



David A. Clarke Jr.  
Sheriff

# Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **Sheriff Orders Deputies to Courthouse Complex Checkpoints After Security Breaches**

Milwaukee, WI – A recent shooting in a courthouse in Wilmington, Delaware last month prompted Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. to order an integrity check of the Milwaukee County Courthouse complex security checkpoints. (The courthouse complex includes the Courthouse, Safety Building and Criminal Justice Facility). Integrity checks have been routinely performed in the past to determine any weaknesses and whether or not someone could get a gun or other weapon into the complex.

The checkpoints are a function of the Facilities Management Division, under director James Burton. He reports to County Executive Chris Abele.

An undercover deputy, who carried no credentials or other law enforcement identifiers, was able to get through the secure checkpoint at all six entrances into the complex with a gun tucked in her waistband without security discovering the weapon after she set off the walk-through magnetometer.

Any time the alarm is activated, security personnel must perform a more thorough inspection to determine what set it off. In each instance, the security officers used a handheld wand to locate the metal, but merely allowed her to reveal her belt buckle as the source, and then let her through without any further check. This occurred at each of the six security screening stations.

Clarke said that “complacency and a lack of a sense of urgency are factors, as well as inadequate supervision by Facilities Management. The security check has become an exercise in going through the motions. That is not what I expect. Employees, jurors and the public are counting on Facilities Management to do a more thorough job to ensure that these buildings remain secure from this type of breach.”

Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. ordered sheriff's deputies posted at each security checkpoint in the court house complex until he is convinced that weapons cannot get through. The staffing of these posts will have to be paid for with overtime, and Sheriff Clarke will request supplemental funding to pay for this since this function is not in the MCSO budget. He will also put forth a report of recommendations to the county executive on ways to make the complex a more secure environment.

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