

A SAMPLE PRISON OFFICER TRAINING COURSE

The material used here has been gathered by a review of more than 100 training programs conducted in individual Correctional Staff institutions, training academies and educational institutions around the world. Conferences with prison practitioners were held in North America, South America, Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East to go over the material in detail. More than 30 manuals were prepared with the laws of specific nations included for the general review and recommendations of prison personnel. The material in this section is what was found to be an almost universally agreed upon set of the basic and minimum information people working in a prison should have included in their initial training. The times suggested here for each course is, again, a compilation of what was gathered from the material reviewed and would most likely be used as a guide in individual institutions doing their own initial or refresher training. Training in a school or academy will undoubtedly be longer and more detailed.

Before working in a detention facility, prison or other type of correctional facility, it is important that certain basic elements are taught to each new employee. This is especially true for personnel who will be working directly with inmates. Following is an outline of what those basic elements should be. The individual institution may wish to change the order suggested for some of the training modules, or may wish to add to or modify some of the topics

The amount of time suggested for each module is based on the experience of similar training modules as operated in several prisons in different parts of the world. The time is the **minimum** needed to cover the subject and is meant as a guide to help you develop your own module. If desired, sample lesson plans can be provided to serve as an example as individual institutions develop their own.

Though physical fitness training is important, it is not mentioned in this manual. Many prison systems bring their recruits into an academy and provide them with as much as six months to a year of basic training which has many additional elements not included here. Those who do more are to be commended and, if possible, copied by others. However, this manual is intended to present the minimum subject matter necessary for the efficient, effective and humane performance of duties. It goes without saying that without proper supervision and constant reinforcement of both the philosophy of the prison system and the appropriate behavior of the staff, the training is of little value.

Finally, what is presented here is the minimum classroom material. It is strongly suggested that the training include several practical sessions where the recruits spend time with experienced officers inside of prisons. After the initial orientation, a visit to one or more prisons is an important way to help the recruit to better understand what he or she will be exposed to during the individual lessons. It is also recommended that experienced officers be trained as "coaches" so when they are working with recruits, they can help reinforce and enhance the basic training.

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THE FIRST WEEK -- AN OVERVIEW OF CORRECTIONS AND WORKING IN IT

I. ORIENTATION

This is the student's introduction to the corrections system. It begins with an overview of the nation's criminal justice system and moves to the specifics of the laws covering the prison system. It ends by covering the general duties and expected behavior of prison personnel. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE PRISON SYSTEM

This module looks at the purpose of prison within the nation. Emphasis is given to the legal difference of the status of a confinee in pre-trial detention and an offender imprisoned as a condition of the court-imposed sentence. It will also cover the different classifications of inmates which must, by law, be kept separate from each other. The final section will list and define the various prisons within the nation and describe their general purpose, population capacities and security levels. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

III. WHO IS IN OUR PRISONS AND WHY?

This module provides information on the race, sex, age, offense, and average term served by the nation's inmates. It also covers the types and numbers of inmates from foreign nations. The lesson ends with a discussion among the students to help identify any false stereotypes and prejudices they might have concerning inmates in general. It will include a discussion on the causes of crime, especially violent crime, within the nation. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

IV. INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND NORMS IMPACTING ON PRISON WORK AND INMATES

This module provides an in-depth introduction of the United Nations and other appropriate Standards and Norms defining the minimum standards of treatment required for detained and sentenced individuals. It covers inmate rights and staff responsibilities. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

V. PRISON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This module identifies the authority under which the prison system works and provides an overview of the policies. Sample policies and procedures are presented. Group discussions and exercises are conducted to enable participants to find solutions to policy questions they might encounter. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 6 hours.

VI. CROSS-CULTURAL AWARENESS

The purpose of this module is to provide participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to supervise and effectively communicate with all members of today's culturally diverse prison community, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of prison operations and avoiding culturally related supervision problems. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

VII. INMATE DISCIPLINE

This module presents an introduction to the discipline process by reviewing the established rules for inmate behavior. The concept of due process in the discipline program is explained as well as punishment options. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 3 hours.

VIII. INMATES AND THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT

This module begins with a brief discussion of the impact of prison and confinement on both inmates and staff. It covers the various stages inmates go through from reception to discharge from the system. This is followed by discussions of the subtle, destructive manipulation by some inmates that can lead staff into criminal activity while working in a prison. The manipulation techniques of the criminal personality are explored as a way of developing insights to protect against the "games" that some inmates play. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

IX. VIOLENCE IN PRISON

This module looks at the issue of inmate violence from the point of view of controls available in prison settings. An analysis of previous disturbances or violent incidence is presented. Discussion of inmate needs and the physical conditions helping lead to prison disturbances is also provided. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 1 hour.

X. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PRISONS AND TREATMENT PHILOSOPHIES

The previous lessons have laid the legal, operational and philosophical base of the prisons and the prison environment. This module looks at the history of how prisons developed into their current method of operating. Information is provided on the theory of re-socialization and rehabilitation and what role the prison officer plays. Current re-socialization programs operating within the prison are explained. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hour.

XI. HOSTAGE SURVIVAL

This module answers the question, "What should I do if I were taken hostage?" Mental and emotional preparedness is stressed along with a discussion of the emergency planning that is part of the institutional response to hostage situations. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XII. FIRE SAFETY

Fires in a prison are especially dangerous due to the security arrangements of prisons. All staff are expected to respond to fire emergencies as well as be aware of their role in fire prevention. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 1 hour.

XIII. SUPERVISION OF INMATES

This module looks at the duties, responsibilities and techniques of inmate supervision. It provides some specific supervision activities when dealing with inmates who are members of organized gangs.

THE SECOND WEEK -- MANAGING PROBLEMS IN A PRISON SETTING

XIV. INTRODUCTION TO SEARCHING TECHNIQUES

This program is divided into sub-sections that deal with techniques for clothed body searches, unclothed body searches and cell or area searches. A consistent "head to toe" approach to the frisk search is demonstrated as one of the security skills that will be tested at the end of the week. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

XV. DRUG AWARENESS

This module introduces the drugs commonly found in prisons. It provides information on the use, effect and identification of chemicals and substances abused by inmates. It provides information concerning safety issues for staff who may come into contact with these substances. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XVI. SUICIDE PREVENTION

This module helps the staff identify the warning signs that people contemplating suicide often exhibit. Correctional Staff need to be aware of their role in identifying and preventing inmate suicide. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 1 hour.

XVII. SIZING UP THE SITUATION

This module helps the staff know what is happening in any situation. Sizing up helps avoid costly mistakes and maximizes the chances that decisions will be effective and accurate. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XVIII. COMMUNICATING WITH INMATES

This module provides the skills to help staff open up communications with inmates. It provides staff with the ability to get another person to tell them more about what he or she knows or thinks. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XIX. CONTROLLING INMATE BEHAVIOR

Besides the need to protect the due process rights of inmates, there is a need to effectively deal with inmate behavior on an on-going basis that requires good management and communication skills on the part of prison workers. This module focuses on various proven ways to effectively correct behavior. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XX. FIRST AID AND HEALTH PROMOTION

This program includes an introduction to Emergency Action Principles as well as correct procedures for patient assessment prior to rendering or summoning aid. Techniques for rescue breathing, clearing an obstructed airway, and CPR are taught as well as other procedures for emergency conditions that, if not treated, can become life threatening very quickly. The session ends with a discussion of health and disease issues, such as TB, AIDS and other communicable diseases. It also covers information on what officers can do to help promote general health and sanitary conditions within the facility. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 8 hours.

XXI. NON-VIOLENT CRISIS INTERVENTION

This module exposes the participants to recognition of the stages of crisis development in individuals as well as effective staff responses to each phase of this development. A series of exercises are provided to assist staff in experiencing what it is like to work with someone going through these phases. Participants are given exposure to non-violent defense techniques as well as a non-violent team control technique. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

XXII. PERSONNEL PROTECTION TECHNIQUES

This module introduces some fundamental principles of personal protection. A variety of defensive release techniques are demonstrated and practiced. The course concludes with several practical control techniques. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXIII. KEY AND TOOL CONTROL

The secure use of tools and keys is an important aspect of every institutional operation. Basic ideas on acquisition and control of these devices is explored and discussed. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

XXIV. INMATE COUNTS

This module introduces important security supervision techniques that are required in inmate management. The focus is on developing good observation skills along with procedures for conducting various types of inmate counts. An exercise in counting is a concluding activity for this module. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 1 hour.

XXV. REPORT WRITING

This module provides an introduction to basic report writing skills as a background to the legal and administrative requirements for reports of the Prison system. The program is divided into two sessions and concludes with a Practicum where each participant will complete several reports that are reviewed under the supervision of the instructor. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXVI. STRESS MANAGEMENT

This module demonstrates stress management techniques and has participants practice some of them. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

THE THIRD WEEK -- SECURITY PROCEDURE AND FIREARMS

XXVII. USE OF FORCE

This module investigates the types of force to use in controlling inmates, always keeping it to the least amount of force necessary. Practice in identifying potentially dangerous situations and how to handle them in as non-combative a manner as possible is given each participant. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXVIII. FIREARM SAFETY

This module prepares the trainees for the specific weapons they will use in corrections. The basics of weapon and range safety are carefully presented as the most important aspect of weapons handling. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 1 hour.

XXIX. INTRODUCTION TO WEAPONS

This module prepares the staff for the potentiality of carrying firearms and chemical agents as a job responsibility related to the authority granted them by the State. This course presents basic introductory skills and a familiarization with the handling characteristics and functional operation of each of the weapons they will use in their job. Classroom demonstration is provided for each weapon. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXX. WEAPONS – CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Each trainee is given ample time to become physically acquainted with the operation of each weapon as a prelude to range practice and qualification. A series of drills and simulations are used to develop and enhance good shooting skills prior to range use of these weapons. Special training on the handling and use of chemical agents will be covered. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXXI. RANGE PRACTICE AND QUALIFICATION

Each trainee will have an opportunity to practice with each weapon and then demonstrate a minimum of 70% proficiency with each weapon that they may be authorized to use in the course of their working duties. The courses of fire are designed to demonstrate accuracy and timeliness in weapon use. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXXII. LOW-LIGHT AND NIGHT FIRING COURSES

Firing at Dusk and during night conditions provides an important familiarization with the limitations of using a weapon in these conditions. The course of fire includes the use of all basic weapons under both low-light and full night darkness conditions. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXXIII. USING RESTRAINING DEVICES

The skills needed to safely and securely apply restraining devices are demonstrated in this module. The participants will learn the functional capability of restraints along with special skills used in the preparation for the transportation of prisoners. A safe transportation method is demonstrated. This is one of the security skills that will be tested at the end of the week. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 3 hours.

XXXIV. TRANSPORTATION OF PRISONERS

This module introduces the security problems involved in motorized transportation of prisoners. A review of common problems is presented. A variety of seating arrangement scenarios are analyzed in preparation for this portion of the security skills evaluation at the end of the week. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXXV. USE OF RADIO/TELEPHONES

This module demonstrates the different types of radio and telephone equipment used in corrections. Each trainee will be given an opportunity to practice with each type of radio. Communication security and methods of clear and concise communications are covered. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 2 hours.

XXXVI. SPECIAL SECURITY ISSUES

This module will cover specialized areas of concern to prison personnel. Those issues include:

- Forced Cell Moves
- Riots
- Crime Scene Protection
- Internal Investigations
- Escapes
- Attacks on the Institution by Bandits

Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

XXXVII. SECURITY SKILLS PRACTICE

This module allows time for controlled practice of the skills required for frisk search, restraint application and transport in one of several situations. Each trainee will work with a partner to simulate real-life situations in the use of these skills. Minimum time that should be allocated to this subject is 4 hours.

ANNUAL AND ON-GOING TRAINING

The material in this chapter has been gathered by a review of more than 100 training programs conducted in individual prisons, training academies and educational institutions. In some cases, where no formal written material was available individuals responsible for training were interviewed or material was gleaned from articles. The material in this section is what was found to be an almost universally agreed upon set of the basic and minimum information people working in a prison should have included in their annual and refresher training. The times suggested here for each course is, again, a compilation of what was gathered from the material reviewed and is considered the minimum necessary to cover the subject.

REQUIRED CURRICULUM

Course Title	Minimum Hours
Prison Policies and Procedures.....	2
Self Defense.....	3
Firearms.....	5
Hostage Situations.....	1
Suicide Prevention.....	1
Safety, to include:.....	4
Fire Protection	
Safety	
Emergency Procedures	
Environmental Issues	
Verbal/Written Communication Skills to include:.....	2
Effective Listening	
Communication	
Report Writing	
Staff Conduct, to include:.....	2
Code of Conduct	
Ethics	
Cultural Diversity.....	1
Security Issues, to include:.....	6
Tool and Key Control	
Supervision of Inmates	
Escape Procedures	
Escort Procedures	
Search and Contraband	

Use of Force, to include:.....	2
Personal Protection Techniques	
Medical Issues, to include:.....	4
First Aid	
Medical Emergencies	
Health Promotion/Disease	
Working with new officers, on-the-job training and coaching techniques.....	1
Inmate Information, to include:.....	6
Inmate Rights	
International Standards	
Re-socialization, rehabilitation Programs	
Inmate Rules and Regulations	