



Public Safety

Santa Barbara County Jail Inmate Dies in Custody



Man Was Being Held in Single Observation Cell at Main Jail, Where Deputies Found Him Unresponsive Early Sunday Morning

Santa Barbara County's Main Jail | Credit: Google Earth

By **Jackson Friedman**

Sun Sep 03, 2023 | 12:30pm

An inmate at Santa Barbara County's Main Jail has died after being found unresponsive in his cell and transported to an area hospital early Sunday morning, September 3, according to a statement released this morning by the Sheriff's Office.

In the statement, Sheriff's Office spokesperson Raquel Zick stated that the inmate – whose identity is being withheld pending notification of his family – was first booked into the Main Jail on Thursday, August 31, on felony charges of driving under the influence resulting in injury and hit-and-run with injuries, as well as misdemeanor reckless driving. His bail had been set at \$100,000.

“The inmate was housed in a single observation cell due to medical concerns including alcohol detox and was being checked by staff at regular intervals,” Zick stated. She said that custody deputies discovered the inmate unresponsive in his cell shortly after midnight on Sunday and began life-saving measures, including CPR and placing an automated external defibrillator, with WellPath medical staff. After first responders from County Fire and American Medical Response were called to the jail, the inmate was transported by paramedics to a nearby hospital, where he died a few hours later.

The in-custody death is being investigated by the Sheriff’s Office and Coroner’s Bureau, and more information will be released once family members have been notified of the death and the investigation has concluded, Zick said.

Earlier this summer, a Santa Barbara County Grand Jury issued **four blistering reports** laying out in grim detail how systemic gaps in the county’s criminal justice system led to the deaths of five inmates in Santa Barbara County jails last year. Those reports are summarized **here** and can be read in full **online here**.

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