

JAIL BULLETIN

NUMBER 52

April, 1989

The Jail Bulletin is a monthly feature of the Crime Commission Update. The Bulletin may be used as a supplement to your jail in-service 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 materials you would like to contribute to the Bulletin.

The contents of the "Jail Bulletin" represent the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect official views or policies of the Nebraska Crime Commission or the Nebraska Jail Standards Board.

POSITIVE STAFF/INMATE INTERACTION

Complete supervision in a correctional facility depends upon employee ability to use specific techniques that help to develop an orderly environment and maintain control. Without an orderly environment, security cannot be maintained or daily activities carried out.

For correctional staff to have control, every employee must be familiar with the facility's operation from general schedules to specific work details. Correctional employees who are trained to instruct, direct, and control inmates, as well as assist them towards self-improvement, are those who have control.

Six main areas aid in gaining techniques that help maintain control in a correctional facility.

1. Supervisory Techniques - The use of certain basic techniques aid in achieving an effective supervisory approach.
 - o Job Knowledge - For correctional employees to be in a position to give orders, they must understand the organization's goals, policies, and procedures. Without such knowledge, employees may find themselves in a position to ask inmates for information. If this situation exists, the employee is at a loss of control.
 - o Self Confidence - Know what needs to be done, by whom, when, and where. The orders must be clear, concise, and direct.
 - o Consistent Temperament - Inmates will react favorably to an employee who appears fair. If there is inconsistency, inmates will not respect nor follow instructions.

- o Ability to Communicate - State all directions clearly and simply, geared toward each individual. Make sure directions are followed or take immediate corrective action.
 - o The Ability to Correct and Praise - Praise is an effective motivator, but when undeserved it is meaningless.
2. Evaluation of Prisoners - Work assignments have a critical impact on an inmate's life, therefore, correctional staff should follow certain guidelines.
- o Know the Inmate - When a correctional officer is evaluating a prisoner who he/she is not familiar with, documentation of this fact should be included in any reports submitted.
 - o Recognize Individual Differences - If an inmate follows orders with difficulty because of some handicap, documentation should be made.
 - o Recognize Change - If an inmate has changed for the better, the evaluation should indicate the change. If the change is for the worse, find out why.
 - o Be Objective - If possible, always give examples of what behavior you are documenting in any evaluation.
3. Constructive Supervision - By following some general rules in inmate supervision, the results will be good work, control, and security.
- o Be Firm But Fair
 - o Suggest Rather Than Order - When an order is given, the tone can set the framework for inmate cooperation and hostility.
 - o Professional Attitude - Always maintain a professional attitude. Never stoop to an inmate's level in actions or language. Try not to lose your temper or make idle threats. Avoid getting on a personal level with an inmate.
 - o Avoid Favoritism - Inmates are quick to notice favoritism. This can lead to inmate confrontations and/or place a "favored" inmate in a position of great authority within the facility, which can seriously compromise security.
4. Interpersonal Relations - Correctional employee's actions and techniques help shape inmates responses. Staff must be sensitive to inmate's needs and requests but also on guard to avoid undermining of their authority. The following guidelines will help to develop an effective and positive relationship with inmates.

- o Be Friendly But Avoid Familiarity - Never discuss your personal life, facility rules, other staff members, or legal problems with inmates.
- o Avoid Discussing Other Inmates - Never criticize an inmate in discussions with another inmate. This could lead to confrontation with the concerned inmate. Such a situation can undermine the correctional officer's authority and lead to a breach of security.
- o Give Advice Carefully - Giving advice in a correctional setting could be interpreted as "official" and some inmates could take it very seriously. Advice giving in a correctional facility can lead to civil matters. Be especially careful discussing an inmate's care, legality of an arrest, and search or procedures used by the arresting agency.
- o Keep Promises - Trust plays a large part in a correctional facility and aids in determining the inmate's attitudes toward staff. If you promise to do something, make sure it is within your authority and carry through with the promise.
- o Listen to Inmate's Request and Carry Through - If you agree to verify a release date, court date, or some other data, do it. Putting it off or forgetting about the request seriously undermines the positive environment you are trying to build and maintain.

5. The Correctional Facility Climate - The correctional employee should keep in mind that the facility runs smoothly only with the consent of the inmate. If coercion must be used each time you wish to move an inmate or perform some task, the facility would come to a standstill.

- o Demonstrate Self Confidence - Act decisively and without hesitation in all situations. Your actions convey that you are in control.
- o Agreement Among Themselves on Goals and Procedures of the Facility - If there is disagreement on a certain policy or procedure, it should be taken up with supervisory personnel, out of hearing of the inmate. Presenting an enthusiastic and common front projects an orderly environment.
- o Positive Attitude Towards Inmates - Only if open lines of communication exist, built upon trust and mutual respect, can correctional employees receive respect from inmates.

- o Pride in Themselves and Their Work - A correctional employee must have a professional attitude and appear interested in the work. If the employee dresses in a sloppy manner, continually complains, and/or takes no active interest in their work, the result can be hurried searches, indifferent attitude, or failure to carry out assigned tasks. These results can lead to a loss of security. An officer must always remember to BE ALERT AND LOOK FOR THE UNUSUAL.
6. Behaviors to Avoid - A cold and indifferent attitude not only increases inmates' despair but can lead to violence or suicide. Therefore, there are some general practices to avoid.
- o Racial Prejudice - Carefully analyze your behavior as it appears to others. Oftentimes, prejudice is an unconscious facet.
 - o Wanting to Be Popular Among the Inmates - Inmates can sense when a correctional officer fears or avoids them. Precaution is different from fear and must be taken when handling certain inmates. Therefore, it is the employee's responsibility to be familiar with restraining techniques and emergency plans.
 - o Fraternizing - If correctional staff/inmate relations become too close, employees may find themselves giving preferential treatment. The most dangerous situation is where correctional employees do favors for inmates, such as extra commissary items, or allowing inmates unwarranted privileges. The best rule to follow is to treat all inmates the same, and do not do any special favors for any inmates.
 - o Indifference to Inmates - Issuing orders to an inmate like a drill sergeant, dismissing all complaints and requests, and a completely depersonalized attitude does nothing for a correctional employee's effectiveness.
7. How Inmates View the Staff - When developing your supervisory techniques and habits, you must be aware of the inmates' situation and perceptions of the situation. There are nine general techniques for effective correctional supervision:
- a. Understand the limits of your authority.
 - b. Keep an objective attitude toward the inmates.
 - c. Don't dismiss inmates' complaints or grievances without proper consideration.
 - d. Refrain from taking a strong stand on minor matters.
 - e. Be sure the inmates know what you expect of them.
 - f. Listen to inmates and know what you expect of them.
 - g. Listen to inmates and empathize with them, not sympathize.
 - h. Praise inmates when they are doing a good job.
 - i. Provide inmates with face saving mechanisms.

The goal of all inmate supervision is the creation of an orderly environment. Be firm but fair, consistent, and objective. By applying these techniques to your position as a correctional employee, your effectiveness and control will improve.

Prepared by: Michelle Schindler
Student Intern Crime Commission

Reference: Staff/Inmate Relations; Smith, Gladys L. and Jones, Janice;
Department of Corrections; State of Alabama

QUIZ

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

SUBJECT: POSITIVE STAFF/INMATE INTERACTION NAME _____

NUMBER: 52 DATE _____

1. All of the following are good supervisory techniques except:
 - a. Fraternization
 - b. Job Knowledge
 - c. Consistent Temperament
 - d. Self Confidence

2. In evaluating inmates, the employee should follow four basic guidelines. Which of the following is one of the guidelines?
 - a. Patience
 - b. Fraternization
 - c. Self Confidence
 - d. Know the Inmate

3. One of the rules of inmate supervision is:
 - a. Patience
 - b. Communicate
 - c. Be Firm But Fair
 - d. Know the Inmate

4. All of the following are practices to avoid in supervising inmates except:
 - a. Racial Prejudice
 - b. Commending for Good Work
 - c. Fear of Certain Inmates
 - d. Passing the Buck

5. In "How Inmates View the Staff", we discussed nine guidelines to follow for effective correctional supervision. All of the following are guidelines except:
 - a. Understand the limits of your authority.
 - b. Keep an objective attitude toward the inmates.
 - c. Dismiss inmate complaints or grievances without consideration.
 - d. Provide inmates with a face saving mechanism.

6. In interpersonal relations, we discussed five guidelines to follow to help shape inmates' responses. Which of the following is not one of the guidelines:
 - a. Feel free to give legal advice.
 - b. Keep promises.
 - c. Avoid discussing other inmates.
 - d. Carry through with inmate's requests.

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ANSWER SHEET SHOULD BE RETAINED BY JAIL ADMINISTRATOR.

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