

JAIL BULLETIN

Number 83

FEBRUARY, 1992

INTAKE AND ADMISSIONS - PART II

C. Information

It is important to obtain personal information about each inmate at the time of admission. This information, recorded in a variety of forms, will be useful to you during the inmate's confinement period.

Personal information is necessary for identification purposes, and to help you with housing assignment selection. The basic information can usually be obtained from the committing documents and by asking a few simple questions. The booking officer should be careful not to ask any questions related to the crime of which the inmate is accused. The initial questions which you ask of the inmate can be a good opportunity to find out if they are complaining of any health problems. You will want to conduct further health screening later in the admissions process, but you can identify major problems now by asking a few key questions.

IV. SEARCH PROCEDURES

Every new inmate who enters your jail can be a potential carrier of contraband or disease. It is crucial that you take steps to control these risks, but recent court decisions limit the extent to which intake searches may be used. Generally, inmates who are suspected of nonserious offenses cannot be strip searched without additional indications of the need to conduct the search (such as an offense associated with contraband, statements of the inmate, inmate behavior, or other reasons.) You should check the standards and court decisions that apply to your jurisdiction before setting policy on this sensitive issue.

There are many printed materials which describe basic frisk and search procedures. Notably, the Jail Officer's Training Manual developed by the National Sheriffs' Association, is very

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useful.

Be sure that all of your staff know how to conduct searches properly. Also be sure that all searches of inmates are conducted with the maximum respect for the inmate and cause a minimum of physical discomfort.

Any searches should be thorough and systematic. Searching officers must maintain visual contact with inmates at all times to make sure that inmates do not dispose of any contraband.

V. KEEPING INMATES CALM

Incoming inmates are often hostile after arrest. Many incoming inmates have bad feelings toward the arresting officers. When they see a uniform on your jail officer they often assume that he/she is another law enforcement official.

You might consider having different uniforms for your jail staff. In many jurisdictions, this has helped to underscore the division between law enforcement and detention/corrections. It can also provide incoming inmates with a clear distinction between law-enforcement officials and the jail staff who are about to work with them.

It is important for your staff to know that inmates are usually upset at the time of admission. Many inmates are afraid about what has happened to them, what is happening to them, and they are uncertain about what will happen to them. One of the best ways to handle this fear is to provide inmates with information at all stages of the process. Let the inmate know what is being done to him, why, and what will happen next. If you explain everything to inmates, they will probably cooperate more because they understand why you are doing it. Explaining also provides for a dialogue between the booking officer and the incoming inmate. This can help reduce tension and ease the inmate's adjustment to the facility.

During the booking process, officers should ask questions clearly, in a calm manner, and in a relaxed tone of voice. This approach can help new inmates to overcome their fears and anxieties.

Similarly, booking officers should try to respond to all questions inmates ask. By responding to the questions which are on their minds, the staff can help to calm their fears.

During the initial search procedures, it is important to inspect all personal property which the inmate brings to the jail, and to decide which is to be taken away from him/her. Any items which you decide should not be taken into the jail must be put in a secure storage area. It is important that you inventory all personal property by listing each piece and describing each item in detail. It is necessary to have an inventory sheet which describes property which is not taken from the inmate.

Use a personal property slip which is signed by both the inmate and the booking officer. This

slip should state that the inventory of the property taken from the inmate is accurate, and that both parties agree to its contents. You should give one copy of the form to the inmate. The inmate's personal property should then be placed in a sealed envelope and stored in a secure place. It is important that you know where the property is, and know that other people cannot gain access without permission.

*This Jail Bulletin is a reprint of material
available in the National Institute of
Corrections, Small Jail Resource Manual.
Copies of the manual may be purchased from
CRS Inc., (207) 685-9090.*

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 jail inspections.

SUBJECT: INTAKE AND ADMISSIONS, PART II

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NAME _____

DATE _____

1. The booking process provides an excellent opportunity to question an inmate about his/her alleged crime.
TRUE FALSE
2. Inmates charged with non-serious offenses cannot be strip searched for any reason.
TRUE FALSE
3. Ignore inmate questions during booking, you're the only one who needs to ask questions.
TRUE FALSE
4. What do some jails do to underscore the division between law enforcement and detention/jail staff?

CREDIT: One-half hour credit for Jail Inservice Training requirement.

Answer Key

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JAIL STAFF HAVE DIFFERENT UNIFORMS

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