

Pine County Sheriff's Department, Corrections Officer

What Corrections Officers Do:

Correctional officers must follow procedures to maintain their personal safety as well as the safety of the inmates they oversee. Correctional officers are responsible for overseeing individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or who have been sentenced to serve time in jail.

Duties

Correctional officers are expected to:

- Enforce rules and keep order within the jail.
- Supervise activities of inmates
- Aid in rehabilitation and counseling of prisoners
- Inspect facilities to ensure that they meet security and safety standards
- Search inmates for contraband items
- Report on inmate conduct

Inside the jail, correctional officers enforce rules and regulations. They maintain security by preventing disturbances, assaults, and escapes. They must also ensure the whereabouts of all inmates at all times.

On any given day, officers search inmates for contraband, such as weapons and drugs, settle disputes between inmates, and enforce discipline. Officers enforce regulations through effective communication and the use of progressive sanctions, which involve punishments such as loss of privileges. Sanctions are progressive in that they start out small for a lesser offense but become more severe for more serious offenses.

Correctional officers inspect facilities periodically. They check cells and other areas for unsanitary conditions, contraband, signs of a security breach (such as tampering with windows and doors), and any other evidence of violations of the rules. Officers also inspect mail and visitors for prohibited items. They write reports and fill out daily logs detailing inmate behavior and anything else of note that occurred during their shift.

Correctional officers may have to restrain inmates in handcuffs and leg irons to escort them safely to and from cells and to see authorized visitors. Officers also escort prisoners between the jail where they are held and courtrooms, medical facilities, and other destinations.

Correctional officers must report any inmate who violates the rules. If a crime is committed within their institution, they help law enforcement authorities investigate.

Correctional officers have no law enforcement responsibilities outside their place of work.

Work Environment

Because jail security must be provided 24 hours a day, officers work in shifts that cover all hours of the day and night, weekends and holidays. Correctional officers work indoors and may be required to stand for long periods during their shift.

Injuries and Illnesses

The job demands that officers be alert and ready to react throughout their entire shift. Working in a correctional institution can be stressful and dangerous at times. As a result, correctional officers may have a higher rate of injuries and illnesses of all occupations.

Work Schedules

Correctional officers usually work 8 hours per day, 5 days per week on various shifts. Because jail security must be provided around the clock, officers work all hours of the day and night, weekends and holidays. Some correctional facilities have longer shifts and more days off between scheduled workweeks. Many officers are required to work overtime.