



NEWS RELEASE

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Allen County Jail Update: Security Classifications

Allen County, Indiana – In order to provide fair and consistent guidelines in determining inmate assignments to housing areas, security levels, treatment and program services, Indiana State Jail Standards mandate the use of a custody-classification system. The Allen County Jail adheres to a classification policy and procedure that is consistent with State Jail Standards and utilizes a Classification Matrix to determine security levels.

Each newly admitted inmate is assessed and addressed based on objective criteria which provides placement of the inmate in the least restrictive housing compatible with his or her assessed risk and needs. There are 5 security classification levels, with 1 being the most secure (highest security risk level) and 5 being the lowest security level. This is done using the Primary Security Level Assignment tool shown below.

Under ideal conditions, there would be housing areas (cell blocks) where only like-classified inmates are housed together, but jail population and the floor plan of the current jail built before modern custody classification mandates, sometimes makes that impossible. So, co-mingling of some classification levels is currently necessary and unavoidable.

In addition to an inmate's security level classification which affects where they are housed, there are also different housing categories to consider. These categories are based on factors like an inmate's gender, as well as medical or disciplinary issues, for example. Furthermore, an inmate's initial classification can change during their incarceration based on behavior and regular classification reviews, which are set at certain intervals.

This system adds a significant amount of complexity to how inmates are housed at the jail – an amount of complexity our current facility was not designed to adequately address. It does not offer enough different housing areas to properly separate inmates based on classification or other special housing needs that would exclude them from the general population.

Indeed, due in large part to its design limitations, the current jail can be considered to be exceeding its population limitations when it is only at 80 percent capacity. The modern jail “pod” design, in contrast, provides many more housing options as each pod is divided up into multiple smaller housing units. This lessens the likelihood of overcrowding and provides increased support for inmate and staff safety and wellbeing.