A GUIDE FOR NEW SHERIFFS:

INCREASE COMPLIANCE WITH STATE JAIL STANDARDS, REDUCE INMATE COMPLAINTS, AND RUN A MORE DEFENSIBLE JAIL

TEXAS EDITION · NOVEMBER 2024

GUARDIAN RFID
WARRIOR TECHNOLOGY

CONGRATULATIONS, SHERIFF, ON YOUR RECENT ELECTION!

Whether you're a seasoned law enforcement veteran or you're new to the profession, stepping into this elected position will often feel like you're running all over hell's half acre.

As you may know, or will soon learn, your jail is typically the second most litigated entity in your county – only behind the school district. So, to help you prepare for your first year in office, we've created this guide to help you optimize three key areas of jail operations and inmate management. Regardless of your facility's size – whether it's 50 or 5,000 beds – these areas emphasize compliance with jail standards, reducing inmate complaints, and running the most defensible jail.

This guide is based on over 300 years of combined corrections experience at GUARDIAN RFID, as well as 1 in 4 jails in Texas relying on our software every day to more effectively manage compliance with Texas Jail Standards.

In short, this guide can help your team avoid allegations of deliberate indifference – while optimizing, modernizing, and driving world-class outcomes. Our goal is to model how jails of any size, budget, or situation – no matter how unlikely or improbable your circumstances may feel – can achieve operational excellence.

Let's get started.

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In this guide, we're going to focus on three things:

1. **Building or Reevaluating Policies and Practices**
that align with or exceed State Jail Standards.

2. **Creating Sustainable and Achievable Systems**
to reduce inmate complaints and lawsuits, optimizing your time to focus on law enforcement matters.

3. **Maximizing Your Defensibility**
to help your staff C.Y.A.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO ADDRESS TEXAS JAIL STANDARDS

First and foremost, as the duly elected Sheriff, you will likely select and empower your subordinates to execute your office's mission. Strong, top-down leadership is essential to your entire office's success – not just yours. Be fair, firm, and consistent in your jail operations.

Observation and documentation will get you out of litigation.
You're no doubt familiar with the phrase, If you didn't log it, it didn't happen. The problem isn't the unfamiliarity with this phrase, but whether it has been consistently enforced and ingrained in your jail's culture.

> *"It was hard keeping accurate logs because when you did a cell check, the logs were done after the fact. The time frames could change, they put down whatever time frame they felt that it was done."*
>
> **CAPT. JASON MICAN** Wharton County, TX

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Let's get more specific.

- How is your staff logging jail rounds?
- When staff are logging observation checks on administrative segregation inmates, are they "pencil whipping"?
- How similar is the description of the past 20 checks?
- Are paper logs logged with uncanny punctuality, such as every 10, 20, 30, and 60 minutes without fail?

Any simple observable pattern is indicative of a bigger problem, especially when it comes to defensibility. Inmates can, and will, exploit any predictable patterns of behavior.

Every jail, prison, and juvenile detention facility must perform security rounds or observation checks on inmates at least every 15, 30, or 60 minutes. Yet over 90% of correctional officers begin their rounds at generally the same time, every time. With no exceptions.

When patterns are predictable, the number of incidents like contraband being smuggled and passed, inmates being assaulted, and self-harm are more likely to occur. This is because as soon as inmates know your pattern, they will alter their actions and behaviors, creating a window of opportunity for these dangerous situations.

> "It's real easy to falsify, all you have to do is write a time down on the paper. If you were 3 or 4 minutes late, you could always move the time backwards on paper."
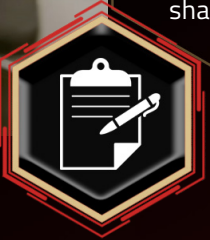>
> **LT. KARL ROHDE** Smith County, TX

Command Cloud, our officer experience platform (OXP), can identify, break down, and prevent pencil whipping and predictable patterns of behavior. Here's how:

- Jails using Command Cloud equip their staff with purpose-built Android devices called SPARTANs. Each SPARTAN runs a mobile app that displays a series of digital clocks showing how much time remains between rounds, along with audible and visual alerts. It also allows staff to log specific observations on high-risk offenders quickly and accurately.

- If staff log a late check, they can be required to log a late check justification, using tools like talk-to-text. Supervisors can review and verify any late check justifications from anywhere. This feature is highly valued by Texas Jail Inspectors because it empowers your staff to maximize your compliance expectations.

If a picture is worth 1,000 words, a video is worth 1,000,000.
Your staff's narrative of an event will be questioned by the media and court of public opinion. It will be wrongly presumed you made a mistake or that your staff committed a crime. To defend against this, you need reliable digital evidence. With Command Cloud, you can capture digital evidence anywhere in your jail at the point of responsibility – including inside cells during shakedowns or extractions.

Since nearly 50% of all inmate populations consist of individuals with mental health conditions, their level of cooperation can be challenging. If your staff starts observing and logging more aggressive behaviors, staff can capture video or images in the moment to substantiate what was really happening and when.

For example, an inmate at the Fort Bend Co. Jail had covered himself in feces every day he had a scheduled court appearance. His attorney thought staff were making it up and denying his right to appear before the court. With digital video evidence, you have unequivocal proof.

Digital evidence, such as video capturing, strengthens your staff's narrative in incident reports to remove any potential doubt. In this respect, your team is always working proactively versus being caught unprepared in a media maelstrom when negative events may occur.

> "They pick that SPARTAN up, they are empowered. They got a camera at their hand. They can do their reports at their hand. They can even record a use of force right there at their hand. They don't have to stop and look for paperwork. They don't have to stop and look for a pen. They are empowered with one little tool that they use every single day to come in and to make their rounds."
>
> **LT. LONNIE KETTLER** Smith County, TX

> *"The inmates are always complaining that they didn't get something. And now with GUARDIAN RFID, I can pull inmate specific information for their whole incarceration and have it all at my fingertips at the website in a few minutes."*
> **C.O. BECKY BENNETT** Wharton County, TX

REDUCING INMATE COMPLAINTS AND PREVENTING LAWSUITS

Inmate Meals
Consider an approach adopted by Congressman Troy Nehls when he was Sheriff of Fort Bend County: "If you wouldn't eat it, don't serve it." After observing meals being passed to inmates in his jail, which he said he couldn't describe – let alone imagine eating himself, he requested his jail administrator to work with the jail's food provider to radicalize the menu. Sheriff Nehls only wanted to see menu items that staff would be willing to eat, like hot dogs and hamburgers, despite the increase in food costs.

Be smart about where to spend money and where to save it. If meal quality can be improved within your budget, do it.

Some best practices include:

1. Collect as Much Inmate Data as Possible:
Document whether an inmate accepted or declined a meal to prevent inmate complaints or grievances. The more data that can be provided about the inmate and overall situation, the more defensible your facility. Lawsuits can arise due to not providing and documenting meals in general, not providing the appropriate special diet (diabetic, religious meal, etc.), and/or not properly documenting meal refusals.

2. Document Meal Refusals:
When an inmate refuses a meal, staff must document the reasoning. For example, if the hot meal is served ice cold, this becomes an issue you should take up with your food vendor.

3. Capture Necessary Evidence:
Agencies may also require video footage of any refusal or a photo of the tray so the agency captures the exact tray the inmate is refusing.
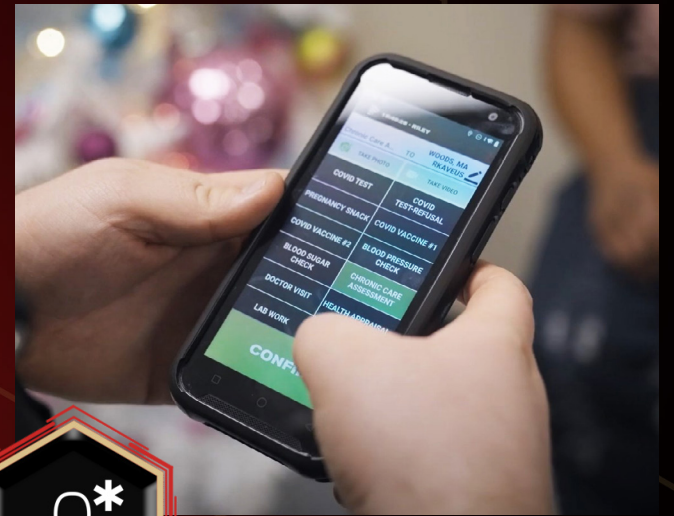
Medical Access
Medical is necessary, and the cost of medical bills at Medicare rates is significantly cheaper than the costs of a lawsuit.

Allegations from inmates about the lack of or denial of medical access are among the most litigious areas of inmate management. As emphasized throughout this guide, your team must have a clear policy and consistent expectations for rigorously documenting medical access – both when it's offered and whether an inmate accepts or declines the offer.

A huge portion of your jail population will have mental health issues. So, it's important to work closely with your mental health providers. If they are not meeting your needs, it's worth the investment to either supplement your resources or make a change. You don't want suicides.

Supplies Issued
Lawsuits can arise if there is no documentation that hygiene or other supplies are offered and refused. Most policies include language that officers must document when inmates accept or refuse these supplies. Whether an inmate receives toilet paper or certified legal mail, it's important to document the offering.

With Command Cloud, inmates can digitally sign to verify acceptance of any item. You can also track items such as razors, clippers, and cleaning supplies – which can be potential weapons and objects of convenience and self-harm.

> *"GUARDIAN RFID is a tool to keep track of your inmates, keep track of your inmate movements, keep track of supplies. It's the most user-friendly, electronic cell check system that I can imagine."*
> **C.O. BECKY BENNETT** Wharton County, TX

MAXIMIZE DEFENSIBILITY AND HELP YOUR STAFF C.Y.A.

Medication Administration

On average, 60% of inmate populations in facilities that use GUARDIAN RFID require prescribed medication or request over-the-counter medication during scheduled medication passes.
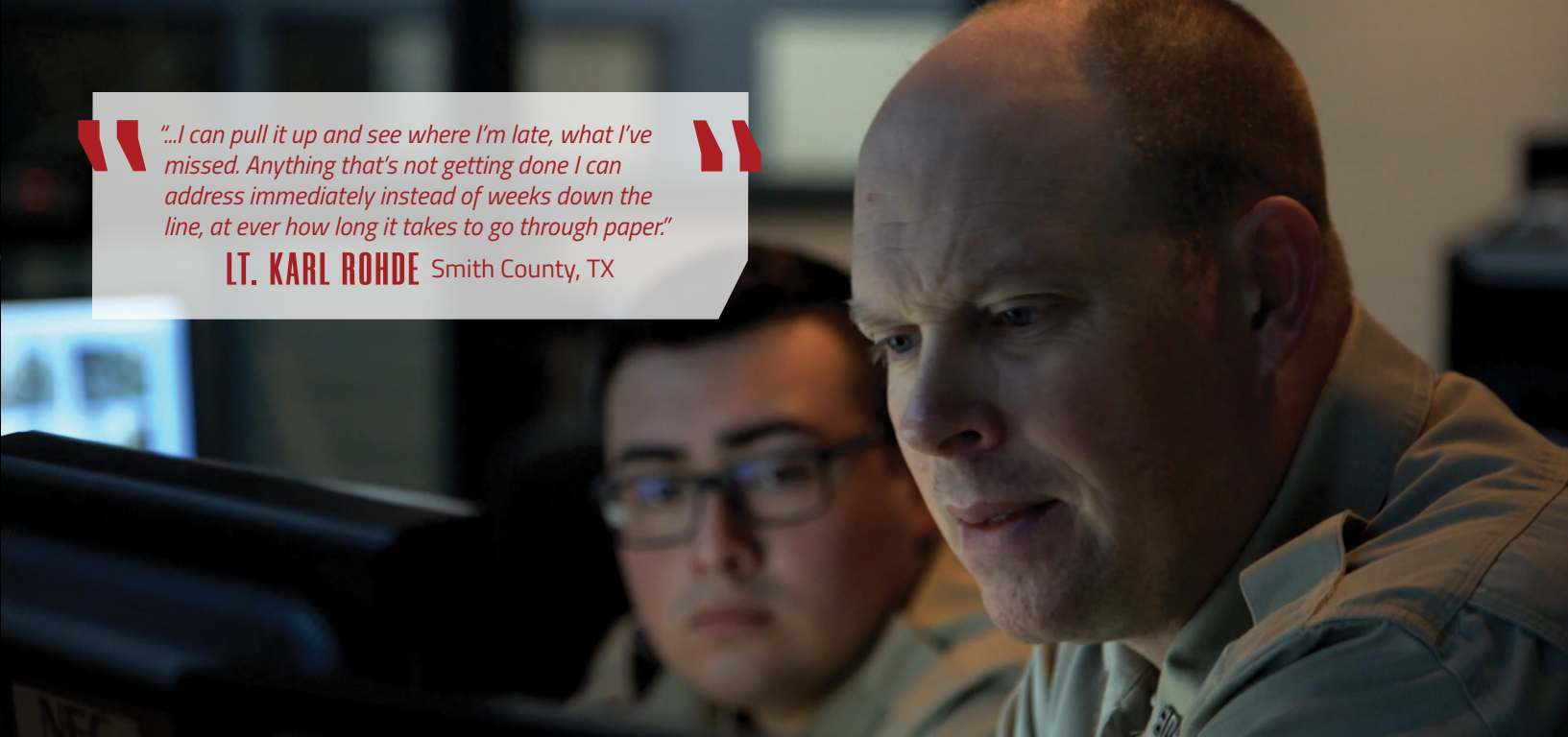
This high demand for medication management underscores the importance of meticulous documentation to ensure staff remain compliant with facility healthcare policies. Failing to maintain accurate records of medication administration increases the risk of litigation and allegations of deliberate indifference. In fact, the most common type of inmate lawsuit involves claims of inadequate medical care, even surpassing claims of excessive force or denial of religious practices.

Command Cloud helps you document when prescription medications and over-the-counter (OTC) medications are offered to inmates. It also documents whether the inmate accepted or refused the medications. All interactions are digitally recorded, including inmate signatures that verify the med pass.

> "...I can pull it up and see where I'm late, what I've missed. Anything that's not getting done I can address immediately instead of weeks down the line, at ever how long it takes to go through paper."
> **LT. KARL ROHDE** Smith County, TX

> "GUARDIAN RFID has made my team more accountable because of the accuracy of it."
> **CAPT. JASON MICAN** Wharton County, TX

Records Retention and Retrieval

Lawsuits can arise months or years after an incident occurs, making it difficult to store and retrieve records at a moment's notice. This causes concern about losing videos/photos, etc. after an extended amount of time.
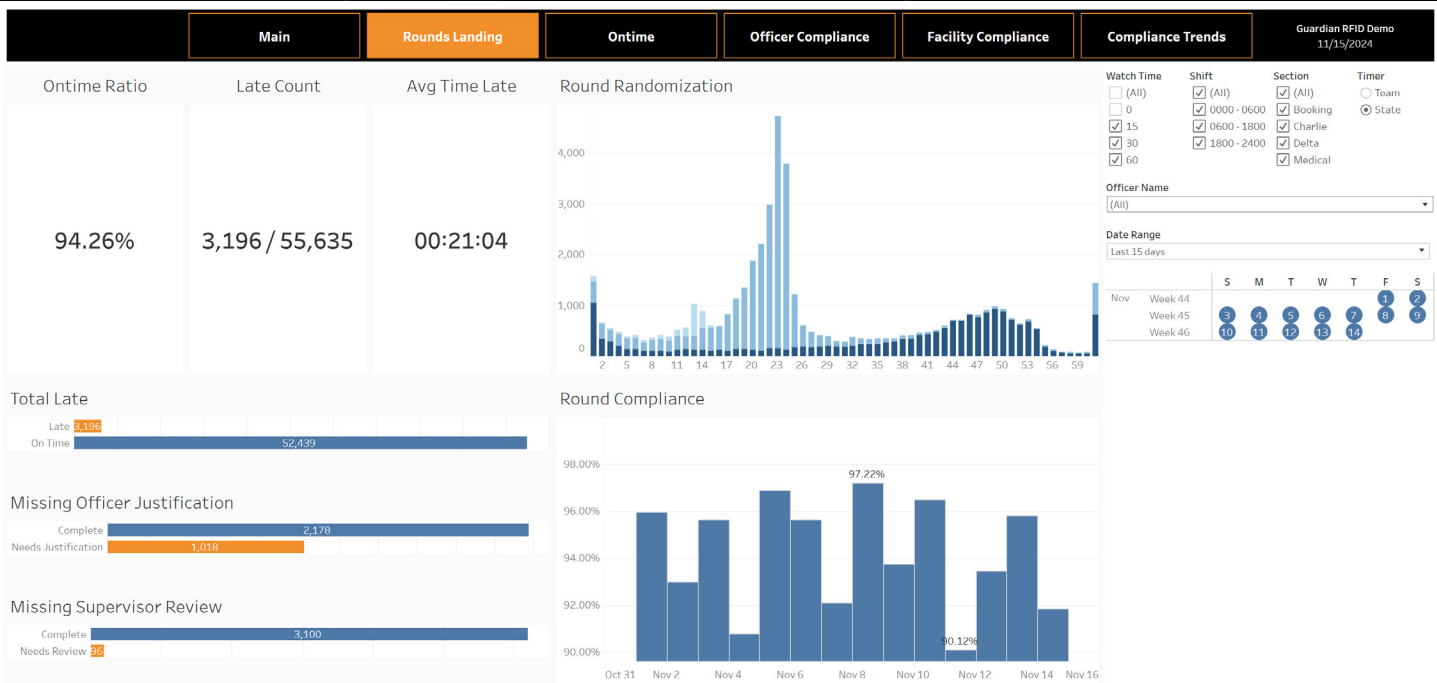
Command Cloud securely stores your data, including all digital evidence (videos and photos), indefinitely. You can easily access any record you need in seconds, by date, inmate, activity type, and more.

TRUST, BUT VERIFY, WITH VISUAL ANALYTICS

Some of the best-performing jails in the country use their facility's policies, rigorous attention to detail – such as their documentation procedures – and tools like business intelligence to measure and improve their performance.

Operational Intelligence is the business intelligence layer of Command Cloud, our visual analytics platform that empowers you and your team to visualize, understand, and act on data insights.

For new Sheriffs, several key business intelligence dashboards can help your team from day one, including Round Compliance, Late Check Justifications, and Supervisor Reviews. You can also use Headcount dashboards to identify bottlenecks that may be impacting headcount completion.

IN SUMMARY

We hope this guide has provided valuable, new strategies to optimize jail operations and inmate management, focusing on compliance, reducing complaints, and enhancing defensibility to protect your staff and yourself.

Achieving 100% is possible. By getting regular updates from your leaders while maintaining a clear vision and setting high expectations, you can transform any agency from good to world-class – regardless of size or budget ability.

Excellence is a choice.

- **Documentation is Crucial to Your Success:**
  Accurate observations and detailed documentation are critical to avoiding litigation and preventing predictable patterns that inmates can exploit. Digital evidence, such as videos and images, should be used to substantiate what happened and when.

- **Use Proven Technology:**
  Command Cloud streamlines inmate management by embedding policies and expectations into daily operations, and digitizes processes to ensure compliance with Texas Jail Standards. With powerful business intelligence tools, it provides real-time insights into your facility's performance, helping you quickly identify strengths and uncover opportunities for improvement.

- **Benefits of RFID + Cloud:**
  RFID technology eliminates the risk of falsified logs and provides digital evidence to support staff accounts, improving defensibility over paper logs, as well as auto-identification technologies such as barcodes and QR codes. With Cloud technology, such as Command Cloud, your facility can ensure secure access to your jail anytime and anywhere.

> *"GUARDIAN RFID is essentially a system that helps you store data right there at your fingertips, and it stores it right there on a cellular device that we call the SPARTAN. And on that device you're able to do everything to start to report observations, haircuts, meals, sick calls. You can take pictures, videos, everything of that nature."*
>
> **CAPT. MARVIN MARTIN** Smith County, TX

MOBILE COMMAND XR™

MISSION COMMAND™

> *"Wharton County Jail is safer, smarter, and more aware with GUARDIAN RFID."*
>
> **CAPT. JASON MICAN**
> Wharton County, TX

> *"Does it make an impact? I know it does!"*
>
> **LT. LONNIE KETTLER**
> Smith County, TX

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ABOUT GUARDIAN RFID

GUARDIAN RFID is the most powerful, widely deployed, and trusted inmate tracking system in the world. We drive the strongest, data-driven compliance and accreditation outcomes, we maximize accountability, and we modernize the correctional officer to achieve more.

Visit **guardianrfid.com** to learn more or visit our YouTube channel at **youtube.com/guardianrfid** for tons of free content.
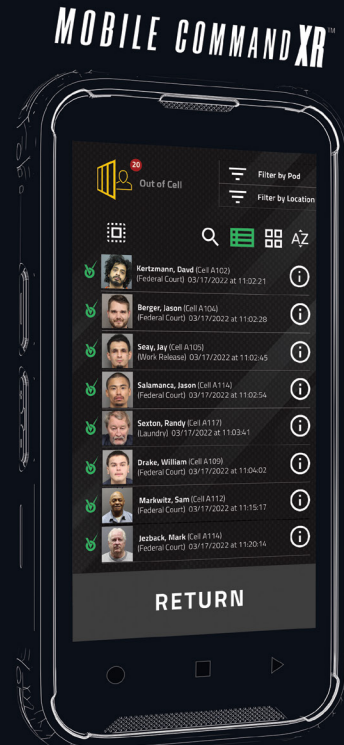
Success Stories:

- Watch how **Smith Co. Jail (Tyler, Texas),** with an average daily population of 972 inmates, uses GUARDIAN RFID to transform its compliance with Texas Jail Standards.

- Watch how **Wharton Co. Jail (Wharton, Texas),** with an average daily population of 119 inmates, uses GUARDIAN RFID to modernize its staff and maximize its defensibility.

> *"GUARDIAN RFID is a fantastic tool for maintaining the safety in a jail. We can log behaviors in a matter of seconds."*
>
> **C.O. BECKY BENNETT**
> Wharton County, TX

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**ONE TEAM.
ONE MISSION.**

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INTERESTED IN A FREE DEMO?
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