

# Grand jury slams Juvenile Hall

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SANTA CRUZ — Juvenile Hall has serious security problems and needs big changes, said the county grand jury in a report released Wednesday.

The report was the second this week to slam conditions at the county's detention hall for teen-agers who run afoul of the justice system.

The investigation by this year's grand jury dinged the Graham Hill Road building for most of the same reasons as the county's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, which issued its own report Tuesday. That report noted the danger of too many kids, not enough staff and outdated buildings, as well as the problems posed by tougher, more violent inmates.

Wednesday's grand jury report agreed. "The current population pressures and the types of young people who are coming through the front door have created a situation that demand serious consideration of expanding the facility just to meet today's needs," said the 19-member

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citizen group, noting "serious deficiencies in the level of security."

Twice in the last year, intruders were able to sneak into the hall, said the grand jury report, despite a high perimeter fence, locked doors and security guards.

The grand jury also looked into an escape from the hall in July 1994 as well as an assault on a guard that same month with a home-made knife fashioned from a Christmas tree stand stored in a closet.

The report made seven recommendations, which the Board of Supervisors and the Chief Probation Officer must answer within 90 days:

- Add at least 30 more cells to the hall;
- Build a secure walkway within the interior courtyard to provide safe passage from one area to another;
- Hire more staff at the hall;

- Hire a full-time building maintenance/groundskeeper;

- Update communication systems with handheld radios, cameras and alarms. Add wide angle lenses to existing security cameras. Remove shrubs from the perimeter fences and add more lighting and security cameras.

- Provide more programs and activities and promote more volunteer services;

- Require the Board of Supervisors to tour the facility twice a year.

County supervisors approved money during this week's budget hearings to buy more radios and wide-angle lenses for cameras, and they authorized an additional intake officer for the hall to get cases resolved faster.

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