



CHAIRMAN'S MEMORANDUM

NO. 25-98 November 16, 1998

TO: SHERIFFS, JAIL ADMINISTRATORS, AND COMMISSIONERS OF CORRECTION

RE: Year 2000 Problem

As many of you know the coming of the Year 2000 will pose significant problems to many computer systems. Since its inception, the computer industry has used a two-digit number to represent the year component of a date; that is, the year 1996 is represented in computer systems as "96". Most, if not all, governmental agencies have computer programs that calculate time periods using these two digits. When the Year 2000 arrives, this two-digit year field will contain "00". Computer-generated calculations that automatically take the higher number and subtract it from the lower one will result in incorrect elapsed time calculations. For example, a person born in 1996 may be calculated to be 96 years old, not four years old. This example points out only one of many computer-generated calculations that will produce wrong results. Effective dates for benefits, license expiration dates, retroactive payments, personnel/payroll transactions, etc., are all potentially affected by this change.

A recent survey by the Officer of the State Controller found that many local governments across New York may not be ready to adequately deal with this problem.

In the past decade correctional facilities have become more and more computerized. This computerization has gone far beyond word processing, database and booking and classification systems. It may not be apparent that systems are operated by computers since one might not see a traditional keyboard and computer monitors. Today many systems have been computerized which increases the likelihood that problems may occur. Any system which is operated by a computer may be effected. Both hardware and software may be effected.

Below is a checklist of those systems which may be effected.

- √ electronic security control systems which operate locking mechanisms;

- √ heating ventilating and air conditioning systems, including

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- negative pressure systems;
- √ fire alarm systems;
- √ electrical or mechanical time recording devices;
- √ Commissary systems;
- √ Personal, mini and mainframe computers
- √ Word processing systems;
- √ Database and spreadsheet systems;
- √ Booking and classification systems¹;
- √ EKG machines;
- √ Computerized medical record systems;
- √ Computerized pharmaceutical records;
- √ Any computerized laboratory device;
- √ Lighting control systems;
- √ Public address systems;
- √ time clocks; and
- √ any other system which may be operated by a computer.

It is strongly encouraged that you either contact the system vendor or manufacturer and get written assurance that the system is in fact Year 2000 compliant. It is also suggested that you work with the appropriate governmental agency in your county to ensure that your systems are Year 2000 compliant and secure funding if required for changes and/or upgrades.

The National Institute of Corrections maintains a site on the Internet which provides additional information on the Year 2000 problem. It can be found at:

<http://www.nicic.org/inst/y2kassist.htm>

Alan J. Croce, Chairman/Commissioner

¹ DCJS is in the process of updating the JMS software for Year 2000 Compliance