

Reporting Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment

Staff

Any staff member knowledgeable of an inmate-on-inmate or staff-on-inmate sexual abuse or sexual harassment that occurs within a TDCJ correctional facility must immediately report the allegation to unit administration in accordance with agency policies.

Inmates

TDCJ inmates are encouraged to immediately report allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to correctional staff, facility administrators, or the unit Safe Prisons/PREA manager. Inmates may also report allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to the PREA Ombudsman Office, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG), or through the grievance process.

Family and Friends

Family and friends of inmates incarcerated in the TDCJ, and the general public, are encouraged to report allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment to the PREA Ombudsman Office or the TDCJ Office of the Independent Ombudsman. Public inquiries concerning allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment received by the TBCJ and the TDCJ are referred to the PREA Ombudsman Office for investigation and response. In addition, all allegations of sexual abuse or sexual harassment are referred to the OIG for possible criminal investigation.

Providing Helpful Information

Provide the following information when reporting allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment:

- Name of the unit where the victim is assigned;
- Date and time the incident occurred;
- Name and TDCJ number of the inmate victim, alleged assailant(s), and witnesses;
- A brief summary of the allegation, and
- Copies of any correspondence that could assist in the investigation.

Contact Information

(Please submit inquiries in writing)

Anyone knowledgeable of an inmate-on-inmate or staff-on-inmate sexual abuse or sexual harassment that occurs within a TDCJ correctional facility is encouraged to immediately report the allegation.

PREA Ombudsman Office

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099
(936) 437-5570 (936) 437-5555 fax
prea.ombudsman@tdcj.texas.gov

Office of the Inspector General (OIG)

P.O. Box 4003, Huntsville, TX 77342-4003
(936) 437-5116 (936) 437-5109 fax
oig.records@tdcj.texas.gov

TBCJ Office of the Independent Ombudsman

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099
(936) 437-5620 (936) 437-4930 fax
Hotline (833) 598-2700
ombudsman@tdcj.texas.gov

General inmate status information may be obtained at www.tdcj.texas.gov

Agency Toll-Free Telephone Number
1-800-535-0283

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Texas Board of Criminal Justice

PREA Ombudsman Office



Authority
§ 501.172, Texas
Government Code

What is PREA?

In September 2003, the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) was passed unanimously by both Houses of Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush. The purpose of the act was to provide for the analysis of the incidence and effects of prison rape in federal, state, and local institutions and provide information, resources, recommendations, and funding to protect individuals from prison rape. The act created the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission and charged it with developing draft standards for the elimination of prison rape. The draft standards were submitted to the Department of Justice for review and passage as a final rule. The final rule, 28 C.F.R. Part §115 became effective in August 2012.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has a “Zero-Tolerance” for all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment of inmates. The TDCJ is committed to taking a proactive approach concerning the detection, prevention, response, and punishment of sexual abuse, including consensual sexual contact, and sexual harassment of inmates in the custody of the department.



Preventing Sexual Abuse in TDCJ

Prior to the passage of PREA, the TDCJ had implemented several policies and procedures concerning sexual assault prevention in correctional facilities.

In October of 2003, TDCJ created the Safe Prisons Program Management Office (SPPMO). The SPPMO is a department within the TDCJ Correctional Institutional Division (CID) that is supervised by the Safe Prisons Program manager. The manager reports to the CID director, who reports to the TDCJ executive director. The SPPMO consolidated existing TDCJ policies and developed a Safe Prisons Plan and “Zero Tolerance” policy concerning the detection, prevention, and punishment of sexual abuse, to include consensual sexual contact while in TDCJ custody. The TDCJ implemented the Safe Prisons Plan in 2005.

In 2007, the PREA Ombudsman Office was created to provide inmates and the public with an independent office to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The PREA ombudsman provides a confidential and anonymous avenue for inmates to report sexual abuse and sexual harassment, as well as investigating and responding to PREA complaints and inquiries received from elected officials, the public, and inmates.

Following promulgation of the PREA standards, the TDCJ renamed the Safe Prisons Program to Safe Prisons/PREA Program. In 2014, the new Safe Prisons/PREA Plan was implemented. The Plan provides the policies and procedures consistent with a zero-tolerance policy that strives to maintain a safe and secure environment for staff and inmates that is free from sexual abuse and sexual harassment and comply with the PREA standards.

PREA Ombudsman Office

The PREA ombudsman was established by the 80th Legislature in 2007 and is appointed by the Texas Board of Criminal Justice (TBCJ). (Texas Government Code §§ 501.171-.178)

The PREA ombudsman reports directly to the chairman of the TBCJ and is an office external to the reporting process of the TDCJ executive director.

*****Mission*****

The PREA ombudsman serves as an independent office to monitor and conduct administrative investigations of allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, as well as provide a point of contact for elected officials, the public, and inmates regarding allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment, or inquiries related to PREA.

The primary responsibilities of the PREA Ombudsman Office are to:

- Coordinate and oversee the TDCJ’s efforts to eliminate the occurrence of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in correctional facilities;
- Review TDCJ policies and procedures to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and standards related to PREA; and
- Respond to public and inmate inquiries related to allegations of sexual abuse and sexual harassment in TDCJ correctional facilities and ensure impartial resolution.