

**[More problems at fed jail in Brooklyn; Inmates report no lights, water or hot food, few staffers](#)**

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Inmates at a Brooklyn federal jail once described by a judge as an “ongoing disgrace” faced new problems over the weekend — no water, spotty electricity, no hot food and staff levels so low that one inmate was told to figure out how to take his own psychiatric medication, defense lawyers charge.

The reported wretched conditions were the latest at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Sunset Park, where alleged Jeffrey Epstein madam Ghislaine Maxwell is locked up.



The Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn. (Theodore Parisienne/for New York Daily News)

“We understand that electrical work was being done Friday evening and will continue this weekend. Our clients are reporting being locked in their cells with the water turned off, resulting in unsanitary conditions from flooding toilets,” Deirdre Von Dornum of the Federal Defenders wrote in an email to the jail’s lawyers and Brooklyn federal prosecutors. “We have heard multiple reports of no hot food being available. Some clients report the lights being out. Many report a lack of officers on the unit.”

One inmate was reportedly given two vials of psychiatric medication and told to self-administer, according to the Federal Defenders, while another inmate described how food was being rationed because of problems with the refrigerators and freezers.

“They are giving us two water bottles and boxed lunches, four slices of bread, two slices of chicken baloney, one small packet of pretzels, one sugar-free juice packet, a pouch of peanut butter and a pouch of jelly,” the inmate wrote to a lawyer. “Also, the toilets DID NOT WORK from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m., so if a bunkie had to defecate, you had to sit in there with that.”

In her letter, Von Dornum called on jail officials not to wait until the end of an extended holiday weekend to reply.

“These conditions are unsafe and fall below the minimum standards for care in the [federal Bureau of Prisons],” she wrote. “Please let us know what can be done — not Tuesday, but today.”

The Bureau of Prisons did not return a message seeking comment Sunday.

In July, Brooklyn Federal Judge William Kuntz railed at the conditions inside the Brooklyn jail after it took several days to fix a 60-year-old bank robbery suspect’s toilet.

“I don’t care if the defendant is Jack the Ripper,” the judge said. “We treat people under our care with respect and decency because it reflects on the entirety of the criminal justice system. ... This is a disgrace. It’s an ongoing disgrace,” he added.

The Metropolitan Detention Center suffered a [blackout during a cold spell in winter of 2019](#), and the [deaths](#) of [four](#) inmates in [custody](#) since [2020](#).

In August, Antonia Ashford, 44, an associate warden at the jail, fatally shot her husband in their Jackson, N.J., home, telling cops she did it after years of domestic strife, prosecutors said.