



CORRECTIONS OFFICER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Corrections, or correctional, officers supervise the activities of convicted offenders in a prison. They monitor inmates at all times, enforce regulations, and maintain order, which often means searching prisoners and their cells. Officers also watch out for those at risk of harm and supervise the movement of prisoners in the vicinity. With experience, they may train new recruits or oversee a part of the institution.



SALARY

Entry-level officer ★★★★★

Senior officer ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Increasing job opportunities due to rising prison populations • Work mainly in the public sector but private prisons operate in some countries alongside government facilities

CAREER PATHS

Prisons are usually run by national or state authorities. To become a corrections officer, you will need to be a citizen of the country in which you work. Once trained, and with experience, you can apply for more senior roles within the service, or use your skills in other related areas, such as counseling and rehabilitation.

TRAINEE To be accepted as a trainee, you will need to be at least 18 years of age and pass a number of physical and mental assessments. Basic training usually lasts for several weeks.



SPECIAL OFFICER Trains in various areas, such as drug and alcohol counseling, suicide prevention, health care, or physical education, with the aim of helping prisoners overcome their problems and adjust to life after prison.



▼ RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **POLICE OFFICER** *see pp. 240–241*
- ▶ **PROBATION OFFICER** *see pp. 244–245*
- ▶ **PSYCHOLOGIST** *see pp. 254–255*

CORRECTIONS OFFICER As well as running the prison community, you help rehabilitate prisoners and work toward providing them with new skills that will be useful in the future.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Law and the legal system • Psychology • Sociology • Languages • Physical education • Counseling and helping people



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS There are no formal requirements, but you will need a reasonable school education and be able to pass a series of aptitude tests.



LIFESTYLE Corrections officers are usually expected to work shifts, including nights, weekends, and public holidays.



LOCATION Corrections officers are based in the prison, supervising inmates indoors, during outdoor activities in prison yards, and on outings and transfers.



THE REALITIES Work conditions can be stressful. They may have to deal with inmates who are prone to aggression, and may need to resolve inmates' disputes.



SERGEANT Supervises a small team of other officers or takes responsibility for one wing (area) of the prison. As well as making sure corrections officers carry out their duties, senior officers must undertake administrative work in the prison office. This role is a promotion, following several years' experience and some further training.



PRISON WARDEN Manages a prison and takes responsibility for controlling budgets and other resources, supervising junior officers, and liaising with social workers and other agencies involved in the rehabilitation and welfare of inmates.

SKILLS GUIDE



Good communication and mediation skills to help defuse potentially volatile situations.



Strong team-working skills to work alongside other personnel to control and safeguard inmates.



The ability to stay calm and remain patient despite stressful and challenging circumstances.



Strength and endurance for dealing quickly and efficiently with displays of aggression from inmates.



Strong powers of observation to detect any unusual activities and behaviors in the prison.

In 2012, more than 465,000 corrections officers were employed in the United States.