

## Reporting Sexual Assaults

### Staff

Due to the serious nature of sexual assaults, any staff member knowledgeable of an offender-on-offender or staff-on-offender sexual assault that occurs within a TDCJ correctional facility must immediately report the allegation to unit administration in accordance with agency policies.

### Offenders

Offenders incarcerated in TDCJ are encouraged to immediately report allegations of sexual assault to correctional staff, facility administrators, or the Safe Prisons Program Management Office. Offenders may also report allegations of sexual assault to the PREA Ombudsman Office or the Office of Inspector General (OIG). In addition, offenders may report allegations of sexual assault through the grievance process.

### Family and Friends

Friends of offenders incarcerated in the TDCJ, family members, and the general public are encouraged to report allegations of sexual assault to the PREA Ombudsman Office, the TDCJ ombudsman coordinator, or the CID Ombudsman Office. Public inquiries concerning allegations of sexual assault received by the TBCJ and the TDCJ are referred to the PREA Ombudsman Office for investigation and response. In addition, all allegations of sexual assault are referred to the OIG for criminal investigation.

### Providing Helpful Information

Public inquirers are asked to provide the following information, or as much as possible, when reporting allegations of sexual assaults:

- Name of the unit where the victim is assigned;
- Date and time the incident occurred;
- Name and TDCJ number of the offender victim;
- Name and TDCJ number of the alleged assailant 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)

Due to the serious nature of sexual assaults, anyone knowledgeable of an offender-on-offender or staff-on-offender sexual assault 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) 437-2133 (936) 437-6981 fax  
[prea.ombudsman@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:prea.ombudsman@tdcj.state.tx.us)

### **Office of Inspector General (OIG)**

P.O. Box 4003, Huntsville, TX 77342-4003  
(936) 437-5030 (936) 437-5138 fax  
[oig.records@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:oig.records@tdcj.state.tx.us)

### **TDCJ Ombudsman Coordinator**

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099  
(936) 437-8035 (936) 437-8067 fax  
[ombudsman@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:ombudsman@tdcj.state.tx.us)

### **TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division**

### **Safe Prisons Program Management Office**

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099  
(936) 437-8918 (936) 437-8949 fax  
[lynne.sharp@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:lynne.sharp@tdcj.state.tx.us)

### **CID Ombudsman Office**

P.O. Box 99, Huntsville, TX 77342-0099  
(936) 437-6791 (936) 437-6668 fax  
[ci.div@tdcj.state.tx.us](mailto:ci.div@tdcj.state.tx.us)

**General offender status information may be obtained at [www.tdcj.state.tx.us](http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us)**

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

Texas Board of Criminal Justice

## PREA Ombudsman Office



**Authority**  
**§501.172, Texas**  
**Government Code**

## What is PREA?

In September of 2003, the *Prison Rape Elimination Act* (PREA) was signed into law. PREA is a federal mandate of “Zero Tolerance” to sexual assaults on a national forum. PREA is the first national law to be passed addressing sexual assault behind bars. The law was passed unanimously and quickly by both Houses of Congress and signed into law by President Bush. Some of the components of PREA include: establishing a zero-tolerance standard for the incidence of rape in prisons in the United States; make the prevention of prison rape a top priority in each prison system; develop and implement national standards for the detection, prevention, reduction, and punishment of prison rape; and increase the availability of data and information about the incidence of prison rape.

## Zero Tolerance Policy

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has a “Zero-Tolerance” policy concerning the detection, prevention, and punishment of the sexual abuse, including consensual sexual contact, of offenders in the custody of the department.



## Texas Response to Sexual Assaults In Correctional Facilities

Prior to the passage of PREA, the TDCJ had implemented several policies and procedures concerning offender-on-offender sexual assaults in correctional facilities. Many of these policies addressed areas of prevention, detection, reporting, and prosecution.

In October of 2003, the Safe Prisons Program Management Office was created. It is a department within the TDCJ Correctional Institutional Division (CID) that is supervised by the Safe Prisons Program manager, who ultimately reports to the TDCJ executive director. The purpose of the Safe Prisons Program Management Office was to initially consolidate the existing agency policies and procedures for preventing offender-on-offender sexual assaults into a cohesive Safe Prisons Plan and a “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 and has since carried it forth to include preventing and limiting other acts of offender-on-offender aggression or violence (those acts that are frequently precursors to sexual assault).

In 2007, the PREA ombudsman was created to provide offenders as well as the public an independent office to report sexual assaults.

## 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.

In 2008, the TBCJ hired the current PREA ombudsman, establishing the PREA Ombudsman Office.

The primary responsibilities of the PREA Ombudsman Office are to:

- Monitor the agency’s efforts to eliminate the occurrence of sexual assaults in correctional facilities;
- Review the agency's policies and procedures to ensure they are in compliance with federal and state laws and standards (currently under review are the proposed national standards submitted to the United States Attorney General by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission), and
- Respond to public inquiries related to allegations of sexual assault in TDCJ correctional facilities.