facility is open 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. As of October 1, 2016, the Center was transferred from Municipal Court to the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD). An SAPD Captain is assigned oversight of operations and staff. The Center staff search Arrested Persons (APs) on arrival, inventory property, and monitor AP's. During a one-week period in April 2025, the Detention Center processed an average of 98 detainees (APs) daily. As of September 1, 2024, shifts include Day Shift: 6 Detention Officers (DOs) + 2 Supervisors (Spvs), Swing Shift: 9 DOs + 2 Spvs (1 DO in training), and Dog Watch: 10 DOs + 2 Spvs. Detention Center staffing is shown below:

Staff Levels	Staff Positions
34	Detention Officers
6	Detention Supervisors
1	Assistant Manager
1	Detention Manager
1	Detention and Security Manager
43	Total Staff Positions

Currently, the Detention Center handles arrested persons for Class C misdemeanors including public intoxication, and all on-site arrests for the San Antonio Police Department, San Antonio Park Police, San Antonio Airport Police, and the Department of Public Safety (DPS). APs are then sent to and processed at the Bexar County (BC) jail. In the past, the Detention Center handled arrested persons for all misdemeanors and felonies resulting in it having to process a much higher number of people on a daily basis requiring numerous transports to the BC jail for APs charged with more severe crimes (Class B misdemeanors and above).

As a result of this shift, the inmate average processing time has decreased from 18 hours in 2017 to just 6 hours now. Although, in some cases, an inebriated inmate may need to be held longer until they are sober. Detention Center manually tracks inmate processing time. Nurses are on site 24/7 to administer breathalyzer tests to confirm sobriety and conduct health checks when an inmate requires medical attention. They are equipped to manage any illnesses or injuries that arise.

Audit Scope and Methodology

The audit covered the period from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. Additionally, we included certain detainee data from April 2025 in the Background section of this report. Processes managed by Municipal Court, Bexar County, and the University Health Care System (e.g., magistrate, payment processing for fines and bonds, medical treatment, etc.) were outside the scope of this audit.

We conducted interviews with Detention Center management and staff to understand the processes and assessed the internal controls designed to keep both staff and APs safe. Our testing focused on procedures described in the Detention Center's standard operating procedures. Specific areas examined as part of our testing included:

- Adequacy of staffing levels and schedules
- Staff training requirements
- Procedures for custody and release of arrested persons
- Appropriate incident documentation
- User access controls

We relied on computer-processed data from the SAP system to review employee lists, work schedules, and financial data. Our approach focused on performing direct tests on this data, rather than evaluating the general and application controls of the system. Similarly, we used data from the MAGS system, a legacy mainframe system, to obtain a list of arrested individuals and their detention durations. As with the SAP system, our reliance on MAGS data was centered on direct testing, rather than assessing the system's controls.

Additionally, we tested MAGS user access to ensure it was being appropriately monitored and restricted. We believe that the absence of additional testing on the system's general and application controls did not impact the results of our audit.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Results and Recommendations

We determined that Detention Center operations are effective. We reviewed each scheduled shift from May 2024 to July 2024 and found the Detention Center adequately manages their shift scheduling and keeps overtime at a minimum. We also tested a sample of 25 randomly selected shift change reports and found that both the beginning and ending supervisors signed the reports as required by policies and procedures, that keys to the detention cells were present, and the number of APs per shift were noted on the forms.

We determined that new hires must pass a background check and complete required training before starting work. Also, the Detention Center tracks completion of all required employee training.

Detention Officers perform thorough custody and release procedures including proper searches of detainees, their belongings, and the facility itself. We reviewed 25 randomly selected prisoner intake forms and found that all had appropriate signatures of both the DO and the AP acknowledging that the inventory of AP property was accurate. Intake forms also had the contact information of the arresting officer and indicated if the AP needed to be (and was) seen by medical staff.

DOs create incident reports in accordance with policy and procedures when incidents occur. We reviewed 20 incidents including both use of force incidents and other types of incidents (such as finding contraband) and found that all reports contained the required information such as verification of medical checkups post-incident, documentation of injuries of staff or APs as appropriate, reasons for use of force, and evidence of supervisory review.

Finally, we reviewed all Detention Center MAGS system users and found them to be both active employees and having an approved level of access.

Although we determined that operations are effective and in compliance with existing procedures, we believe that system reporting capabilities could be strengthened to facilitate current operations.

A. Mainframe System Functionality

The MAGS system is an old inflexible mainframe legacy system used to record and monitor arrested person activity at the Detention Center. It lacks the functionality to produce pertinent reports that would allow management to effectively analyze operational data such as the average number of hours between arrival and release of arrested persons, track cell checks, incident reports, use of force, and shift changes. Currently, this information must be manually tracked in spreadsheets and on paper forms, which is not conducive to managerial analysis.

The lack of functionality with the MAGS system is due to it being a hard-coded legacy system which is difficult to modify and upgrade.

Using an inflexible legacy mainframe system could compromise the ability to: quickly generate critical information for decision-making, integrate with modern systems, ensure data reliability and availability (due to aging technology and inability to support it), and meet transparency and accountability requirements.

Recommendation

The Chief of Police should consider implementing a new software system to retain and analyze operational data with the goal of replacing the MAGS mainframe system with a more flexible system capable of producing meaningful reports to facilitate the management of Detention Center operations.

Appendix A – Staff Acknowledgement

Mark Bigler, CPA-Utah, CISA, CFE, Audit Manager
Javier Castillo, Auditor in Charge
Susan Van Hoozer, CIA, CISA, Auditor

Appendix B – Management Response



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78283-3966

April 25, 2025

Buddy Vargas, CPA, CIA, CFE
City Auditor
San Antonio, Texas

RE: Management's Corrective Action Plan for Audit of San Antonio Police Department Detention Center

The San Antonio Police Department has reviewed the audit report and has developed the Corrective Action Plan below corresponding to the report recommendation.

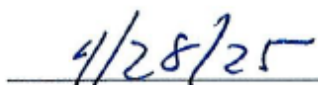
Recommendation					
#	Description	Audit Report Page	Accept, Decline	Responsible Person's Name/Title	Completion Date
A	Mainframe System Functionality Recommendation: The Police Chief should consider implementing a new software system to retain and analyze operational data with the goal of replacing the MAGS mainframe system with a more flexible system capable of producing meaningful reports to facilitate the management of Detention Center operations.	6	Accept	Deputy Chief Michelle Ramos, Chief of Staff	May 2025
	Action plan: The new WebMAGS system will launch in May 2025, replacing the current MAGS mainframe system, which will be decommissioned at that time. This is a more flexible system that will aid the daily management of the Detention Center operations. The new system will allow for users to obtain reports on demand. Additionally, the data from the new system can be exported to Excel and other formats. WebMAGS also supports web services and application programming interfaces (APIs), enabling future data access across other technology platforms.				

We are committed to addressing the recommendation in the audit report and the plan of action presented above.

Sincerely,



William McManus
Police Chief
San Antonio Police Department



Date



Maria Villagómez
Deputy City Manager
City Manager's Office



Date