

**County of Santa Clara
Office of the Sheriff**



DATE: July 30, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

FROM: Laurie Smith, Sheriff DocuSigned by:
Laurie Smith
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SUBJECT: Report relating to training of Custody Support Assistants

During the October 22, 2020 meeting of the Finance and Government Operations Committee, Supervisor Chavez and Supervisor Cortese requested information regarding training that is provided to Custody Support Assistants (CSAs) who process inmate mail. This is a very important task as it supports the safety and security of the facility by reducing the influx of contraband sent to inmates through the mail.

The CSA training program is a hands-on experience. New CSAs who work in the mail room are assigned to a Lead CSA who trains them in the policies and procedures related to mail screening. This includes information such as the use of safety equipment, acceptable vs. unacceptable mail, and banned mail content. Lead CSAs also demonstrate how to fully screen mail including examining the outside of the envelope, opening the mail, and scrutinizing the content. New CSAs are trained to look for discoloration, wet spots, or ripples in the paper; stickers, stamps, or stray markings on the paper as well as anomalies in the address label or postmark. New CSAs are trained to place suspicious mail in a plastic bag for further evaluation by sworn staff. Ongoing, CSAs work closely with the Jail Crimes Unit staff and Sergeants sharing information, discussing trends, and developing strategies to reduce the amount of contraband entering the facilities.

cc: Tiffany Leneear, Assistant Clerk of the Board