



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

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News Release

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Inmates Clog Jail Sewage System, Creates Costly Cleanup

Shortly after midnight on Friday, Fresno County Sheriff correctional staff discovered a problem with the plumbing inside the North Annex Jail. This is a 1,728 bed facility located at the corner of M and Merced Streets. The plumbing issue was a sewage backup in the pipes, which then leaked throughout the building and into two courtrooms on the first floor. It created significant water damage in the courtrooms, as well as a large wet mess in different areas of the jail. Outside restoration crews were called in and began treating the cleanup as a hazardous materials situation, which requires special equipment. Water service to inmates in the North Annex Jail was temporarily suspended and then restored at 9:00 am. Staff provided inmates with clean water for both drinking and restroom use during the down time.

Due to damage, business to the impacted courtrooms Departments 95 and 96, has been moved to the Fresno County Superior Courthouse located at 1100 Van Ness Ave. More specifically, cases will now be heard in Departments 20 and 34. The time table for reopening Departments 95 and 96 is unclear, but repair work could take up to a month to complete.

The clog in the sewage system is believed to have started earlier this week. We determined inmates have been flushing objects such as blankets, clothing, food and garbage down the toilets. On Friday, the system finally became overwhelmed. The damage is estimated to be tens of thousands of dollars. Taxpayer money is not being used to pay for these costs. Instead, insurance and pre-existing revenues will cover the expenses.