

Response to Video of Inmate Harrison Ellison Cell Condition

On Tuesday, December 20, 2022, the Chattanooga Times Free Press inquired with the HCSO regarding a video that was released to them by local attorney Brandy Spurgin detailing the cell conditions of one of her clients. It is important to note, the HCSO allowed the attorney the opportunity to view the cell and take a video to be shown in court.

The inmate in question, Harrison Ellison, is held in a dual segregation cell with another inmate. Ellison has been charged with homicide and has been housed at the Silverdale Detention Center since October 7, 2020.

The video depicts several issues inside the inmates' cell including various styrofoam food containers and trash, and a vandalized shower curtain and light fixture. Unfortunately, what this video does not detail is the cause of the aforementioned damage or accumulation of trash.

The light fixture, the shower curtain, and other items have been repeatedly vandalized in the cell. HCSO maintenance personnel have made repairs inside the cell and are currently assessing the most recent damages. In addition to the current damages, a new light fixture was installed by maintenance on Thursday, December 22, 2022.

It is important to note, inmate vandalism and intentional sabotage is something corrections services and maintenance personnel deal with on a daily basis throughout the Silverdale Detention Center. This is due in large part to the fact the original intent of this aged facility was to house low level offenders as a workhouse. The HCSO is working to modify and retrofit the facility to house high level offenders. The way power switches, lighting fixtures, and other building related items are installed often creates difficulty in managing inmate vandalism and sabotage. Recently approved improvements and projects are designed to limit inmate exposure and access to lighting and electrical equipment.

The HCSO offers cleaning products to the inmates and trash removal daily. All inmates are responsible for keeping their respective cells clean. Despite offering daily trash removal, trash has been left to accumulate in the shared cell in question. If an inmate begins to accumulate too much trash material, HCSO corrections personnel will enter the cell and remove trash in order to maintain sanitary conditions as defined by Tennessee Corrections Institute regulations.

Lastly, the Times Free Press requested information pertaining to an alleged leak that is occurring in the inmate's cell. There is no documented leak in the cell that maintenance has been made aware of at this time. There was a small leak that was reported in July of 2021 after the inmate(s) on the floor directly above Ellison intentionally sabotaged and flooded their shower causing the leak to affect his cell. Once again, this was not an issue our personnel ignored, rather an unfortunate result from inmate vandalism. Anytime water drips into a lower tier, it is the result of inmate flooding in an upper level.

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