

Chapter 10

Security Duties

Security is a term that is used very frequently in a correctional facility. Officers might hear that the warden's new directive "improves security" or that an inmate was moved to segregation to "maintain the security of the institution." *Security* is defined by Merriam Webster's dictionary (2004) as "freedom from danger, fear or anxiety; a place of safety." (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/security>). It has two main principles: (1) the prevention of escapes by inmates and (2) the maintenance of peace and order in the facility. It requires constant vigilance (Newcomb, 1989, p. 2). All people who live and work in the facility as well as the public must be protected from harm.

Basic Security Duties

This chapter will explore the basic security duties of the correctional officer: key and tool control, headcounts, searches for contraband, and the transporting of inmates. These duties are an integral part of officers' daily responsibilities in the institution. If mistakes are made, the results could be deadly. Also included in this chapter is information on emergencies, inspections, informants, and escape prevention.

Control of Keys and Tools

Correctional facilities are locked facilities. Cellblock doors, security gates, staff area doors, exit doors, and food slots on cellblock doors all require keys. While some large doors may be opened electronically from a control center, the backup system in case of power failure is a key. In some facilities, the use of keys includes the old fashioned metal kind *and* the newer computer locks where a computer card is swiped across a pad that opens a door. Keys also include handcuff keys and keys to restraints, which could be a prized possession for an inmate if stolen or lost by a correctional officer.

Key control is basically common sense and accountability. Besides post or housing keys used by the officer inside the facility, there are emergency keys and restricted keys. *Emergency keys* are keys that allow the staff rapid access to every part of the facility in case of riot, fire, power outage, or other emergencies. A master key that opens *all* security gates is an emergency key. *Restricted keys* are keys for certain areas such as commissary, staff offices, gyms, laundry, and other areas. They are issued only to staff who work in those areas (Bales, [Ed.], 1997, pp. 48–49).

In some large facilities, administrators have established *keyed zones* or areas that require only specific keys. If the inmates, for example, seize an officer as a hostage, they cannot gain access into another area. In no case, however, should officers working in inmate housing areas or with inmates be issued keys to external doors or doors that lead to outside the facility (Newcomb, 1989, p. 5).



Key control means that all keys are accounted for. Used with permission, Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

The following key control procedures are recommended by the American Correctional Association:

- Keys must be cross-indexed and numbered. Records should show where the keys fit, what keys are on what ring, what staff members handle that ring, and any additional areas of concern. Also keys must be checked out from a secure control area.
- Keys never should be tossed to another staff member or left in a lock. Keys should be physically *handed* from one staff member to another.
- Keys to such areas as the armory or tool storage areas should never come into contact with inmates, *ever*.
- Entrance keys, external door keys, or grand master keys should not be in circulation in the institution.
- Employees should *never* take institution keys home.
- If appropriate, such as in minimum security institutions, inmates may possess keys for lockers, rooms, or work assignments. Inmates should never see security keys or be allowed to handle them. (Bales [Ed.], 1997, p. 49)

A good rule for correctional officers to remember is the following: *Maintain possession of your keys—at all times!*

Homemade Keys

Hardware stores are not the only places where keys are made—inmates can make them, too! Take the case of a prisoner in the Florida Department of Corrections where officers conducting a strip search discovered in his possession a homemade key, which could open doors throughout the institution. A subsequent investigation discovered more hiding places where several dozen weapons were found. When the officers conducted a body-cavity

search, they found in the inmate's rectum seven hacksaw blades, thirty-four razor blades, \$2,000.00 in cash, and six homemade handcuff keys (Sweet, 1994, pp. 75–76).

In an Alabama jail, an inmate used a piece of cardboard to wedge a recreation yard door open. After the inmates went to sleep, he wedged the inside recreation yard door with a piece of cardboard, small enough to make the door look shut and locked to any correctional officer watching the camera or on post. He exited through the door into the recreation yard, climbed the razor-wire fence, got on top of the roof, climbed down the outside perimeter fence, and got away. What amazed authorities is that the inmate had a prosthetic leg; he was described as very agile (Rogers, 2015). What can correctional officers learn from these two incidents? Homemade keys can be hidden anywhere, *and* many ordinary items, such as cardboard, can be used as “keys.”

Tool Control

Tools in the hands of inmates become weapons or instruments of escape. Correctional facilities, like other buildings that are heavily used, frequently are in need of repair; door locks, elevators, and other areas all require maintenance. All maintenance workers should be escorted by correctional officers and be responsible for safeguarding their tools when working in the facility. Upon leaving, the entire work area must be inspected to make sure no tools or discarded material was left behind that could be fashioned into weapons by inmates. This is especially true of facilities that are undergoing remodeling or are adding space through construction. After construction, it is imperative that correctional officers inspect any area that inmates will have access to for anything—tools, pieces of metal, and so forth—that inmates can use to circumvent security, escape, or make into a weapon.

All tools used by facility staff must be accounted for, either by a tool control officer who signs tools in/out to staff and supervises inmate workers or by a check in/out system, where staff log-out tools for use and log-in returns. Inventories are a must, preferably in the form of a daily check. Some institutions use shadow boards where officers can see quickly at a glance if any tools are missing. Tool control can also cover kitchen utensils and janitorial equipment (Bales [Ed.], 1997, pp. 46–47).

Headcounts

One of the most important duties that the correctional officer performs is the headcount. This duty, while appearing simple, is crucial to the security of a correctional facility, and inmates would like nothing better than to see correctional officers make mistakes. Mistakes in headcounts create a “loophole” for the crafty inmate to wiggle through. Inmates must be accounted for *at all times*, even when out of the facility on a transport, at a doctor's appointment, at a police lineup, or while in court. Correctional facilities are required legally to know where inmates are. If an escape occurs, it is a criminal offense, but authorities—the police, sheriff, or corrections agency—will want to know how it happened and what the correctional officer did or did not do properly. Also, if an inmate escapes because he or she was missed on a count—this is embarrassing and the media will run with the story.

There are three types of counts that are performed. They are as follows:

1. **Formal count:** a regular count required by staff at certain times such as at shift change, before lockdowns, and at meal times. Formal counts may be counted five or six times per day or as often as every two hours in maximum security institutions

2. **Census count:** verification of inmate presence at a program, work detail, or activity (in other words, recreation)
3. **Emergency count:** count taken because of an emergency such as a fire, riot, disturbance, power outage, escape, or another concern (American Correctional Association, 1997, p. 72)

If an inmate wishes to escape, he/she needs to successfully thwart the count. Such methods may include having another inmate be counted twice, using a dummy in a bed (for night counts), or convincing staff by forged pass or verbal manipulation that they are supposed to be in an area, program, or activity, but in reality, they are not (American Correctional Association, 1997, p. 72). In reality, officers can conduct counts any time they feel it is necessary. In fact, the inmates should be well aware that they are subject to a count at any time.

Guidelines for Effective Headcounts

Concerning headcounts in any type of correctional facility, officers should:

- Be aware that they, not inmates, control the count. If necessary, inmate movement can be stopped. Inmates may be required to stand in front of their cells or stand in line. Two officers may be necessary to conduct counts of large numbers of inmates.
- Counts only should be conducted by officers, and never by inmates. Inmates should never be permitted to assist in a count.
- If the count is interrupted, start over.
- All inmates should be checked in physical living/work/programs areas at least every thirty minutes or twice or more per hour.
- When conducting a headcount, the officer should see skin and breathing if the inmate appears asleep. Inmates have escaped using life-like heads and lumps made of clothing under bed clothes to fool officers.
- Inmates should be observed for changes in morale or mood. Emotional changes in inmates can “tip” the officer off that something is wrong, such as violence, escape attempts/plans, sexual assaults, or suicides.
- All counts—formal, informal, census, or emergency—must be documented in a log or on a form. In training, it must be stressed that when an officer signs for a count, he/she is signing an official record that he/she physically accounted for the inmates.
- If the officers’ count cannot be verified by the official roster, the count must be retaken.

(Newcomb, 1989, p. 5; American Jail Association, 1997, pp. 73–76; American Correctional Association, 1997, pp. 73–76.)

A basic, but important, rule for the correctional officer to keep in mind at all times is this: *You* are the boss and the master of your area. If an inmate is missing, *you* will be the first one asked. If at any time you have a “gut” feeling that you should take a count—*take one*. And if the inmates complain—too bad, that is life inside.

Searches

Besides headcounts, another crucial duty of the correctional officer is searching: searching common areas, living areas, incoming mail, laundry carts, book carts, vehicles entering and leaving the facility, inmate property and belongings, and the inmates themselves. Thorough searches are very instrumental in maintaining tight security in the institution.

Contraband

The goal of any good search is to ascertain if the inmate has contraband or items not authorized by the facility administration, such as illegal drugs or weapons (including homemade weapons) (see Chapter 3). Contraband can also include excess authorized items such as an inmate having two extra blankets when inmates are only issued one (Cornelius, 1996b, p. 67). Contraband covers a broad range of items and its definition can include anything that correctional officers think is a threat to institutional security.

Generally, contraband is defined differently in each correctional facility; but other general guidelines and definitions parallel the aforementioned definition. Contraband can be any item not permitted to be received by inmates, sold inside the facility, received from the outside, or if approved, changed or modified (American Correctional Association, 1997, pp. 22–24). Possession or trafficking in contraband is a disciplinary offense and in some jurisdictions, a criminal offense. For example, an inmate selling illegal drugs within the institution can be charged with an in-house disciplinary offense and a criminal or “street” charge.

When any vehicle enters or leaves the facility, it should be searched since it may contain contraband or even inmates attempting to escape.

Contraband in its many forms is a testament to inmate ingenuity. *Inmate ingenuity* is defined as the unlimited imagination and ideas that inmates exhibit in terms of manufacturing or smuggling contraband, manipulating of staff (see Chapter 12), circumventing security, and attempting escape.

Maintaining Safety and Security by Managing Contraband

By Edward W. Szostak

Superintendent (retired) Albany County Correctional Facility

Partial adaptation from: *American Jails*, July/August 1998, pp. 62–64, used with permission of the American Jail Association.

Contraband is any item that is prohibited in a correctional facility. Contraband in a correctional facility is a very serious matter. It requires diligent attention by correctional staff daily to combat the creativity of inmates in their efforts to create or acquire these forbidden items. Contraband may be a pen, a paper clip, currency,
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gum, powdered coffee creamers, cigarettes, matches, lighters, or even certain types of shoes or sneakers. Contraband varies at each facility depending on the level of security and classification of inmates. Some form of contraband exists in most correctional environments.

The Albany County Correctional Facility is currently a 1,005-bed facility (mega jail) that has experienced many phases of construction since 1982. The original facility was built in 1931 and had a 350-bed capacity.

[*Author's note:* According to the Albany County Sheriff's Office website, the institution now has a maximum capacity of 1,043 beds, employs a sworn and civilian staff totaling 420, and has an average daily population of more than 800 inmates. In 2016, more than 7,000 offenders were booked into the jail and the average daily population was more than 800 inmates (Albany County Sheriff's Department, 2017).]

The Albany County Correctional Facility has experienced a variety of contraband items, such as homemade knives (shanks), homemade alcohol (home brew), and in order to create contraband—hiding places. Inmates have hollowed out books and bars of soap. We have found bars of soap carved into various shapes including the shape of a small handgun. The gun appears quite genuine once colored with a black magic marker or pen. Broom and mop handles can be fashioned into spears, shanks, or clubs; bed sheets braided like rope; broken Plexiglas mirrors and pens can be sharpened and made into shanks. Even harmless powdered coffee creamers can be dangerous. When the powdered creamer is blown through a hollow pen or straw-like device onto a flame, it becomes a crude flame thrower.

Construction Projects

Correctional staff working in facilities that have experienced construction projects, whether major or minor, need to be attentive. We all recognize our business is somewhat unique; therefore, we must look at and handle things differently than businesses not concerned with the security issues we encounter. Common equipment or items used by contractors must not be left abandoned or improperly disposed of because inmates can acquire them and use them for entirely different purposes. Account for everything. All construction workers and managers will need to be informed of security requirements long before the job begins and reminded throughout the project. Pre-bid conferences, preconstruction meetings, and all construction-related documents must clearly state the requirements that will be enforced. Security staff must constantly review deficiencies, address them, and notify supervisors immediately.

Contractors must be prohibited from bringing in glass soda bottles, pocket knives, money, and medications. The contractors should also be instructed not to have any contact with inmates. They need to be advised to properly inventory all materials such as screws, nails, and spent shell casings (unused ammunition for nail guns). Vehicle security procedures also need to be addressed, requiring that all vehicles and keys be secured at all times. Tools and heavy equipment must be secured and ladders are to be removed at the end of each day and properly secured.

Contraband Type and Methods of Obtaining It

Some items once allowed, but now forbidden, introduce a whole new array of security problems. For example, the Albany County Correctional Facility is now a smoke-free facility and has been for more than three years. This has generated some interest by inmates who illegally obtain smokes of any kind and something to ignite them. Smuggling tobacco products by mail and/or packages, visitors, and even bribing staff are current methods used to introduce contraband (see more details on this in Chapter 12).

Other methods include inserting drugs or weapons into a rubber handball, sealing it, and then throwing it over perimeter fences or walls into recreation areas for the intended recipient. Obviously, correctional officers need to be diligent in their efforts to search for and detect such methods. Contraband has also been introduced by the inmates' family members, even going so far as to placing contraband in an infant's diaper. Shoes, boots, and sneakers are also sources of contraband. Most foot apparel contains a metal arch support that reinforces the firmness of the footwear. This metal arch has been removed by inmates and then sharpened into homemade shanks or shivs.

Major Facility Searches/Shakedowns

To minimize the amount of contraband over the years, the staff of the Albany County Correctional Facility has conducted three major shakedowns, all following the 1991, 1993, and 1996 construction projects. The entire facility was shut down and searched from top to bottom. Cost estimates were approximately \$10,000.00 per search, each search taking between eight-to-twelve hours to complete. Teams were established. They consisted of a K-9 unit and their handlers from local law enforcement agencies, identification officers for photographic evidence, property officers to account for confiscated items, maintenance staff to provide access to plumbing and electrical areas, and additional correctional officers, supervisors, and administrators.

An announcement was made to all inmates the night prior to lockdown time (22:00) of the shakedown at 07:00. Reports of toilets flushing continuously throughout the night were noted by correctional officers working the midnight shifts. Officers also found items thrown into common areas during their routine rounds.

Contraband Control

Once a method of making a weapon or obtaining prohibited items has been identified, measures are taken to minimize future access and opportunity. Such measures include inmates found in possession of contraband being prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, daily searches of individual housing units, portable metal detectors, and K-9 patrols being used during inmate visitations.

Additionally, changes have been made to equipment and supplies to reduce availability of articles that can be used as weapons. Such measures include stainless steel toilets and sinks replacing porcelain fixtures, plastic replacing metal mop handles,
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and mop heads that had metal frames and screws now having plastic frames and clips. We purchase our cleaning supplies in plastic containers instead of containers that use metal lids. Factory-sealed bakery products with plastic clips replace items that were once sealed with metal twist ties. These metal twist ties can be used as a conductor of ignition in electrical outlets. Heavy duty non-breakable plastic footlockers replace metal footlockers and all-plastic chairs replace metal and wood office furniture. Only clear trash liners are used because they permit visual inspection of contents.

The most recent step we have taken is seeking and obtaining the funding for the purchase of orange-colored canvas foot wear for all inmates upon admission. Sheriff James L. Campbell persuaded the Albany County Legislature to provide the \$20,000.00 needed to purchase the canvas sneakers. Fortunately, the Albany County Sheriff's Office has experienced a good working relationship with the legislative branch of our county government.

Once the canvas sneakers are purchased and received, all inmates' personal shoes, boots, and sneakers are confiscated and placed with their property and held until their release. They will then be issued a pair of bright orange facility-issued canvas sneakers. Surprisingly, during the budget hearings, the media took great interest in this topic. This resulted in positive public relations for the facility with state and local media groups.

Sheriff James L. Campbell and I are proud to say that we have a very dedicated and professional staff. Training plays an important role in ensuring that officers and civilian staff *always practice safe techniques* during their everyday routines. These factors and our conscious efforts greatly reduce contraband in the Albany County Correctional Facility.

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Edward W. Szostak retired from the superintendent's position of the Albany County Correctional Facility, located in Albany, New York. He began his career as a correctional officer in January 1975. He rose through the ranks of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, chief, and assistant superintendent, moving to acting superintendent in 1990 and earning the full-fledged title the following year. During his tenure the facility expanded from a 350-bed institution to its now 1,005-bed capacity, went smoke free, and was awarded a Certificate of Accreditation in January 1997 by the New York State Commission of Correction and the New York State Sheriffs' Association. He has formed Szostak and Associates, Criminal Justice Consulting, e-mail: EWSzostak@aol.com.

Inmates have made shanks from the metal arches in shoes (Szostak, 1998, pp. 62–64) and have even sharpened toothbrushes to use as weapons. One jail officer reported that an inmate took a hollow plastic pen barrel and glued (by melting plastic) a sharpened coin on the end to make an arrow! Inmates have placed razor blades upright in deodorant sticks and made “bongs” out of light bulbs. One inmate had a jar of peanut butter mailed to him from the outside. When the correctional officers inspected it, they discovered a two-shot derringer pistol concealed inside the jar in a plastic bag. The jar had been resealed. There is no end to “inmate ingenuity.” Correctional officers must remember the following



Inmates can make unique items. Note the gang symbols on the sneakers and the toilet paper flowers. Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail, used with permission. Photos by author.

throughout their careers: **Never underestimate the imagination and intelligence of inmates** (Cornelius, 1998, p. 34).

Why be concerned about contraband? Every correctional officer, whether he or she is a line officer, supervisor, or agency head, can weigh in on that question. To the correctional officer the battle against contraband is an endless struggle, one that never ceases to amaze. There *are* important reasons to fight the war on inmate contraband, no matter what the type of institution, prison, jail, community corrections, or juvenile detention center. Here are some:

- The manufacture, smuggling, and trafficking in contraband gives power to the inmate; the inmate will be respected and rise through the inmate population social hierarchy.
- When contraband gives power to the inmate, it makes even the weaker inmate formidable. Inmates can purchase weapons or drugs, or seek protection from inmates who have obtained or manufactured weapons. *Everything is for sale.*
- The lure of contraband is never ending. Veteran inmate contraband entrepreneurs can be very patient, waiting for a “flurry” of shakedowns and searches to peter out and staff complacency to set in. Also, the new inmates may try many different ways to deal in contraband—it is exciting.
- There are many ingenious ways to make and traffic in contraband. Correctional officers should never seriously be surprised when a new type of weapon, inmate communication method, new smuggling scheme, or hiding place is discovered. For example, a big commodity in the inmate contraband marketplace is the cell phone—small, compact, and powerful, it gives inmates access to the outside world.
- To protect more valuable caches of contraband, inmates may “allow” contraband items to be found. This gives correctional officers a sense of accomplishment, while the inmates wait for the excitement to die down. They still “win.”
- Correctional officers should never overlook the obvious hiding places. For example, an inmate would never hide drugs in his Bible; it’s too obvious. But, correctional officers should look anyway because the drugs may actually be there. Correctional officers should retrace their steps, squat, and look under things—including the toilet rim—and look up. (Bouchard, 2005, pp. 11–12)



This is an example of “inmate ingenuity”: Lt. Robert Sodorsky with toilet paper jacket, Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail, used with permission. Photo by author.

The Amazing World of Inmate Contraband

Inmates throughout history have developed expertise in taking ordinary items and making them into contraband. For example, inmates have taken ordinary toilet paper and braided it into a strong rope. Inmates have taken an ordinary door knob and placed it into a sock for a homemade weapon. Here are some other examples of inmate inventiveness when it comes to making, smuggling, and hiding contraband:

- In one institution, correctional officers discovered figurines made out of dried spinach coated with floor wax. Further investigation revealed that inmates could make knives the same way—spreading out spinach, letting it dry, and coating it with floor wax till it hardens. The homemade knife does not set off metal detectors and is good for up to three thrusts (CorrectionsOne, January 7, 2014).
- In a facility, an inmate used a bunk bed handle, an electrical outlet plate, and a screw to create a very functional ax (CorrectionsOne, October 22, 2013).
- Even innocent looking items can have a double use. Correctional officers searching feminine hygiene items found a USB thumb drive hidden inside a tampon. This device could store sensitive data, including escape plans, and could be easily moved around the female inmate population. Could the females be confident that correctional officers would not search this item? Another question might be this: If the inmates got a thumb drive that contained information that they should not have, how could they get to a computer to use it? (CorrectionsOne, June 25, 2013).
- In a Michigan correctional facility, correctional officers searched an innocent looking deck of cards. The deck had a hole hollowed out and a butane lighter was found inside (CorrectionsOne, September 26, 2011).

Inmates use contraband for living comfortably inside a facility, such as making homemade alcohol, obtaining drugs, or even “conning” correctional officers into getting

them an extra blanket or food. But, contraband can be used for assaults on fellow inmates or correctional officers. It also can be used in escape attempts.

In an eastern Kentucky jail, an inmate awaiting trial for murder planned to use a hypodermic needle and a sharpened pencil as weapons in an escape attempt. He had hidden the items under his bunk; officers acting on a tip found them (WYMT, 2012). In February of 2015, a fully loaded semi-automatic handgun was smuggled into the Milwaukee County Jail. Investigators believe that the handgun, which was stolen, was hidden inside a “walking boot-style cast” worn by an offender arrested on warrants by the Milwaukee Police. He complained of leg pain, was transported by police to a local hospital. The police are not permitted to remove body casts or prosthetics. Once inside the jail, it is believed that the inmate stashed the firearm inside a load of dirty laundry. He posted bail and was released. The gun, now in the jail laundry, was taken to the Milwaukee House of Corrections, which provides laundry services for the jail. Fortunately, the gun was found. It would have been a “windfall” for the inmates (Garza, 2015).

To the average citizen, it is believed that the correctional officers inside a correctional facility are one step ahead of the inmates concerning contraband, especially where and how it can be hidden. But, inmate hiding places can be under toilet rims, in cracks inside a wall, inside a body cavity, or in a ceiling. But, if inmates are generally not allowed glue or paste, how do they “stick” contraband in these hiding places? They do it by using their imagination! There are three known types of inmate fastening agents:

- **Fasteners from an official source:** Legal, authorized items can be used to fasten one item to another or to hide an object somewhere. Examples include toothpaste, soap, stick deodorant, sticky labels peeled from containers, adhesive bandages, and flaps from envelopes.
- **Naturally produced glues:** Inmates are imaginative and will use saliva, mucous, and semen. Not only are they sticky, but can be infectious as well as disgusting.
- **Illicit fastener group:** These are items that the inmates are not allowed to have, but still manage to obtain anyway. Examples include duct tape, clear tape, Velcro, and any type of glue. Duct tape can be used to construct false walls or floors in laundry and food carts, either to hide in and get close to an exit for escape, or to hide contraband in for transport around the facility. (Bouchard, 2011)

Basic Types of Searches

There are three main types of searches in correctional systems: individual inmate searches, housing unit/work area searches, and *vehicle searches* (see page 209). Searching inmates as well as all areas where they live, attend programs, and when transported to and from the facility is a fundamental part of the job of the correctional officer. To be a good correctional officer, one must put his or her hands on inmates and their belongings. There is no room for doubt and hesitation. Correctional facilities and inmates must be searched.

Individual inmate searches: There are three types:

1. **Frisk (“pat-down”):** This is the most general type of search. It encompasses inspection of the inmate’s clothing and body through the clothing. Officers run hands over the inmate’s clothing to ascertain if anything is hidden in cuffs, under arms, and in other areas. Dentures, toupees, and prostheses are removed and inspected.

2. **Body (strip search):** Strip searches examine the skin surface of the inmate, including hiding places in hair, behind the ears, under breasts (females), armpits, genitals (male), behind the knees, on the soles, between toes, and between the buttocks. Dentures, toupees, and prostheses are removed and inspected.
3. **Body-cavity search:** This type of search examines inside body openings such as the anus and the vagina. It should be done due to a reasonable suspicion that the inmate has concealed contraband inside a body opening. It should be performed *only* upon authorization of the warden, staff duty officer, or other high-ranking official. Also, it *must* be performed either manually or by instrument by trained medical personnel. Dentures, toupees, and prostheses are removed and inspected. (American Correctional Association, 1997, p. 36)

Pat-downs do not have to be in private, but strip and body-cavity searches must be in private and performed in a way so as not to offend the dignity of the inmate. Officers should be located behind inmates for safety. All searches should be documented, such as pat searches entered in a log or shift report; strip and body searches are written in an incident report.

In the past several years, strip searches and body-cavity searches have come under legal scrutiny due to challenges in the courts. In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Florence v. County of Burlington*, 132 S.Ct. 1510, 182 L.Ed. 2d 566 (2012) that strip searching all arrestees coming into a correctional facility to prevent contraband being smuggled to the inmate general population was constitutional. This decision also said that some arrestees cannot be exempted from the invasive procedure of strip searches due to the absence of reasonable suspicion that they may have a weapon or dangerous contraband. This decision left the discretion of this up to jail officials (Mushlin, 2014, §9:1.70). The best course of action is for all correctional officers to be very familiar with their facility's policy and procedures on strip and body-cavity searches.

Body-cavity searches, including X-rays and surgical procedures, are clearly the most invasive of any search of an inmate's person. Digital searches of the rectal cavity for other than security reasons are in clear violation of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, protecting against unreasonable searches and seizures. The courts are clear that anal-cavity searches must be for valid penological reasons, such as concerns over contraband, drugs, or weapons being hidden. A determination of reasonableness considers whether other methods of searching and their availability could have been used. Courts have also ruled that if a cavity search is conducted in other than the nose, mouth, or ear, it *must* be conducted by trained medical personnel.

The best illustration of good guidelines concerning body-cavity searches comes from the American Bar Association standards. They state that a digital body search should only be performed upon the written authorization of the institution's chief executive officer (or designee). Also, there must be a reasonable belief that the inmate is hiding contraband or other prohibited items inside his or her body cavity. In accordance with case law from the courts, the searches must be conducted by trained medical personnel, in a prison hospital or another private setting (Mushlin, 2009, pp. 362–364). To summarize, the key to body-cavity searching is to have sound reasons, get authorization in writing, have them conducted by trained medical staff, and do so in private so as to not offend the inmate's basic human dignity, no matter what his or her charge or attitude.



Correctional officers always have to be “nosy.” Here a correctional officer is doing a cell inspection in a maximum security unit. Used with permission, Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Housing Unit/Work Area Searches

Inmates refer to these types of searches as “shakedowns.” These searches of dayrooms, cells, kitchens, closets, classrooms, libraries, and other areas, should follow the principle of being “*systematically unsystematic.*” This means that the staff has a plan where to search, but makes it appear random to keep the inmates off guard. Correctional officers conducting searches of this type should ask themselves: “**Where would I hide contraband in here if I were an inmate?**”

Everything in the area should be searched, including bedding, furniture, wall cracks, holes, books, magazines, newspapers, large cans (for false bottoms), window bars, frames, ventilators, shelves, drawers, and cabinets. However, in this era of AIDS and diseases passed by blood-borne pathogens, inmates do secretly hide needles for tattooing or drug use and an officer searching “blindly” can get stuck (Bales, [Ed.]. 1997, p. 45).

Vehicle Searches

All commercial vehicles such as delivery trucks, trash trucks, and so forth, should be searched when entering and leaving the perimeter. Some institutions use mirrors, mechanics’ “creepers,” or inspection pits to check underneath the vehicle for contraband or inmates. Narcotics or pharmaceuticals should be unloaded in a secure area away from inmates. Also, the contents’ list of shipments and/or vehicles must be checked against the payload or cargos, particularly paying close attention to boxes that are partially opened, damaged, marked in an unusual way, or are extra (Bales, [Ed.]. 1997, p. 45).

Staff must remember that inmate workers (trustees) are the “movers and shakers” of contraband in the facility. Trustees also have access to materials that other inmates do not. When inmate labor, including trustees, is used, there is a strong possibility that security will be breached (Newcomb, 1989, pp. 5–6).

Transportation

Transporting inmates, even for short distances, is one of the most dangerous tasks for a correctional officer. Transporting an inmate, who must always be considered an escape risk, is dangerous when out of the secure environment of the institution. Inmates have escaped while on a transport and some of these escapes have been very daring. For example, an inmate charged with carjacking, kidnapping, and making terrorist threats escaped from jail officers at a local hospital where he was to have a broken wrist recast. As soon as the hospital elevator doors opened—out he ran. Unconfirmed reports said that two females were waiting in a vehicle to pick him up (Bay City News, 2004).

A correctional officer must remember this phrase on all inmate escorts and transports, no matter what the destination or what the inmate is charged with: *Desperate people do desperate things*. Even on a short transportation run to a local hospital for a simple medical procedure, transporting an inmate to a nearby county for court, or a transfer to a prison, a correctional officer never knows what the inmate is thinking or what is going on inside his or her mind. Most inmates welcome a chance to be transported, because it is a break from the monotonous views of prison or jail. They can see people, especially those of the opposite gender, green grass and trees, and breathe fresh air. Other inmates see a transport as a chance to escape or even commit suicide.

For example, an offender under arrest for murder was being taken to the local county jail by two deputy sheriffs. He was seated in the back seat of the vehicle with his hands restrained in the front position. The inmate complained that he was cold and asked the deputies to open the sliding plastic partition so some heat could reach him in the back. One of the deputies complied, and as the vehicle rounded a curve, the inmate suddenly shoved himself through the opening, grabbed the steering wheel, and tried to swerve the car off of the road and into a ditch. The deputy driving managed to stop the car on the shoulder; the two deputies fought the inmate and subdued him by using pepper spray. Fortunately, back-up law enforcement officers responded and the inmate was transported to jail. He received a life sentence. He later stated that he worked up the nerve to commit suicide by crashing the car, and the two deputies would not be injured because they were restrained by seat belts. He wished to be thrown through the windshield and die. It must be noted that he sued, alleging excessive force by the deputies in subduing him, and he lost (Ross, 2009).

Guidelines for Safe Inmate Transportation. Whenever correctional officers take inmates out of the secure confines of a correctional facility, the chances for escape increase. The inmate may break free of his restraints and run; he may assault correctional officers and run; or he may have help from an accomplice. A transportation run is a chance for freedom. Also, since the inmate is still in custody, there is always a chance for liability if mistakes are made. An inmate may claim that he was subjected to excessive force, he was injured, or that he was denied medical care. A citizen could claim injury if an escape attempt resulted in an accident. Having good, common sense and clear policies and procedures can effectively defend a correctional agency and staff in lawsuits arising from inmate transportation (Ross, 2009).

When a correctional officer is ordered to transport an inmate or inmates, he must ensure that he has all critical information about the inmate, the vehicle, the route, the nature of the transport, and what to do in cases of emergencies. Even though correctional officers have access to cell phone communications and GPS, basic communications must be in working order. The following is a non-inclusive list of items to be in inmate transport policies and procedures:

- Selection and preparation of the transport vehicle: making sure that it has been serviced and is in good running order.
- Procedures to follow in case of accidents, emergencies, or detours: emergency numbers and nearest law enforcement agencies along the route. Alternate routes should be planned in case of a traffic jam or detour.
- Searching, securing, and placing inmate inside the vehicle: the transporting correctional officer should be the one who searches the inmate before placement in the vehicle.
- Having information about the prisoner: escape risk, behavioral problems, and any special medical or mental health issues. All paperwork should be in order.
- Gender of the inmate: if opposite gender, having a two-person correctional officer transport if possible, and calling in the beginning and ending mileage.
- Proper use and need for restraint equipment including double locking restraints.
- Number of correctional officers required and weapons involved.
- Nature of the transport: medical visit, hospital emergency, court, or to another facility.
- Communications: equipment including cell phones should be in working order.
- Procedures for security of inmate in case of bathroom breaks and feeding.
- Transporting on commercial aircraft: escorting through airport, boarding aircraft, possessing of weapon, and authority of flight crew. (Ross, 2009)

Transporting officers should follow procedures at all times and *always* be cognizant of the fact that *any* inmate may seize an opportunity to escape. Inmates should be visible to the correctional officer at all times, seated away from officers' weapons, and not be allowed to change seats or come into any contact whatsoever with the public. The correctional officer operating the vehicle, if alone, should be able to slightly turn and have the inmate in his or her line of sight. Many inmates have been known to engage the correctional officers in conversation as a distraction. It is advisable for the correctional officers to be firm but polite and most of all, follow all procedures and keep their minds on the job.

Patrol Techniques

Correctional officers, like their counterparts on the street (police officers), must patrol their "beats." That beat could be the facility perimeter, a dormitory, a housing unit, a floor of cellblocks, or other areas. Each inmate housing area is a community just like each street or subdivision in an outside community. Each "community" has its security flaws, different inmate personalities, conflicts, and problems. Correctional officers, by walking around and going into all of the inmate areas, can get to know the inmates living and working there, just like a police officer walking or patrolling a "beat."

The officer should know as much as he or she can about inmates in his/her area, activities that are going on, and the whereabouts of all inmates in the designated area. Correctional officers should know who is authorized to be in an area, who comes in, and who goes out. The correctional officer should also be familiar with the routine of the area, similar to the street in a police patrol area. He or she should also know when individuals are supposed to be there, what they do in the area (such a cleanup details or

job assignments), and when activities occur. Any supervisor checking the area should ask the correctional officer what is going on, and the correctional officer should be able to tell him or her.

A key to effective patrolling is to always keep inmates guessing where the correctional officers are, where they will go next, who and where they may search, and how long they will stay in an area. Correctional officers should be unpredictable—walking through an area, for example, and instead of going out one door, turning around and going out the door that they came in, or stopping a group of inmates and asking how they are, and closely observing any signs of nervousness.

Emergencies

Officers on patrol should be aware of all possible and existing security breaches, including fire hazards in their areas, and report these conditions to their supervisors and request corrective action. Correctional officers must be very familiar with procedures to be taken in case of any emergencies. Progressive thinking departments have conducted drills with the local fire departments, even setting up mock medical “triage” stations with correctional officers role playing as injured inmates. Correctional officers must realize that even though most facilities are nonsmoking, an inmate wishing to disrupt security or one who is acting in a bizarre fashion may start a fire. Fires may also start in kitchen areas or may be electrical in origin. It is imperative that correctional officers know what to do in a fire and smoke situation, including being trained in the use of emergency breathing apparatus.

Policies and procedures of agencies and facilities are often based on correctional standards, including those from the American Correctional Association. In the standards manual for adult correctional institutions, specific standards mandate a facility to have monthly fire safety inspections by qualified personnel (such as from the local fire department) and weekly inspections by a qualified department staff member. Also mandatory plans must be written for situations that can disrupt security. These include riots, hunger strikes, hostage taking, and disturbances. Other situations include power failures, inmate work stoppage, control center failures, and smoke and fire conditions. Plans must be written, updated, and reviewed annually, as well as presented in training to all staff (American Correctional Association, 2014a, pp. 62–63).

Also important is where to evacuate inmates in the event of a natural disaster such as a tornado, hurricane, or flood. Sometimes emergency situations are unusual. In one jail, construction crews on a building site directly across from the jail hit and ruptured a gas line, making it necessary for the jail to cancel all programs, evacuate all civilians and non-custody staff, and consult plans to evacuate all inmates from the side of the jail closest to the ruptured line. The local fire and police departments were notified, but fortunately the situation was quickly brought under control. Correctional officers must remember three key things in an emergency:

1. Keep calm: do not panic. Follow the instructions of your supervisors and what you learned in training.
2. Your top priorities are the safety and security of the inmates in your custody.
3. Always remember that inmates will use emergency situations to pick up contraband if they can or to escape.

Inspections

A key part of the correctional officer's patrol throughout the institutions is to conduct inspections. While some inspections, such as for fire equipment, may be mandatory per policy, the correctional officer on every shift has to inspect his or her area for security breaches or anything out of order. A correctional institution can never have too many inspections. Correctional officers on posts are the first line of responsibility to ensure that everything works properly, nothing is malfunctioning or missing, and everything is in order. Correctional officers should focus their inspections on security devices, security features, and operations within their areas of responsibilities. Correctional officers must work the plumbing, open and close the doors, test devices and equipment, check maintenance records, and ask other staff members, including civilians, if everything is in working order. Inspections should include looking at the following:

- Locks (manual and electric) and food slots on cellblock doors
- Security fittings: screws, bolts, hinges, brackets, and door slides
- Gates, doors, windows, screens, and access panels
- Walls, windows, window frames, and bars
- Ceilings and floors
- Drains and drain covers, heating vents, ductwork, and pipe alleys
- Perimeter walls and fences
- Surveillance systems (both video and motion detectors)
- All lighting in common and cell areas
- Intercoms and communication systems including radios and other devices
- Areas and hardware for signs of a fire hazard or safety problems
- Plumbing: water, shower, and toilets for proper operation
- Fire safety equipment: alarms, detectors, breathing apparatus, hoses, and extinguishers (Martin & Rosazza, 2004)

Checks must be made of all areas and equipment and deficiencies must be logged, reported to the appropriate staff, and corrected—without exception and as quickly as possible. The elements of security discussed in this chapter—counting, patrolling, controlling keys/tools, and searching—all interact during an officer's shift and are dependent on everything working properly.

Complacency

The officer's worst adversary besides the crafty inmate is complacency. Complacency resulting from boredom can be an ally to the inmate. Officers working the same routines for long periods of time can become complacent, especially when a false sense of security sets in because serious incidents have rarely occurred. Examples of officer complacency include: failing to check identification of inmates, conducting poor searches or inspections, sleeping on post, exercising inadequate control over tools and keys, watching television on post, playing computer games on post, exhibiting sloppy work habits, submitting poorly written reports, not entering critical information in observation logs, and failing to exercise control and discipline when dealing with inmates (Cornelius, 1996a).

Correctional officers who socialize with inmates, including having sex with them instead of properly supervising them, become complacent—and the inmates love that. In one institution, the command staff, as a training exercise, planted a laminated card along the facility outside perimeter. The card read: “Bring this to the Chief of Security.” At least seventeen officers walked by this card over a six-day period before it was discovered (Czerniak & Upchurch, 1996; Cornelius, 1996a, pp. 28–29)! Rotation of personnel, training exercises, and close supervision all can combat complacency.

A blaring example of complacency occurred in the Oregon state prison system. In one facility, a fifty-year-old inmate convicted of robbery, kidnapping, attempted rape, and assault launched a daring escape attempt. His sentence will end in 2060, when he is ninety-six years old. Saying that prison was “driving him insane” and he would start killing people if he did not escape, he developed a checklist and obtained maps of Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, and Washington. He went to work on his escape on a Sunday evening. First, he fashioned a dummy in his bunk. He then hid beneath a pile of dirty prison laundry and rode undetected in a laundry cart as another inmate pushed it to the prison laundry and locked it in for the night.

Now, he was alone and went to work. The inmate broke a hole in the prison wall and got into the maintenance shop. He broke into a vending machine and pried open the cages where hand tools were stored. Now in possession of various items including a sledgehammer, a pry bar, a battery powered drill, and a power saw, he drilled out the door lock of the door leading to the utility room. After disrobing and greasing himself with lotion, he slithered through a vent and got outdoors. He managed to dig under a fence and climb over another, but his arms were severely cut by the razor wire. Exhausted and bleeding, he crawled under a blanket in the prison yard and was found the next morning.

If this were not bad enough, a convicted burglar tried to escape from the same prison. He had escaped from a Colorado halfway house in 2000, but that information was not entered into his prison record. During the evening, he fashioned a dummy in his bunk looking so relaxed that he put headphones on the dummy’s head. While in a group of inmates for evening recreation yard time, a confidential informant told correctional officers about the dummy. After three attempts to call him in the yard, officers ordered an emergency lockdown. They found him with a group of inmates filing out of the yard. His pockets contained thirty-five rolls of dental floss, two razor blades, plastic rope, photographs of his wife, and candy bars. Later searches of the recreation yard yielded a ladder manufactured from dental floss and toilet paper tubes. Both inmates received six months in segregation (Zaitz, 2014).

Escapes are embarrassing and can make the public wonder if correctional officers are doing their jobs. A special team investigated the escape attempts. The team concluded that the prison was “out of compliance with its own procedure and [Department of Corrections] security standards.” The team also said that correctional officers were not properly counting inmates and in the laundry, the correctional officer was just checking off names on a roll as inmates called out cell numbers and names without looking up or verifying identification. The escapes were blamed on prison staff “complacency.” In another Oregon state prison, a rope measuring 39 feet long was found under some outside bleachers—in full view of a guard tower (Zaitz, 2014).

Informants

The use of informants to aid law enforcement officers is as old as the law enforcement profession itself. Police officers get the information needed to solve crimes from those close to or directly from those who are engaging in criminal activity. Correctional officers, as part of their daily patrol duties, use confidential informants. Simply defined, a *confidential informant (snitch)* is an inmate who gives information to correctional officers on the condition that his or her identity will remain anonymous. Inmates who act as informants usually want something and what they want may not be entirely clear to the officer. However, some motives of an inmate informant are as follows:

- *Fear*: The inmate feels threatened by other inmates' activities or planned activities such as an escape plot, contraband manufacturing/smuggling, or taking of a hostage. The informant wants no part of it.
- *Revenge*: The inmate believes that he/she has been treated unfairly or harshly by other inmates.
- *Animosity*: To eliminate competition from other inmates, such as in trafficking in contraband or making a "power play," the inmate may turn informant.
- *Egotism*: The inmate wants the staff to think well of him/her.
- *Reward or favor*: The inmate may relate information to an officer in hopes of receiving a reward or favor such as a trustee job or special visit.
- *Desire to reform*: Inmates may become informants because they feel remorse for their crime and wish to do a "good deed" for society.
- *Playing a game*: An inmate may give false information to confuse officers, especially new, inexperienced officers. (American Correctional Association, 1997, p. 102)

Officers must use common sense when dealing with confidential informants. In addition to ascertaining the motives of the informant, the correctional officer should never promise any type of reward, and all information should be relayed up the chain of command to the officer's supervisors for discussion and follow up. The officer should *never* reveal the identity of the inmate, either verbally or in writing, and if this must be done, the correctional officer should discuss it with supervisors. It does not matter if the correctional officer needs or wants the information given (American Correctional Association, 1997, p. 102). Many correctional officers use the terms "confidential source," "reliable source," or "anonymous source/inmate," which all mean confidential informant.

With the handling of informants comes a responsibility to keep them safe. If other inmates find out, the informant's life is in danger. Correctional officers must be loyal to their informants as the informants are loyal to the correctional officer. This loyalty can be shown by the correctional officer in keeping informants' identities secret, watching their backs, and doing everything possible to keep them safe. There may be times when an informant must be transferred to another housing unit or facility for his or her safety. Correctional officers should tell staff on those areas that the inmate is a source of information, and if they are solid, professional correctional officers, they should watch out for his or her safety.

Unfortunately, many informants have their own agenda—getting back at enemies or disarming enemies to make them vulnerable. Correctional officers must be cautious and use common sense and rely on the advice of veteran officers. However, if an inmate is known to feed correctional officers false information, correctional officers are wise to keep their distance (Koonce, 2012, pp. 108–110).

Correctional officers realize the value of inmates giving up information to the staff—being a “snitch.” Many inmates are snitches in one way or another and are in prison because they were informed on, according to an officer at the Lebanon (Ohio) Correctional Institution. The trait is brought into the prison. One ten-year veteran of Lebanon says that snitching “stops a lot of things . . . it prevents drug deals . . . escapes . . . and it prevents people from getting hurt” (Wojda, Wojda, Smith, & Jones, 1991, p. 29).

Escapes

A fundamental goal of a good correctional security system is the prevention of escapes. Every inmate thinks of escape at one time or another. Some dismiss the thought while others try to escape. To the correctional officer, *every* inmate is an escape risk, no matter what his/her charge, demeanor, or time left to serve.

The term *escape* can be defined as “an inmate’s criminal absence from the confines of the institution or extended confinement area with the intent to remain at large” (Camp, 2003, p. 49). The absence is unauthorized and the inmate is subject to criminal prosecution as well as in-house disciplinary action. The extended confinement area could be the community, program, job, or work detail outside the facility to which the inmate is legally permitted access. An inmate could be charged with escape if he/she was on work release and did not report to a job. An inmate can be charged with escape if the inmate is absent without authorization from a work detail or transport. This extended area also includes being in the legal custody of a correctional officer or a law enforcement officer, such as on a transport to a police station, court, or to another facility.

Desperation Escapes

Correctional officers should remember at all times that the lives of inmates have been disrupted by incarceration. The things important to them on the outside can impact them inside, such as the family moving on, a significant other ending their relationship, the children growing up without them, and other issues. Desperate people do desperate things:

- A desperate escape occurred in 1983 in Alabama where eleven inmates ran through holes hacked in fences under a barrage of shotgun fire. Within forty-five minutes, nine were recaptured (*Washington Post*, August 29, 1983).
- Women inmates desperately try for freedom, too. In 1984, five inmates, including two convicted killers, escaped from maximum security by squeezing through steel bars covering a window. The women, ranging in size from 5’2”, 110 pounds, to 5’6”, 150 pounds, squeezed through bars fifteen inches high and less than eight inches apart (“5 Inmates Escape,” *Washington Post*, December 17, 1984).
- An inmate in a Missouri medium security workhouse being escorted to the showers suddenly made a break for freedom, climbing to a second tier of cells, smashing a glass wall, and climbing two razor wire fences. More than a dozen correctional officers responded to calls for assistance. The inmate fought them off, swinging homemade nunchucks at them. He had constructed the nunchucks from a bed sheet and a chair. He was captured a few hours later, after eluding police helicopters and police dogs. At the same facility, an inmate walked through an open gate and climbed the perimeter fence. In a nearby facility, two inmates crawled through a

ceiling access panel in the jail infirmary and climbed down the side of the building with a rope made from a bed sheet. Both were recaptured quickly (Wilson, 2011).

Staff mistakes can make an escape easy. For example, in 1982, two Pennsylvania county prison employees were suspended after one left his post to get coffee, leaving his keys on his desk, and two doors unlocked. An inmate charged with rape and kidnapping escaped. A few months before, the same inmate escaped from a West Virginia jail by crawling through a ventilation system to the jail roof (*Pittsburgh Press*, December 31, 1982)! Two inmates from a Southern jail used a piece of a light fixture to open a jail door latch. It was easy because the door installer hung the door *upside down!* (*Detroit News*, 1996).

In Virginia, in 2012, an inmate sentenced to fourteen years for armed robbery escaped a local jail in an effort to “get home to [his] family.” He climbed over the recreation yard wall, which was topped with barbed wire. He stayed with a female friend and managed to get a haircut before he was recaptured. He insisted that he was not dangerous and had noticed that only one correctional officer was watching the yard from an overhead booth. He said that the escape was easy and “felt like a piece of cake” (McNamara, 2012).

Inmate Ingenuity Escapes

How far will inmates go in devising escape plans and carrying them out? Correctional officers must remember three words: patience, sight, and ingenuity. Here is a sampling:

- Three Texas inmates purchased hundreds of yards of dental floss at the jail’s canteen (commissary). Authorities discovered that they braided it into a rope ladder and used cardboard salt and pepper containers for stirrups on it.
- A convicted forger escaped from an Arizona jail by having a forged release order faxed to jailers.
- In one facility, booking received a telephone call from a probation officer requesting that a certain inmate be released. However, there was no probation officer; the phone call came from the inmate himself calling from one of the facility’s pay telephones (Sweet, 1994, pp. 72–77; Stinchcomb, 2005, p. 220).

Inmates can be patient; they do have twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week, and 365 days per year to think . . . think . . . THINK! For example, an inmate serving two consecutive life terms plus fifty-five years for murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, and arson in a New Mexico prison worked for months to escape, by breaking the 6 foot by 1 foot window in his cell and the metal crossbar over the window. His tools were a razor blade fashioned on the end of a Popsicle stick. The inmate told investigators that it took him five months to break the bar. He designed a fake plastic window that he put over the broken window. He squeezed through the hole and lowered himself two stories with a bed sheet rope. But, once out, he decided that he should go back in. Officers found him on the grounds acting bizarre—saying that he did not know how he got there. The ruse did not work, and he told all (Burkhart, 2012).

Inmates planning an escape do not like to be observed. When correctional officers make rounds, what inmates are doing always should be in the line of sight of the officers. For example, inmates have dug holes in outside walls because they have covered cell door windows with towels—saying “that the light keeps us awake.” Or, they may cover up digging by using toothpaste or other fastening agents to put pictures torn from magazines in cell walls.

Correctional officers must keep lines of sight clear. Being incarcerated may be uncomfortable for inmates at times, and so it also is when a correctional officer is called into the warden's office to explain why cell door windows were covered and several inmates are now missing.

Courthouse Escapes

Jail correctional officers' duties extend frequently to the courthouse. Inmates must be escorted from the jail to court and defendants appearing in court are often remanded to custody. Correctional officers no matter what their assignments are must remember that whenever inmates are out of their cell or living area, they may seize an opportunity to escape. Desperate people do desperate things. Consider these escapes from court:

- An inmate just sentenced to life in prison escaped from a Florida courthouse by slipping out of his handcuffs, hitting a deputy with a five-foot ladder, and prying open a metal garage door that led to the street. He managed to pry the door open through brute strength and squeeze out a one-foot opening. He was recaptured after leading police on a high-speed chase in a stolen vehicle. As he was being placed into a sheriff's vehicle, he proclaimed "I am going to make them kill me" (*Pensacola News Journal*, 2008).
- An inmate suspected of serious crimes, including attempted murder, escaped from a group of inmates returning to a prison minimum security honor farm. Not only did the correctional officer fail to escort the inmates, the escapee changed prison uniforms with an inmate who had an honor farm classification and resembled the escapee. The change took place in a toilet space in a holding area. After switching uniforms, the two inmates lined up to go to their classified destinations. The escapee got into a van that was idling nearby reportedly driven by his girlfriend. As a result, a security overhaul was planned including the implementation of a fingerprint security system that scans the offenders' index finger and identifies them with offenders in the county law enforcement database (Thompson, 2007).

It is important and critical that correctional officers inside a facility communicate information about inmates to personnel supervising them in court. This information includes behavioral problems, disciplinary problems, gang and security threat group associations, abrasiveness toward staff, and escape risk information. Offenders view the courthouse as one more location closer to the outside—and freedom.

Escape Policies and Procedures

While escape policies and procedures vary from facility to facility, certain items are basic in nature. To prevent escapes, policies should include these measures:

1. Reporting unrest, tension, and changes in inmate behavior or conduct
2. Basic security accountability: tool and key control, counts, searches, and inspections
3. Classification review of all inmates including designating high-risk inmates
4. Proper work and living assignments
5. Prompt correction/repair of security breaches and plans to cover breaches until repairs are completed (Henderson, Rauch, & Phillips, 1997, p. 187)

Escape-Prevention Plan

A functional escape-proofing plan provides procedures for maintaining security, notifying law enforcement agencies, and having strategies for capturing the escapee. The American Correctional Association (1997) recommends the following eighteen points.

No matter how secure the institution, inmates will try to escape. During an escape attempt, officers must act quickly to stop the attempt and recapture the inmate(s). That is why a functional escape-prevention plan is vitally important for every institution. While the methods used by inmates in escape attempts vary, escape plans should contain the fundamental search and surveillance techniques that cover most situations. A functional plan includes the following elements:

Defining an escape. A clear definition is needed of what specifically constitutes an escape and the use of deadly force to stop escapees, in the particular jurisdiction involved, as opposed to an inmate being “off-limits,” “out of bounds,” or some other lesser infraction.

Reporting an escape. Staff in the institution must know who they should notify in the event they believe an inmate is missing. In most cases, this is the control center.

Alerting the perimeter and gateposts. As soon as an inmate is believed to be missing, the perimeter and gatepost staff and any outlying patrol staff should be notified.

Securing the area. The entire institution should be secured; inmates must return to their quarters/cells.

Providing a count. The inmates in the institution should be counted immediately, to determine the identity of the missing inmates; in most cases, a picture card (identification) count will be needed to verify the identity of those missing.

Notifying top staff. The plan should specify the order in which top staff should be notified, usually starting with the warden.

Stating hostage information. The plan clearly should state that no inmate with a hostage is to be released, and that no hostage has any authority.

Identifying key posts to continue to staff. Some areas can be secured and their staff assigned to the escape hunt; others, such as the powerhouse and food service, must continue to operate; these positions should be identified in advance so no confusion results from removing staff from a critical post.

Establishing a command center. This area includes not only internal communications and command functions, but also communication with local and state law enforcement personnel assisting in the escape hunt.

Recalling staff. Using a current list of all employees and pre-established call-up procedures, off duty employees should be told to report.

Notifying local law enforcement. This section of the plan should state who is authorized to notify local law enforcement personnel of the escape, and by what means; it also may involve distribution of escape flyers.

Continued

Escape-Prevention Plan, *continued*

Using internal searches to apprehend hideouts. The plan should specify internal search procedures to apprehend inmates who may be hiding inside the facility, awaiting darkness, fog, or some other time when it may be more favorable to try to escape the secure compound.

Planning external searches. Plans/procedures need to be in place that include the use of force regarding “fresh pursuit,” and coordination with allied agencies.

Establishing outside escape posts. The plan should establish fixed and roving escape posts, identify the equipment that should go on each post, and describe the other procedures necessary to staff these posts, including issuance of equipment.

Providing staff support on escape posts. The plan should provide for using the regular relief, feeding, and checking on staff on remote posts.

Offering strategies for apprehending and restraining escapees. The plan should provide staff with clear guidance on actions they should and should not take when apprehending an escapee. At least two officers should be present to search all escapees after they are captured; if only one officer captures an inmate, the inmate should stay “spread-eagled” on the ground until backup assistance arrives.

Notifying of capture. When inmates have been captured, the procedures must specify who will notify all law enforcement agencies, communities, and the media.

Interviewing escapees. The plan must ensure that any interviews with escapees are done in a way that does not hamper the criminal prosecution of an escapee by compromising any constitutional rights.

(Reprinted with permission of the American Correctional Association, Alexandria, VA: “Chapter 7: Emergency Plans and Procedures,” *Correctional Officer Resource Guide* (3rd ed.). Don Bales, [Ed.], 1997, pp. 66–67.)

One thing that law enforcement agencies must have to successfully recapture an escapee is escape intelligence. *Escape intelligence* is defined as a comprehensive package of information that lets law enforcement agencies know as much information as possible about the escape, safety concerns, and who should be contacted in case of apprehension. The following information should be in this summary:

- Name of escapee, including all known aliases or nicknames
- Escapee’s sex, race, nationality/ethnic origin, birth date, age, height, weight, hair and eye color, scars, marks, tattoos, state of residence, and social security number or numbers, if the inmate uses more than one
- Recent photos of escapee
- Escapee’s crime, sentence, and any detainers (charges pending from another jurisdiction)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation numbers, state police numbers, and/or local police case numbers
- Fingerprint classification
- Last-known residence, past associates, likely places, residences, and groups so to which he/she could return

- Driver's license and vehicle information, if available
- Information as to whether the escapee is considered violent, dangerous, or armed
- Name and title of the agency staff person who should be contacted if another agency captures the escapee (Henderson, et al., 1997, p. 188)

Intelligence must be gathered when an escape occurs. Not only do staff have to file a detailed report, other information must be gathered from inmate informants; staff observations must be included, and the comments from the family of the escapee (if cooperative) must also be included. The incident must be analyzed for causative factors, security breakdowns, and other problems for use in training and in revising procedures. One key part of an escape investigation is the gathering of information from the inmate's file, visiting lists, property, mail, and phone calls (Henderson, et al., 1997, p. 189).

Summary

Security in a correctional institution is an ongoing process involving observation of inmates through key and tool control, headcounts, proper searches, inspections, safe transportation procedures, and escape prevention and apprehension. The basic definition of security is “freedom from danger” for staff, inmates, and the public. Lack of control can cause assaults, escapes, and security breakdowns. Procedures must be in place and followed.

Keys and tools can become serious security problems if placed in the hands of inmates. Common sense methods of control, such as logs, can help in their control.

Headcounts are crucial to security and must be conducted properly, either formally or informally. Searches of inmates and facility areas reduce the risk of contraband.

Transporting inmates safely takes careful planning and preparation. Inmates in desperate bids for freedom can escape during transports or by “inmate ingenuity” — schemes and daring plans, sometimes involve contraband. No less important is the fact that desperate inmates will attempt to escape from courthouses. Correctional officers must know the basics of the facility's escape-prevention plan and remember that inmates can be desperate, daring, and patient.

Emergency preparedness is key to a secure correctional facility. Correctional officers must know what to do in case of fire, work stoppage, power failure, or another type of emergency. Finally, complacency is a hindrance to correctional officers being effective on the job, and inmates will take advantage of this.

Inmate informants can pass along information to the officer, but an informant's motive may be self-serving. Confidential informants should be kept safe and their identities kept secret.

Review Questions

1. Why is the control of keys and tools important?
2. Name four guidelines for successful headcounts.
3. What is meant by the term “inmate ingenuity”?

4. Describe the three main types of inmate searches.
5. Explain six ways that a correctional officer should prepare for a safe transport.
6. What motives could a confidential informant have in supplying information to staff?
7. Name four points of a good escape-prevention plan.
8. What is the importance of line-of-sight in escape prevention?
9. What is the importance of keeping the identity of an informant secret?
10. Name and explain the three types of fastening agents inmates use to make and hide contraband.
11. Explain the meaning of the phrase: “desperate people do desperate things.”

Terms/Concepts

body (strip) search

body-cavity search

census count

confidential informant (snitch)

emergency count

emergency keys

escape

escape intelligence

formal count

frisk (pat down)

inmate ingenuity

keyed zones

restricted keys

security

systematically unsystematic

vehicle searches