

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION AND TRAINING MANUAL



The contents of this document have been compiled to provide instruction for volunteers as they prepare to provide services inside a Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections unit. Furthermore, it will inform the volunteer of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and appropriate behavior required by the Act.

James M. Le Blanc, Secretary
August 19, 2012

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

MISSION AND GOALS STATEMENT

The mission of Corrections Services is to enhance public safety through the safe and secure incarceration of offenders, effective probation/parole supervision, and proven rehabilitative strategies that successfully reintegrate offenders into society, as well as to assist individuals and communities victimized by crime. Goals and priorities are built around the Department's commitment to public safety and rehabilitation and serve to guide our performance in carrying out our mission. These goals and priorities include:

Staff and Offender Safety

We provide for the safety of staff and offenders by maintaining an organized and disciplined system of operations which enhance the stability of all programs. All employees are provided training on the principles of ethics and the Code of Ethics of the American Correctional Association to demonstrate our commitment to professional and compassionate service.

Provision of Basic Services

We provide basic services relating to adequate food, clothing, and shelter. We are further committed to delivering cost effective, quality health care services that maintain basic health and quality mental health services to contribute to the offender's satisfactory prison adjustment, and to diminish public risk presented by offenders upon release.

Opportunity for Change

We promote moral rehabilitation through program participation and will provide an environment for offenders which enables positive behavior change. This will be accomplished by making or identifying educational and rehabilitative opportunities available within the institution, or in the community for offenders under supervision, who demonstrate motivation for change and the desire to participate in such programs.

Opportunity for Making Amends

Through the availability of opportunities for making restitution and participating in community restorative initiatives, offenders will be provided a mechanism to compensate individuals and communities harmed by crime.

We are committed to developing partnerships throughout our communities to include victims, relevant groups, and public and private agencies. We recognize the importance of the role of the community, the victim, and the offender in a successful criminal justice system. By using evidence-based practices, we will increase compliance with conditions of parole and probation supervision and the ability of the offenders to reintegrate, which will result in safely reducing recidivism among Louisiana parolees and probationers.

STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

There are nine institutions under the authority of the Department, including two operated under contractual agreements with private management corporations.

CLASS	ADULT INSTITUTIONS	OPERATIONAL CAPACITY	LOCATION
1A	Louisiana State Penitentiary	6312	Angola
1B	Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women	1098	St. Gabriel
1C	Elayn Hunt Correctional Center	2175	St. Gabriel
1C	David Wade Correctional Center	1095	Homer
2A	Dixon Correctional Institute	1600	Jackson
2B	Avoyelles Correctional Center	1788	Cottonport
2B	Allen Correctional Center*	1476	Kinder
2B	Winn Correctional Center*	1476	Winnfield
2B	B. B. "Sixty" Rayburn Correctional Center	1156	Angie

*Privately operated, state-owned facility

Additional information regarding specialized programs offered at each facility can be obtained from Department Regulation No. B-02-001 "Assignment and Transfer of Offenders"-Appendix VII-Custody and Classification Chart.

LOCAL JAIL FACILITIES

Currently, approximately 56% of the offenders sentenced to the Department of Public and Corrections are housed in local jail facilities. These facilities are under the direct supervision of Sheriffs or Administrators and must adhere to the "Basic Jail Guidelines" in order to house state offenders. In addition, they are monitored by departmental staff. Similar to state facilities, certain local jail programs and activities are supported by volunteers, thereby creating a need for volunteer training and orientation. In an effort to provide assistance in the area, a copy of this document will be provided to each local jail facility.

AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION (ACA) ACCREDITATION

ACA accreditation encompasses all of the Department's goals and priorities and serves as a catalyst for productive change in the policy-making, management and operational processes of the state's correctional institutions, Division of Probation and Parole and contract and cooperative endeavor agreement programs. ACA is a national, non-profit organization of correctional professionals and practitioners that has developed rigorous standards for prisons and other correctional operations. Accreditation is a credential that identifies the state correctional system as stable, safe and constitutional.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAPLAIN: IDENTITY AND FUNCTION

The Chaplain has been called to the institution and has been given the responsibility to provide religious services to the offender population. He knows the spiritual needs and conditions of the population and is responsible for developing religious programming to meet those needs. The Chaplain is a pastor within the institution where he serves. Chaplains have many responsibilities and therefore, depend on volunteers for assistance.

The volunteer must always keep in mind that the Chaplain works in a public institution. It is the Chaplain's responsibility to provide services to meet the needs of offenders from many different faith groups and is responsible for facilitating compliance with applicable policies and procedures. The Chaplain is accountable to the Warden/Administration of the facility.

The Chaplain represents multiple faith groups and receives many requests from groups wanting to enter the institution. Often, more requests are made than time or space will allow. All groups must receive equal respect. Scheduling of religious services is to be coordinated through the Chaplain's Office at the respective institution where the service is to be provided. Other activities involving volunteers are to be coordinated by the appropriate staff member at the institution in cooperation with the Volunteer Service Coordinator.

The Chaplain is available to assist in whatever way possible. If there are questions, requests, suggestions or ideas, the volunteer should not hesitate to contact the Chaplain to discuss them. Suggestions are encouraged. Words of support, prayer and concern are welcomed.

PART TWO: THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

ADMISSION

Institutional policy governs requirements for entry into each institution. Each volunteer shall receive a copy of Department Regulation No. B-08-004 "Volunteer Services Program" and shall sign a Volunteer Registration Agreement (Form B-08-004-A) and Rules and Guidelines for Volunteers or Guests (Form B-08-004-B). Volunteers must willingly agree to abide by Department of Public Safety and Corrections and institutional regulations, policies and procedures. Forms shall be submitted to each institution where the volunteer desires to serve and shall be maintained by the Chaplain or Volunteer Services Coordinator.

All volunteers must receive orientation appropriate to the scope of the service to be rendered prior to the volunteer's service. Participation in an orientation program qualifies the individual to serve as a volunteer at any departmental unit. All units may require unit-specific or assignment-specific training as may be necessary. If such training is required, it shall be completed at a time that is convenient to institutional staff and volunteers.

A legal picture I.D. must be presented at the appropriate checkpoint of the institution before entry is permitted. Volunteers will only be allowed entry for their approved activity or an approved appointment. Institutional visitor/volunteer I.D. badges must be worn at all times and must be visible.

Persons under the age of 18 will be not allowed to serve as a volunteer without special consideration. Groups with minors will be considered on a case-by-case basis as long as the minors are a vital part of a specific program.

Group sponsors must be prepared to submit a program outline of the services they wish to provide. This outline shall include, but is not limited to: philosophy; purpose; goals and objectives; desired schedule and any arrangements or accommodations that might be needed.

The number of persons permitted to enter in a group is governed by institutional policy. Any additions or deletions to the volunteer list must be submitted to the Volunteer Services Coordinator (the Chaplain in most institutions) in a timely manner and according to unit policy.

The Volunteer Services Coordinator will recommend to the Warden or designee for final approval those applicants who meet the qualifications for service prior to the volunteer's beginning service.

The Warden has the option of limiting, suspending and/or discontinuing the service of any volunteer or volunteer organization at any time. Infractions of policies and/or procedures shall be reviewed by the Warden or designee who will render a decision. Any volunteer no longer cleared to enter the institution shall be informed in writing.

If charged with breach of law, or if other antisocial behavior becomes commonly known, a volunteer may be subject to suspension or termination. The volunteer's conduct must always be disciplined so as not to discredit the Volunteer Service, the Department or the institution before the offender population.

Relatives of offenders and those persons on an offender's approved visiting lists WILL NOT be allowed to serve as a volunteer for any reason, excluding verifiable faith/character based program participants or approved mentor(s). Volunteers are not allowed to visit offenders for any reason other than to provide approved services.

Ex-offenders will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the Warden prior to entrance.

CONTRABAND AND SEARCHES

All volunteers shall be held accountable for the introduction of contraband onto the grounds of any DPS&C institution or local jail facility. This includes, but is not limited to, entering the institution with the smell of alcohol on the breath and/or being under the influence of any drug or alcoholic beverage. Volunteers are subject to a search of their person, possessions and vehicle at any time. Whoever violates the contraband provisions shall be fined not less than \$250.00 and not more than \$2,000.00 and shall be imprisoned with or without hard labor for not more than five years. (La. R.S. 14:402).

Prior written permission from the Warden or designee must be secured at each institution before cameras, recording or musical equipment can be brought into the institution. Before any type of offender photograph is taken within the prison, an Offender Media Release (Form C-01-013-A) must be signed by the offender. These forms are to be secured from, and returned to, the appropriate staff person at the institution. For juveniles under the age of 17, consent must be granted by the legal guardian and approved by the Warden or designee.

No weapons and/or ammunition of any kind are allowed on the grounds of the institution.

Volunteers are discouraged from bringing any medication, cash, or valuables of any kind on prison grounds. Medication is permitted only if it is absolutely necessary. Persons requiring medication shall consult the Volunteer Services Coordinator regarding institutional procedure.

Any form of money, paper or coin, is considered contraband for offenders. The amount of money, jewelry, or any other valuables brought into the institution by volunteers shall be limited.

The institution is not responsible for any lost or stolen item of any sort, i.e., money, or any other valuables. Keys shall be under the volunteer's control at all times.

Cell phones, beepers, purses and handbags are not allowed.

A complete list of contraband items shall be provided by the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

SAFETY AND RULES OF CONDUCT

Volunteers are expected to immediately comply with instructions given by institutional personnel. In the event the Chaplain or other staff supervisor is not present during the volunteer's time of service, the Correctional Officer present should be consulted for assistance or concerns. The Correctional Officer on duty has authority over offenders and volunteers. Instructions are to be followed immediately unless the volunteer feels compliance would lead to imminent harm.

Volunteers are not to accept anything from offenders, i.e. mail, messages, packages, etc. Nothing is to be brought into or taken out of the institution on behalf of an offender or their families. Volunteers shall not give personal addresses and phone numbers to offenders. Any communication with offenders must remain on a professional basis. Inappropriate personal relationships shall result in disciplinary action against involved parties.

Volunteers are not allowed to leave funds for an offender and are not allowed to solicit funds from an offender. Hobbycraft purchases from offenders must be processed through proper institutional channels and not directly with the offender.

All volunteers must secure approval from the Warden or designee before giving an offender an item or article of any kind. Donations to the institution are coordinated through the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

Volunteers shall not reveal confidential information gained from any offender or Department records. Information pertaining to a threat to security (i.e., escape, riot, suicide, harm to others, etc.), abuse of a senior or child abuse must be reported to the Volunteer Services Coordinator immediately.

After signing in, volunteers are to report to their places of service according to institutional policy. All volunteers are to remain in the designated area. No one is to roam the compound. This is a security risk and could result in removal from the active volunteer list. Members of the group are to enter and exit the compound at the same time. Arrangements for exceptions must be made with the Chaplain.

Be on time when entering and leaving the prison.

Volunteers are not to enter restrooms with offenders.

No Volunteer shall encourage or engage in the slandering or discussion of matters concerning staff members or their own personal lives with the offenders. No congregating with offenders for the purpose of discussing institutional and/or DPS&C rules or regulations will be allowed. Questions regarding administrative policies and/or procedures may be addressed with the Volunteer Services Coordinator. No volunteer shall verbally or physically abuse or mistreat an offender or staff person in any way for any reason.

Derogatory racial or sexual comments are inappropriate and are not allowed.

Physical contact between volunteers and offenders shall be limited to handshakes.

Proper attire is required at all times to include the following but not limited to: no shorts and no revealing and/or provocative clothing. Shirts and shoes must be worn at all times. Sleeveless attire without appropriate covering will not be allowed. Clothing giving the volunteer the appearance of an offender will not be allowed.

Statements or releases to the news media concerning departmental policy, practices or status of offenders shall be made only by the Warden or designee. Similarly, volunteers shall not make statements about or quote offenders to any public media or in a public gathering except by permission of that offender and through the Warden's office. Each offender's privacy and dignity must be respected as for any citizen.

Smoking is governed by institutional policy.

Loud, boisterous, and offensive behavior/conversations will not be allowed or tolerated. Violence, fighting, horseplay, and threatening or interfering with employees or other volunteers at any time on the institution's premises or any other place during periods of volunteer service shall not be tolerated.

Volunteers are to notify the Volunteer Services Coordinator, or designated supervisor, in advance of the scheduled event should they be unable to attend a scheduled program or activity. Likewise, in the event the institution has to cancel an activity, the sponsor shall be notified as soon as possible. It is imperative to maintain current and correct information (address and phone numbers, home and office) with the Volunteer Services Coordinator.

All vehicle traffic rules of the institution must be obeyed.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

What is Sexual Misconduct?

Sexual misconduct is any behavior or act of a sexual nature directed toward an offender by an employee, volunteer, civilian, official visitor, or other agency representative (excluding an offender's family, friends, or other visitors). Sexual relationships of a romantic nature between staff or volunteers and offenders are prohibited.

Consensual and nonconsensual sexual acts include: intentional touching of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks with the intent to abuse, arouse, or gratify sexual desire, including completed, attempted, threatened or requested sexual acts; occurrences of indecent exposure, invasion of privacy (beyond that reasonably necessary for safety and security), or staff or volunteer voyeurism for sexual gratification; any sexual advance by staff members or volunteers; requests for sexual favors by staff members or volunteers; threats by staff or volunteers for refusing sexual advances; indecent exposure by a staff member or a volunteer in front of an offender; and fondling or kissing.

Sexual acts or sexual contact between a staff person or a volunteer and an offender, even if the offender consents, initiates or pursues, are always prohibited.

What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is repeated verbal statements or comments of a sexual nature to an offender by an employee, volunteer, civilian, official visitor or other agency representative (excluding offender's family, friends, or other visitors).

Examples of sexual harassment include but are not limited to: demeaning references to an offender's gender or derogatory comments about body or clothing; repeated profane or obscene language or gestures; jokes about sex or gender specific traits; abusive, threatening, profane or degrading sexual comments; and undue or flirtatious attention or any conduct of a sexual nature.

What is Over-Familiarity?

Over-familiarity is engaging in or attempting to engage in conduct likely to result in intimacy or a close personal relationship with an offender. Examples of behavior by staff or volunteers and offenders that are prohibited include: flirting; exchanging personal letters or gifts; and requests or granting of special favors. Volunteers should not discuss personal matters with offenders.

What is Retaliation?

Retaliation is intimidation toward an offender from filing a complaint or participating in an investigation of sexual misconduct. The Department prohibits any individual from interfering with an investigation, including intimidation or retaliation against witnesses. If an offender believes that this privilege is being denied, or the offender is being unfairly transferred or punished in some way because of a complaint or assisting in an investigation of a complaint, the allegation should be reported to the Warden or designee.

Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003

In accordance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections is committed to ensuring a safe and humane environment for all offenders. An important part of a safe and humane environment is freedom from sexual misconduct or sexual harassment by staff. For the purpose of this guide, staff includes DPS&C employees, volunteers and others. Offenders include those incarcerated in state and local jail facilities. This guide explains offenders' rights and the safeguards that are in place for protection from sexual misconduct and sexual harassment.

All volunteers shall receive training on institutional policy relating to preventing inappropriate sexual behavior, detection, responses and reporting of sexual assault and sexual misconduct during pre-service and annual training. All volunteers shall be given a copy of Department Regulation No. C-01-022 "Prison Rape Elimination Act" and shall sign the Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct with Offenders Civilian Acknowledgement (Form C-01-022-C) stating that they understand that any violation will result in termination of services from the unit and shall include the filing of criminal charges as warranted.

"Sexual misconduct" and "sexual harassment" are terms used in this section to describe certain kinds of prohibited behavior involving a staff member and an offender. These terms are defined in following sections and there are also examples of each.

The DPS&C cannot and will not tolerate any form of sexual misconduct. In accordance with La. R.S. 15:828(A)(1), the Department recognizes the worth of each offender and strives to treat them in a humane manner. Specifically, the Department prohibits offender abuse, which includes sexual contact by a staff member and accordingly, the DPS&C maintains a zero tolerance policy with regard to sexual misconduct.

Due to the offender's custody status, in accordance with DPS&C procedures, no prohibited act of sexual misconduct can have a claim of consent as an affirmative defense.

Sexual misconduct includes any sexual behavior or act of a sexual nature directed toward an offender.

In an effort to continually promote the professionalism of our staff, the DPS&C shall pursue prosecution of any staff member who is involved in this type of activity. Any physical contact with an offender of a sexual nature may result in prosecution in accordance with La. R.S. 14:134.1.

Alleged abuse (including sexual contact) of an offender shall be immediately reported to any employee or supervisor, which will be investigated, and if confirmed, reported to local law enforcement.

DPS&C employees and employees of local jail facilities are prohibited from engaging in this kind of conduct. They recognize that improper behavior tarnishes their reputation and jeopardizes the safety and security of the institutions. It is important that everyone, staff and offenders, do their part to eliminate the harm that results from sexual misconduct. The purpose of this document is to ensure that volunteers are aware of the safeguards that exist.

Remember!

Sex between volunteers and offenders is never okay.

If you are a victim, or are aware of an incident as described herein, report it immediately to the staff supervisor at the institution.

All reported incidents will be investigated.

False allegations can hurt the victim and the accused.

Help is available.

PART THREE: CON GAMES...THE GAMES OFFENDERS PLAY

Remember, the possibility exists that an offender will try to take advantage of you. Never think you are so smart that you could never be conned. Everyone needs to remember that there are special risks involved when working with offenders. However, it is unusual for a wise, informed and cooperative volunteer to be harmed by an offender. If you are aware that you can be conned and are on guard to prevent this from occurring, then you will be ahead of the game.

What would you do if...

You get a request for a delivery?

You get a request for money?

You get a request for equipment?

You get a request from an offender's family member to deliver a package on your next visit?

You receive a lot of flattery or romantic overtures?

Mature volunteers working with offenders of the opposite sex can be effective as many offenders have not learned healthy ways to relate to anyone of the opposite sex, especially in a nonsexual manner. Learning to appropriately relate to a member of the opposite sex in prison will help the offender to develop appropriate relationships upon release. Married couples that serve as volunteers can be especially significant role models for offenders. Most offenders have never seen a good marriage modeling a loving commitment between two people.

Volunteers and staff alike must remember that some offenders will seek romantic involvement. This can usually be handled easily if you respond appropriately and quickly. You need to be prepared for romantic advances and know how to handle them. Offenders, like us, do not want to be rejected. Handling advances kindly, but firmly, will prevent a problem from occurring. Offenders will usually begin advances with "feelers" to see how you will respond. A proper response will generally halt any further action from the offender. This is a situation in which you must trust the judgment of the Chaplain and the policies of the institution. Sometimes it is best not to have a member of the opposite sex working with an offender. Some institutions will not permit members of the opposite sex to work with offenders in certain circumstances.

PART FOUR: AN OFFENDER PROFILE

Limited Education/Reading Skills: On average, offenders function at about an 8th grade reading level. Volunteers must be careful to use materials and vocabulary they can understand. Involvement can help them learn to read or to read better.

Limited Problem Solving Skills: An offender's inability to solve problems is largely responsible for why the offender is in prison. Arguments and conflict are common. Help them learn to solve their own problems. In the prison, they are allowed to make very few of their own decisions.

Limited Communication Skills: Offenders have great difficulty expressing themselves, getting to the point, and being straightforward. Many times they will "beat around the bush." Their writing skills are limited; they need to learn how to communicate in their writing.

Lack of Discipline: This may be the first time they have ever had to take responsibility. They may have never held a job or, if they did, it may not have been for long. It is important for them to learn how to start and finish something.

Wounded With Many Hurts: When you hear many of their stories the old adage that "hurting people, hurt people" is indeed true. A large part of our role is to help them work through their hurts, to heal and become a healthier person.

Significant Parental Issues: Many offenders came from abusive homes, or did not know either their mother, father or both. Many were raised by grandmothers.

Many Character Issues: Offenders often have character flaws and deficits. Many are "characters."

Confused Theology: Offenders hear many conflicting messages from many different backgrounds. Volunteers must leave denominational "ideologies" at the gate. It is important for every volunteer to understand that the prison is not an extension of their congregation or program. Volunteers provide a particular service at an approved time to the institution and to the offenders.

Sentence Length: A lengthy sentence provides a great deal of time. Offenders can choose what they do with that time. Incarceration can be a great opportunity to read and study.

Older and Younger: Many offenders are older and sicker while younger offenders are getting longer sentences.

Stats: In 2012, 69% of incarcerated offenders were African-American and 40% of the population was incarcerated for substance abuse related crimes.

Church Challenges: Cultural, racial, denominational and generational are among church challenges.

PART FIVE: THE EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER

QUALITIES OF A GOOD VOLUNTEER

Adults of all ages, all educational levels, and from all walks of life are good volunteers. Correctional systems need level-headed people who are willing to share their experience or training with offenders and want to be part of the team. Effective volunteers tend to have the following qualities:

Ethical: Ethical living means treating others with respect, no matter how they treat you. It's treating others the way you want to be treated. It's doing what is right simply because it's the right thing to do.

Good Listener: Everybody needs someone who will listen to them. Offenders are no exception. They experience joy, sorrow, happiness and sadness just like everyone else. They need someone who cares about their thoughts and feelings. Listening to what offenders say makes their words valuable enhancing their self-esteem.

Empathic Not Gullible: Empathy is showing others that you are willing to look at life from their perspective. It also involves communicating that understanding to them. Volunteers cannot be effective until they have an understanding of the pressures, needs, interests, capabilities and limitations of offenders from the offender's point of view. It does not mean believing everything you hear.

Respectful: To be effective, volunteers must respect offenders as individuals, empathize with their pain and believe in their capacity to change. There is no room for prejudices or feelings of superiority in a prison setting. Sometimes, showing respect is being honest enough to withdraw. Occasionally, there may be offenders you simply can't deal with because of their personality or crime. If this happens, talk it over with your supervisor. Offenders, like others, require you to earn their respect and trust before they will open up. Don't pry. Let offenders decide when to reveal details about their crime, their past or other concerns.

Genuine: Being genuine is allowing people to see the real you. It involves expressing your true feelings with tact and consideration. It's being honest and talking without using words that have double meanings. Genuine people even take criticism without becoming defensive. They know themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses. When someone expresses a negative opinion about them, instead of getting hateful, they will try to understand the other person's point of view.

Patient: There are many sources of frustration in correctional facilities. Sometimes frustration can take root while waiting for the outside gates to open, especially if it's cold or raining. Prison schedules are subject to change at a moments notice. Security takes first priority. Effective volunteers allow time for the unexpected. Those who roll with the punches will earn the respect of offenders and staff alike.

Trustworthy: Effective volunteers do not make promises unless they are prepared to carry them out. Offenders will test volunteers just to see if they will keep their word. Once you break their trust you've lost them. Being trustworthy includes telling offenders the limits of confidentiality. Ask your supervisor about the rules at your facility and be up front with offenders. Also, being trustworthy is showing up on time and following the rules. It means not allowing offenders to con you into helping them break the rules. Create a reputation of being dependable and faithful.

Objectivity...Don't Take Sides: Never interfere with Correctional Officers in the performance of their duties. Never take sides in a dispute between an offender and a Correctional Officer. If you have questions or comments about the way a situation was handled, discuss them with your supervisor in private. Follow the chain of command if you wish to lodge a complaint.

Prepared When Faced With Hostility: Sooner or later, you will be faced with a hostile offender. The offender may be angry with you or with the whole world. When this happens, volunteers should not try to force conversation. Listen to the offender's grievances and give the offender a safe place to vent feelings.

Thanks Not Expected: Many offenders have never been taught how to say "thank you." Others find it embarrassing to show gratitude. As a result, volunteers and staff members feel unappreciated and are tempted to quit. Occasionally volunteers do get to see the fruits of their labor. This is what makes volunteering inside a correctional facility worthwhile.

GOOD IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Many of the tips below have already been mentioned elsewhere in this training session. They are arranged here as a convenient checklist to help you get ready for your contacts with offenders. As you begin visiting, review these do's and don'ts regularly. This should pay off in a more positive contact with offenders during those crucial early weeks. Even if you are a volunteer that has been in prison ministry for years, this checklist will be a good tool to use for refreshing your memory. Just remember one good rule of thumb is: "**When in doubt - DON'T!**" Do not do or say anything until you have received permission or clarification. It is always better to be safe than sorry.

Accept Offenders as Individuals: Each offender is unique. Avoid the tendency to make sweeping generalities about prisoners. If you relate to them as individuals, they will respect you as a person and come to trust you more quickly. You'll probably find that many offenders' language, values, and morals are repulsive and foreign to yours. Remember that you need not condone bad behavior but you must accept them as human beings whom God loves before you can help them.

Learn to Listen: Many offenders have never had another person listen to them without judging their statements or trying to "set them straight." Don't automatically believe or not believe everything an offender tells you, but always listen to him. Search out facts. Active listening for the emotions and feelings behind words, asking brief questions and letting the offender know you have heard what he said. In short, show the offender you are genuinely interested in him and what he has to say.

Seek Additional Help When Needed: If you can't answer an offender's question, don't be afraid to say so. Then seek out the correct information.

Give Clear Encouragement When Needed: Most offenders have low self-esteem; they often tend to think of themselves as losers. You will often need to reassure them, and build their confidence. This can be particularly important with offenders who have come to Christ and started on the road of Christian growth. The hostility to religion and Christianity in particular, which pervades most prisons, is bound to affect them. An offender will also likely be full of doubt and fear just before his release from prison, although he might not admit it. He's wondering if he will be accepted outside, whether he can find a job, etc. Try to help him realize that these are normal feelings for someone who has been incarcerated for a while. Assure the offender that you will be available, with proper authorization, to help with adjustment to life outside the prison walls.

Set a Good Example: One of the greatest of ministries to the offender is providing an example of a successful, law-abiding citizen. He may have known only a handful of people like you. Keep your behavior above reproach and without condescension. Be supportive and friendly, but firm. Let him see in your life how love, honesty and responsibility pay off. Help him see that he can claim these values for himself if he is willing to make some tough choices about life's priorities.

Enter With an Open and Teachable Attitude: Even if you understand everything in this handbook, you still have a lot to learn about prisons and how to relate to offenders. Think of yourself as an apprentice, anxious to learn from everyone about how to be a good volunteer. Learn from fellow volunteers, offenders, the Chaplain and the Correctional Officers. Keep an open mind about what you see in prison. Make your service as a volunteer an exciting and challenging adventure.

Remain Professional: Respect your role as a volunteer and the task you are responsible to do.

WORDS OF CAUTION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Don't Over-react to an Offender's Initial Hostility: Some offenders will test you when you visit them for the first time. They may call you a do-gooder and lash out against the church and every decent principle you believe in. Don't lose your cool and tune the offender out. Let him express himself without trying to "set him straight." He may be trying to find out if you really have what it takes to become a friend and work week after week in a harsh environment. Try to keep calm and accept the offender in spite of such a reception.

Don't Preach: Don't judge the offender's actions, past or present. He already knows about bad behavior and the misery it has brought him and others. Accept the offender as he is and try to help establish a healthy self-respect.

Don't Ask an Offender Why the Reason for Imprisonment or Sentence Length: The offender will confide in you when trust has been established. If you probe for such personal facts too soon, he might clam up and refuse to talk about anything. You need to remember that such facts really do not matter anyway and have nothing to do with why you are there. If you are really serious about accepting the offender unconditionally then what does it matter why he is in prison? God, after all, forgives and forgets, so why should we be concerned.

Don't Make Promises: Many offenders are lax about promises made by others, but they can be unforgiving if someone they trust lets them down. Openness and total honesty will go a long way toward winning an offender. Remember the Golden Rule..."Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

Don't Visit the Offender's Family and Friends: As a volunteer you are to serve the institution and the offenders while on the prison grounds. You are not to develop any relationships outside of this context without prior approval through the faith based initiative sponsor. Doing so could be a compromise of security and could be considered favoritism. It could very well open many doors that you would one day wish remained shut. There may be the rare exception to the rule where you may be able to help the offender and his family strengthen their relationships, but this must be done openly with the full cooperation of everyone involved, including approval from the institution.

Don't Expect Instant Results: Working with offenders is slow, difficult and often exasperating work. Many offenders have spent a lifetime perfecting irresponsible and antisocial behavior patterns. Don't expect them to turn into paragons of virtue after a few visits. Remember, your main motivation for entering this ministry is not to "be successful" but to do what Christ commands. Expect progress to be slow and sometimes painful. Offenders make the decision as to what services they will attend. They cannot be forced to attend a service if they do not want to attend.

Don't Over-identify With the Offender: Become the offender's friend, but do not identify with him so much that you lose your objectivity. Remember that an offender's problems are uniquely their own; you can't carry them for him. To feel with an offender gives him strength. But to feel like him creates the impression that you are just as powerless as he is. If you feel yourself beginning to over-identify with an offender's situation, seek out the Chaplain. He can help you regain your objectivity. Remember he is with the offenders every day and knows what the offenders are going through. He is also there to assist you in whatever way he can.

Don't Give Pat Answers to an Offender's Problems: One sure way to drive an offender up the wall is to give simplistic answers to complicated problems. If an offender pours out his difficulties to you, avoid flippant responses like, "This must be God's will for your life" or "Just pray about it, and everything will be OK." In the harsh environment of a prison, such responses sound phony. The offender will respect you a lot more if you are honest enough to acknowledge the difficulty of his situation.

Don't Violate the Offender's Confidence: NEVER repeat to someone else what an offender has told you in confidence. If what you have been told by the offender does not threaten the life, well being, or security of the offender, other offenders or the security of the Institution, then it should remain in confidence. However, if you need outside advice about a problem, relate the facts of the case without identifying the offender involved to the Chaplain or Victim Services Coordinator. Don't try to handle a problem on your own. Seek assistance.

Don't Peddle Your Theological Beliefs or Doctrines: Your role as a volunteer is to live the example of Christ before the offenders, not to convince them of your particular views about the Bible, Salvation or the Holy Spirit. Don't propagate doctrines or religious ideas that might cause divisiveness and bad feelings in the prison community.

Don't "Talk Down" to an Offender: Try to tune into the offender's frequency. Use language he can understand and identify with. Show the offender through your words and your attitude that you want to be his friend.

Don't Carry Anything Into or Out of the Prison Without Proper Clearance and Authorization: Make sure you follow prison rules about what can and cannot be carried in and out. In some prisons, even books and magazines have to be carefully searched before they leave or enter the prison. The most basic principle of prison service is to obey prison rules and check with officials when in doubt about proper procedure.

Don't Express Physical Affection to an Offender: Women volunteers should follow this rule conscientiously in working with male offenders and likewise for male volunteers working with female offenders. Even a pat of the hand is strictly a no-no in the explosive prison atmosphere, because it can be so easily misunderstood and misinterpreted. Then, too, some lonely offender may misunderstand your intentions and push these physical interchanges further than you intend to go.

MINIMAL PHYSICAL CONTACT with offenders is the best rule for both men and women to follow.

Don't Make Decisions for Offenders: Locking people away in prison shelters them against making decisions for themselves. Seeing their weakness you may be tempted to jump in and make decisions for them. Resist this temptation with all your strength. If human dignity means anything, it means making your own decisions and accepting responsibility for them. Offenders must learn to stand on their own two feet and make clear choices about their future. Don't let them play the con game of letting you decide for them, then blaming you when things don't turn out exactly right.

Don't Blame Yourself if an Offender Doesn't Make it on the Outside: It doesn't mean you are a failure. After all, you are only one of many influences in an offender's life, most of which are beyond your control. Your positive influence in an offender's life may not bear fruit for many years, or it may not work at all. You must be able to handle your own frustrations if a setback does occur. Do the best you can and leave the results to God. All that is required of you is to be faithful.

PART SIX: THE HOSTAGE SITUATION

It is important for every volunteer to know that there always exists the possibility of a riot or hostage situation to occur. This is one of the many ugly realities of prison life. As a result, it is of vital importance that each volunteer have some tools with which to work in the **unlikely** event you get caught up in this type of situation.

One of the first facts a volunteer needs to know is that the staff has received the training and will respond effectively to any given situation. Another fact is that most situations of this type have a life span of less than five hours and they normally end **without** injury. Being prepared for the unexpected assists in preventing a major catastrophe.

WHAT IS A HOSTAGE SITUATION?

A hostage situation occurs when under any conditions where a volunteer or staff member is held illegally and against their will, denied their right to move, act or speak freely, and make decisions on their own or a condition that endangers life or poses the threat of danger while holding a person or persons in a restricted state against their will.

Whenever it becomes necessary to take by force or negotiate for a person's freedom and safety, a hostage situation exists. As a general rule when hostages are taken, offenders concentrate on prison staff. The greatest likelihood of a hostage situation exists during a significant disturbance or during an escape attempt. However, occasionally, individuals or small groups of prisoners who are mentally or politically motivated or seeking publicity may take hostages to draw attention to some issue or to themselves. If taken hostage, a staff member will utilize the PACES guidelines (which stands for Patience, Alert, Cooperative, Eye Contact and Stockholm Syndrome). The PACES guidelines be discussed in greater detail during the volunteer orientation program.

REMINDERS FOR HOSTAGES

Be cautious of heroics. Do not act foolishly. Be cooperative and obey the captor's demands without appearing either servile or antagonistic.

Look for a protected place where you could dive or roll if either authorities or offenders attempt to assault your location with force.

Keep your cool. Attempt to relax by thinking about pleasant scenes or memories. You might try to recollect the plots of books or movies. This will help you remain functional.

Keep a low profile. Avoid the appearance of observing crimes that the captor commits; look down or away. Avoid interfering with their discussions or activities.

Do not make threats against the captor or give any indication that you would testify against him. If offenders are attempting to conceal their identities, make no indication that you recognize them.

Be reluctant to give up your identification or clothes. Loss of these things is demoralizing. Offenders will use them for bargaining. Be especially resistant to exchange clothes with an offender. This could put you in much greater danger in case of an assault.

Try to drink water and eat even if you are not hungry. It is important to maintain strength. As a result of the stress of the hostage situation, you may have difficulty retaining fluids.

Be conscious of your body language as well as your speech. Do not say or do anything to arouse the hostility or suspicions of your captors. Act neutral and be a good listener if your captors want to talk. (Again, be cautious about making suggestions to your captors as you may be held responsible if something you suggest goes wrong).

Think of persuasive reasons the captors should keep you and the other hostages alive and not harm you. Encourage them to let authorities know of your whereabouts and condition.

Convey messages accurately between the two groups should you, as hostage, serve as a negotiator between offenders and authorities.

Drop quickly to the floor and seek cover if there is a rescue attempt and shots are fired. Keep your hands on your head. When appropriate, identify yourself. Do not resist being apprehended until positive identification is made.

Observe all you can even though you must appear disinterested while being held hostage. Ensure that you are thoroughly debriefed and make your own notes after your release. All of these things will help in the subsequent prosecution of the offender.

Be debriefed when you are released. This will give you the opportunity to discuss what happened to you and to express your feelings freely. Since you have nothing to be ashamed of, deal openly with your reactions and any problems you may have subsequently.

PART SEVEN: SUMMARY

These policies and procedures were developed to foster the safe and efficient operation of DPS&C facilities and local jail facilities and to emphasize and promote the need for rules and norms for everyone who works within the institutional environment. All volunteers are required to read, study and agree to the policies and procedures prior to beginning service. In the event of a rule violation, ignorance of policies and procedures will not be an acceptable excuse.

The DPS&C staff looks forward to working with you to create and continue programs that will assist the offenders in experiencing and leading more productive and meaningful lives.

As always, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections appreciates the jobs you, the volunteer, do for our offenders, staff and institutions. You play a valuable role in the overall rehabilitative effort.