
JAIL BULLETIN

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The Jail Bulletin is a monthly feature of the Crime Commission Update. The Bulletin may be used as a supplement to your jail inservice training program if officers study the material and complete the attached "open book" quiz. The Bulletin and quiz may be reproduced for use by your staff. We welcome any jail training material you would like to contribute to the Bulletin.

SECURITY

One of the basic functions of a correctional facility is to protect the public by detaining individuals judged to be a threat to society. In the past, the protection interest centered on creating insurmountable barriers to thwart escape, and the concentration was on providing effective perimeter security rather than internal safety. If we are to view inmate rehabilitation and resocialization as important, then the emphasis must center on not only a secure environment but safe as well.

The single most important factor in our security program is the jail staff...staff persons that are firm, fair, consistent, and knowledgeable. Inmates can sense very quickly the staff persons that are lax on searches, low on discipline, and poor on communications. Jail staff must learn and experience a wide variety of procedures that define sometimes complex and interrelated tasks. Therefore, to be fully proficient in this job, jail staff must be *trained and coached so that they are capable of functioning effectively in any position. This is necessary because it gives the staff person an overview of all facility operations and an understanding of why each job is done the way it is and the responsibilities that go with that particular job.

(*Jail Standards, Chapter Two, states that with the exception of Type I Facilities, all facility employees who work in an excess of two hundred (200) hours annually in direct or continuing contact with inmates shall satisfactorily complete thirty-six (36) hours of initial training and eighteen (18) hours of yearly in-service training).

There are two basic types of facility security. The first, perimeter security, pertains to the capability of a facility to prevent escapes...to safely confine its population within the limits of a given area. In general, these limits are the outside walls or fence or can relate to inside walls, rooms, or activity areas. The second type is internal security, and it refers to the

abilities of the facility staff to control or influence behavior within inside areas in a manner that involves protection of inmates from one another or from themselves, protection of staff and inmates from one another or from the environment, and control or prevention of riots and/or disturbances. Both perimeter and internal security are important in order to effect total facility security.

OBJECTIVES OF JAIL SECURITY :

A security program has four primary objectives:

1). Ensure safety of staff, inmates, and the public

Ensure the safety of staff, inmates, and the public is one of the major objectives of a security program. If this objective is not achieved successfully, all other programming activities by the jail staff will have little meaning or impact. When inmates perceive the environment as disciplined and friendly (as opposed to unprofessional and hostile), they will perceive it as safe and secure, and, more times than not, will respond in normal fashion. However, if inmates are in constant fear of assault or harassment, survival, not self-improvement, will be their main concern. These fears, if sufficiently extensive among the inmate population, can become a negative, self-fulfilling prophesy.

A facility security program, which reduces or eliminates tension, benefits both staff and inmates by providing a safe, secure environment. No jail, due to the varied natures of inmates, can be guaranteed trouble-free. However, a high quality security program effected by a professional staff will reduce the frequency of serious incidents.

2). Maintain order within the facility

A second objective of a jail's security program is to maintain order. As a public facility and as a part of the Criminal Justice System, a jail cannot permit nor condone any kind of activity that would manipulate, control, or exploit other inmates. To have order in a "forced group" living situation, it is necessary to regulate certain activities that can be done in the outside community such as drug/alcohol usage, freedom of movement, unrestricted hours, and so forth. Permitting these activities to occur in a correctional facility could lead to confusion, chaos, and undesirable consequences.

3). Prevent escapes

The third major objective of a jail's security program is to prevent escapes. An inmate's commitment order compels the facility administrator to maintain continuous custody of that inmate from book-in to release. Thus, escape prevention becomes a legal obligation for jail staff. Here again we also have an obligation to protect the public by detaining individuals judged to be a threat to society.

4). Control contraband

The fourth major objective is the control of contraband. Contraband being any item or article inside the facility that was not issued by the facility, purchased from the commissary, purchased through approved channels, or approved for issue by an appropriate staff member. Authorized items may be considered contraband when found in excess quantities or altered (such as a detainee with a large amount of commissary items who is running a "store" for other detainees, altered clothing, etc.)

Effective supervision, that is managing inmates and their time, is the key to controlling contraband. Staff members should always submit written reports on all contraband problems they observe both to ensure that the problem is quickly corrected and to protect themselves. No contraband problem is too minor to be ignored nor are any contraband problems too insignificant to be put in writing.

When a jail fails to function as intended or fails to meet any one of these objectives, the results can be disastrous. Tension will escalate into violence, and serious injury or death may result. An aware staff, practicing interpersonal communication skills, can establish an environment that encourages normal social behavior that will diffuse tension. Significant cues occur during communications, and these cues deal directly with how the situation is perceived. If staff members can address inmates in a tone of voice typical of interactions outside in normal society, then responses are more likely to be just as normal. There must be give and take, respect for respect.

SECURITY AND COMMUNICATIONS:

Internal security is effected and affected by communications. A jail staff persons' effectiveness is measured by their ability to make their thoughts, feelings, and needs known to others and on their receptiveness to the attempts of others to share similar data with them. Communications in corrections is especially difficult because the jail staff must deal with a wide range of persons coming from all sorts of backgrounds. This not only deals with staff-to-inmate relations but also staff-to-staff communications.

COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS:

Because listening is a highly selective and subjective experience, interference to communications processes can arise out of the listener's frame of reference (vested interest/hidden agenda) and other attitudes about the world. If a person expects to hear certain things (based on preconceptions about the message sender's personality and background or opinions about the subject matter), interference may occur and block the message. Information which conflicts with the listener's pre-set ideas may again be simply blocked out and not heard. Active listening is a key skill in corrections work.

The first component of listening is that of attention. In corrections work, we hear a lot of noise. When we work the cell areas, it is our job to pay attention and sort out those noises for cues. Those cues cause the second component, reception, which is the actual receiving of the sound. The third component is

that of perception. Meaning is assigned to these sounds (sounds of distress, fighting, arguing, other threats to safety and security) and we respond accordingly. These three elements are present in every instance of listening, although depending on the situation and the listener's motives, different aspects may be stressed. A trial lawyer, for example, pays close attention to the flow of a witness' testimony and concentrates on unearthing inconsistencies, contradictions, and evidence of distorted perception. A staff person listens to an inmate's tale of woe and thinks, "I've heard that one before" and shuts off the message only to learn later that the inmate did have a problem and now the facility is being sued.

The following are some good communications skills:

- A. Paraphrasing: By such phrases as "Are you saying...", "Do you mean...", "Your point is...", restating what the inmate says before you add words of your own shows the inmate that you can and want to respond with an accurate idea of their message.
- B. Perception Checking: Deals more with feelings rather than the knowledge aspect of a message received. Using phrases such as "you appear to be...", "It sounds to me like you...", demonstrates that you are aware of the feelings of the speaker.
- C. Non-Verbal Expressions: "Yeh, I'm listening to you," Officer Gerbal says to Inmate Harpie, but Officer Gerbal is looking at the jail housing sheet, his face is frowning, and he obviously is not listening. Officer Gerbal's body language gives him away. He is not interested in Inmate Harpie's message.

Here are some non-verbal expressions or body language signals and their meaning.

- 1) Amount of eye contact (people normally look at each other from 40-60 percent of the time). More eye contact can reveal interest while avoiding eye contact may indicate disinterest, dislike, or evidence of guilt.
- 2) Leaning or moving close to someone may demonstrate interest while moving away shows disinterest and a non-verbal statement of not wanting to disclose information (too close for comfort).
- 3) Crossing one's arms (which may indicate an unwillingness to change or defensiveness).
- 4) Facial expressions of approval or disinterest (smiling, nodding, or frowning).

The important aspect of body language is that it is a largely unconscious form of communication. Thus, in the example of Officer Gerbal, he was giving Inmate Harpie a verbal message of "Yeh, I'm listening to you", but it was his non-verbal body language (eyes diverted to another task, frowning expression) that told Inmate Harpie the true message. Therefore, when "mixed" or conflicting verbal and non-verbal messages are sent, the receiver tends to instinctively depend on the non-verbal cues to determine the true message.

D. Argument Avoidance: This is perhaps the greatest challenge that anyone can be faced with and in the corrections business it is critical. More times than not, what we first have to question when listening to a disruptive inmate is where is this person coming from...from their cognitive domain (knowledge, facts, etc.) or from their affective domain (emotions, feelings, etc.). Is there some substance to their insistence? Avoiding arguments (and this involves co-workers too) involves strategies for re-routing arguments into more constructive channels:

- 1) Listen, really listen, to what the other person has to say, instead of interfering...instead of concentrating on your hidden agenda or trying impatiently to interrupt.
- 2) Paraphrase what is being said to you so that the speaker knows that you want to understand. State the speaker's position accurately.
- 3) Avoid flat statements of disagreement.
- 4) Concentrate on probing questions that clarify, (Mr. Jones, you sound angry...what made you angry?)
- 5) Establish points of agreement and emphasize your agreement.
- 6) Back up your viewpoint with reason and facts (if you have none, or have not searched out the problem, keep quiet and listen with no emotion).
- 7) Effect a resolution (agree to meet again after the problem is investigated or restate points of agreement).

SECURITY RISK REDUCTION

The primary impact of staff, locks, alarms, and other tools of custody is to constrain inmates and to prevent serious breaches of security. But to create an environment in which the majority of inmates cooperate requires more than just equipment and a show of force. To prevent staff-inmate battle for the "real" control of the facility, there must be good staff-inmate communication, fairness, and an awareness of the constitutional rights of those in custody.

Most inmates want a peaceful facility and want to stay out of trouble. Since inmates spend 24 hours a day living in an environment that does not afford much privacy, they want the personal protection a good security system offers. This desire is often unexpressed but it is there.

It is recognized that arbitrary, unfair treatment of inmates and constant inmate idleness will stress a security system. Some of the factors that reduce risks and prevent security problems are:

- .. A management team who are able to communicate effectively and provide guidance and coaching to staff;
- .. Good staff communications through verbal and written pass-down logs, written reports;

- .. Good staff-inmate communications;
- .. Knowledgeable, alert, conscientious jail staff;
- .. Continuous appraisal of policies and procedures;
- .. Firm and fair enforcement of rules, regulations;
- .. An efficient, prompt disciplinary and inmate grievance process;
- .. Provision for classifying inmates;
- .. Provision for visits;
- .. Providing inmates the opportunity to do constructive work while incarcerated;
- .. Providing inmates the opportunity to be involved in constructive leisure-time activities, including outdoor recreation and exercise, and;
- .. Providing inmates with opportunities for self-betterment, such as religious services, educational programs, and rehabilitation programs.

All of these factors, if successfully addressed, communicated, and implemented by the jail staff can alleviate frustrations and keep tensions at a low level, thus, they affect security. Virtually all activity within the jail facility has an impact on all other elements of the facility's operation.

Jail staff should realize that inmates do not escape from buildings but from the people who staff the buildings. In essence, security is people attending to people. All staff must constantly be alert, looking for actual or potential security problems, and then going one step further, doing something about what they see. Working in a jail facility is a full-time profession, and it is no place to catch up on sleep, do homework for a college course, or read the newspaper. The jail staff persons have sold their time to the county, therefore, they must be accountable for that time.

SUMMARY:

- 1) A jail security program should have four primary objectives: 1) Ensure the safety of both inmates and staff; 2) maintain order within the facility; 3) prevent escapes; and 4) control contraband.

Any security program becomes less effective if inmates fear for their safety. Inmate tension in turn creates stressful working conditions for facility staff. In such situations, routine encounters between staff and inmates can degenerate into explosive situations. Thus, our security program has as its goal the development of a secure environment that ensures safety for the public, our staff, and inmates.

- 2) The single most important factor of security is the jail staff person.

The jail staff person has a great responsibility to ensure that the functions of safety, security, discipline, and custody are carried out. The effectiveness of our security program depends upon the jail staff person and their abilities to demonstrate acceptable behavior and positive interpersonal communications skills. Staff persons, for their own protection and to make sure observed problems are taken care of, should report all problems in writing.

- 3) Internal security is only as good as staff communications are between staff and with inmates.

It is the responsibility of the jail staff to create a normalized environment for inmates.

- 4) Inmates do not escape from a building but from the people who staff the building. Therefore, the facility management team must take every step possible to reduce security risks.

Security is a constantly evolving process. Jail staff must be ever alert for actual or potential security problems. This involvement would be in written and verbal communications that process problems into workable solutions.

--Adapted from material contributed by
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QUIZ

Nebraska Jail Standards require that jail staff receive eighteen (18) hours of inservice training each year. The Jail Bulletin may be used to supplement inservice training if an officer studies the bulletin, completes the quiz, and this process is documented by the jail administrator for review during annual jail inspections.

SUBJECT: SECURITY, #2

NAME _____

- 1) The single most important factor in our Security Program is your _____.
- 2) Jail Standards state that all facility employees who work in excess of _____ hours annually in _____ or _____ contact with inmates shall satisfactorily complete _____ of initial training and _____ of yearly in-service training.
- 3) The two basic types of facility security are _____ and _____ security.
- 4) T F Perimeter security is all that our jail staff has to be concerned about?
- 5) A Security Program has four primary objectives. They are:
 - A) _____
 - B) _____
 - C) _____
 - D) _____
- 6) Good communication skills include _____, _____, _____, and _____.
- 7) Listening has three components. They are: 1) _____, 2) _____ and 3) _____.
- 8) Inmates don't escape from buildings but from _____.

CREDIT: 1/2 hour credit for Jail Inservice Training requirement
ANSWER SHEET SHOULD BE RETAINED BY JAIL ADMINISTRATOR OR TRAINING OFFICER

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SUBJECT: SECURITY, #2

NAME _____

- 1) The single most important factor in our Security Program is your _____ STAFF _____.
- 2) Jail Standards state that all facility employees who work in excess of 200 hours annually in DIRECT or CONTINUING contact with inmates shall satisfactorily complete 36 of initial training and 18 of yearly in-service training.
- 3) The two basic types of facility security are PERIMETER and INTERNAL security.
- 4) T Perimeter security is all that our jail staff has to be concerned about?
- 5) A Security Program has four primary objectives. They are:
 - A) ENSURE SAFETY OF STAFF, INMATES, AND PUBLIC
 - B) MAINTAIN ORDER WITHIN THE FACILITY
 - C) PREVENT ESCAPES
 - D) CONTROL CONTRABAND
- 6) Good communication skills include PARAPHRASING, PERCEPTION CHECKING, NON-VERBAL EXPRESSIONS, and ARGUMENT AVOIDANCE.
- 7) Listening has three components. They are: 1) ATTENTION, 2) RECEPTION and 3) PERCEPTION.
- 8) Inmates don't escape from buildings but from THE PEOPLE WHO STAFF THE BUILDINGS.

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