

BCJS Annual PREA Report: January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

Sexual abuse and sexual harassment of inmates by other inmates or by staff negatively impacts the mission of the Berks County Jail System (BCJS) to maintain a secure institutional environment that serves to provide protection and safety for the legally incarcerated of Berks County. In accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), the BCJS has established a zero-tolerance policy for substantiated acts or threats of sexual abuse, sexual harassment, or retaliation for the reporting of sexual abuse or harassment.

By providing training, education, and reviewing our policy and procedures on a yearly basis we are confident that we are providing the inmates, staff, contractors, and volunteers everything we can, so they are confident and comfortable with the PREA mandates. We are also confident that all of our staff, contractors, and volunteers have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the PREA mandates and the BCJS policies and procedures. By providing our staff with the necessary training and knowledge they are able to effectively provide sexual abuse and harassment prevention, detection, and response to those allegations.

The Berks County Jail System had its first PREA Audit on June 27 and June 28, 2016. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards. The Jail had its second audit on March 13 and March 14, 2017. The final report for this audit also noted 100% compliance. The Jail had its third PREA audit on April 6, 2022, through April 8, 2022. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards. The Berks County Jail had its most recent PREA audit on March 12, 2025, through March 14, 2025. The final audit report noted 100% compliance with the PREA standards.

Based upon a comparative analysis of PREA incidents in the year 2024. In the year 2024, there were a total of 4 PREA-related incidents, one of the incidents being substantiated. In the year 2025, there were a total of 8 PREA-related incidents. Out of the 8 PREA-related incidents in 2025, there was one substantiated incident, two unsubstantiated incidents and five unfounded incidents. The substantiated incident resulted in the perpetrator being held accountable through the jail's disciplinary process. Out of the five unfounded incidents, two of them resulted in inmate disciplinary action due to false PREA reports being submitted. Overall reporting has increased in 2025 compared to 2024 by 100%. The increase in allegations can be attributed to the increased out of cell time for inmates, which resulted in more frequent inmate interaction.

With all reported incidents custody and supervisory staff responded to and intervened in each incident in accordance with policy. All incidents were reported to the PREA Coordinator in accordance with established procedure.

The Inmate Classification Committee, or ICC (which consists of treatment supervisor, a representative from the medical/mental health department, and a PREA Investigator), was instructed to conduct a review of the one substantiated incident of sexual abuse. The seven other reports were not passed on to treatment due to being unsubstantiated and unfounded. Additionally, a PREA investigator conducted bi-weekly follow up for 90 days with the victim of sexual abuse to ensure no retaliation was taking place after reporting the incident. Throughout the year, the ICC did conduct monthly interviews with all inmates who identified themselves as transgender.

The Berks County Jail System remains committed to a zero-tolerance policy as described above and there is no corrective action needed related to the jails policy or procedures on PREA-related incidents.

Jeffrey R. Smith – Warden

Date