

# Inmate Record Keeping

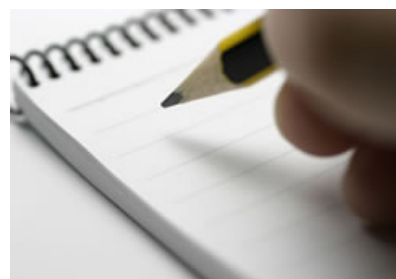


## Introduction

### Welcome

The old saying, "If it's not documented, it didn't happen," certainly applies to the corrections world. Jail administrators are responsible for a massive amount of information pertaining to incoming and outgoing inmates, visitation logs, medical and disciplinary records for every inmate in the facility, and logs of all activities and inspections performed in the facility.

Any failure to maintain accurate, accessible records means that all of this vital information could be lost. Without this information, management will be at a serious disadvantage when making the decisions that will allow efficient jail operations and will ensure the safety of officers and inmates. Worse yet, failure to maintain accurate records could make you and your facility vulnerable to lawsuits from inmates.



## Introduction

### Course Instructions

This course provides 1 hour of instruction including evaluation and knowledge checks and is presented in a linear format. Please read each page and review the associated materials thoroughly.

The course consists of the following components:

- Course Summary
- Course Instructions
- Course Sections
- Knowledge-Check Quizzes
- Post-Test/Final Exam

Please note that the Knowledge-Check Quizzes which appear after each section are not graded. You will only be graded on the post-test in the Final Exam section of the course. If you do not pass the final exam, you are allowed to retake the exam 2 additional times. Also, keep in mind that your progress through the course is tracked and if you logout, you will be able to login at a later date and continue the course from where you left off.

Once you have started a course, courses in progress are listed in My Dashboard of your account.

## Introduction

### Course Overview

The one-hour Inmate Record Keeping course is vital to Officers in a correctional facility. Keeping accurate logs and records of inmates will ensure an efficient and safe environment for inmates, officers, and the public.



# Introduction

## Course Objectives



At the end of this course, the learner will:

- Explain the importance of maintaining accurate and secure inmate records.
- Identify the types of records that your facility must maintain.
- Recognize the risks and liabilities that your facility faces if proper inmate records are not maintained and kept secure.

## Course Content

### Lesson 1 Overview

This lesson will introduce the record keeping responsibilities of Corrections Officers. We will discuss the four main file types officers should focus on:

- Commitment Files
- Inmate Files
- Investigative Files
- Administrative Files



## Course Content

### Record Keeping Responsibilities



Each corrections facility has a responsibility to maintain thorough, accurate records on every inmate. In addition, jail management must keep these records secured so that inmates or other unauthorized persons cannot access them.

Proper record keeping is essential to maintaining control over the inmates in your facility. Written records provide an objective account of the events, individuals, and facilities that are part of your institution. If this information is lost or tampered with you risk mistakenly releasing an inmate or being sued because an inmate did not receive adequate medical attention.

In addition, accurate records are vital when budgeting and preparing administrative plans. If your records are inaccurate or missing, your facility could be underfunded and understaffed. Without sufficient data, you can be out of a job as a result of poor documentation.

# Course Content

## Types of Files

Almost every corrections facility will be responsible for maintaining the following types of files:

- **Commitment Files** - including inmate information gathered during the admissions process, court orders, sentencing information, etc.
- **Inmate Files** - including admission and release records, medical records, grievances, etc.
- **Investigative Files** - includes confidential investigation records not kept with general inmate records
- **Administrative Files** - includes official records about the general jail population, logs of institutional activities, and inspection records



# Course Content

## Lesson 1 Summary

This lesson introduced the record keeping responsibilities of Corrections Officers. We discussed the four main file types officers should focus on:

- Commitment Files
- Inmate Files
- Investigative Files
- Administrative Files





# Quiz I



## Quiz

**1. Accurate records are vital when budgeting and preparing administrative plans. Inaccurate records can cause your facility to be \_\_\_\_\_.**

- Investigated
- Audited
- Placed on probationary status with the state
- Underfunded or understaffed

# Quiz I



## Answer Key

**1. Accurate records are vital when budgeting and preparing administrative plans. Inaccurate records can cause your facility to be \_\_\_\_\_.**

- Investigated
- Audited
- Placed on probationary status with the state
- Underfunded or understaffed

## Course Content

### Lesson 2 Overview

This lesson will highlight Commitment Files, and how to effectively file these documents.



## Course Content

### Commitment Files (Part 1)

The Commitment File is initiated when a new inmate arrives at your facility. This file contains basic identification information for the inmate as well as all documents pertaining to court decisions, judgments, and the authorization to hold the inmate. This file should include:

- The inmate's basic information (name, booking number, date of birth, sex, etc.)
- Photos and fingerprint cards
- Sentencing number and court docket number
- Judicial district and judge's name
- Date and terms of imprisonment



## Course Content

### Commitment Files (Part 2)

The Commitment File should also include:

- Convictions and pending criminal charges
- Records of previous confinement
- Booking and release dates
- Special commitment instructions and legal documents (detainers, warrants, etc.)

Keep in Mind:

The Commitment File, as well as all other inmate records, must be kept in a secure location for the duration of the inmate's confinement. After the inmate is released, the Commitment File and all other inmate records should be retained and stored with your facility's archival records



# Course Content

## Lesson 2 Summary



This lesson highlighted Commitment Files, and how to effectively file these documents.

## Quiz II

### Quiz

**1. A Corrections facility will be responsible for maintaining the following type of file:**

- Recruitment Files
- Commitment Files
- Confinement Files
- Fingerprint Files

## Quiz II



### Answer Key

**1. A Corrections facility will be responsible for maintaining the following type of file:**

- Recruitment Files
- Commitment Files
- Confinement Files
- Fingerprint Files



## Course Content

### Lesson 3 Overview

This lesson details Inmate Files, what they should include, as well as how to file inmate grievances properly.



## Course Content

### Inmate Files (Part 1)

Your facility is required to maintain a comprehensive file on each inmate housed in your facility. This file is initiated at admission and should contain a complete history of the inmate's incarceration at your institution. An inmate's file should include basic information such as:

- Admission information
- Booking and release dates
- Special commitment instructions and legal documents (detainers, warrants, etc.)
- Chronological record of institutional assignments
- Original pre- and post-sentencing investigation information
- Criminal arrest record



## Course Content

### Inmate Files (Part 2)

An inmate's file will also contain his or her important personal information, including:

- Classification and review material (gang affiliation, special risk factors, etc.)
- Medical records
- Property and cash receipts
- Grievances and any other inmate-written communication with staff
- Participation logs for institutional program activities and counseling sessions

Keep in Mind:

The inmate file serves as the complete, objective record of an inmate while he or she is at your facility. However, any personal opinions or "unofficial" comments should not be included. Everything in an inmate's official record should be impartial and professional in tone.



## Course Content

### Inmate Files (Part 3)

Additionally, the inmate file should include administrative forms and records related to that particular inmate, such as:

- Authorization forms (mail disposition, property transfer and release orders, visiting and correspondence approvals)
- Incident reports for any disciplinary actions
- Visitor and visitation records
- Lists of commissary purchases
- Receipts and expenditures for the inmate's accounts
- Documentation relating to continued custody



## Course Content

### Grievances

Most facilities allow inmates to file formal written grievances when they feel they have been mistreated, when they're seeking to appeal a disciplinary action, or when they feel their rights have been otherwise violated. These grievances must be retained as part of the Inmate File.

The primary reason for filing inmate grievances is to provide a complete record of issues raised by a particular inmate and to ensure that the complaint received a fair, systematic hearing. Improper record keeping or mishandled grievances could be cause for a lawsuit.

Additionally, written grievances can help identify your facility's "problem" areas. If multiple inmates are filing numerous grievances related to the same issue, having a thorough record of these grievances can help you pinpoint problems and develop an overall solution.

#### Keep in Mind:

Be sure to keep inmate-specific grievance information in a secure area. Allowing unauthorized access to grievance records could open the inmate up to reprisals from other inmates or even your facility's staff.



## Course Content

### Lesson 3 Summary

This lesson detailed Inmate Files, what they should include, as well as how to file inmate grievances properly.



## Quiz III



### Quiz

#### 1. An inmate's file should include:

- Medical records, prior visitors, gang affiliations
- Gang affiliations, pre-incarceration medical appointments, place of birth
- Transport history, release plans, probation scheduled events
- Location of arrest, preferred foods, father's high school

## Quiz III



### Answer Key

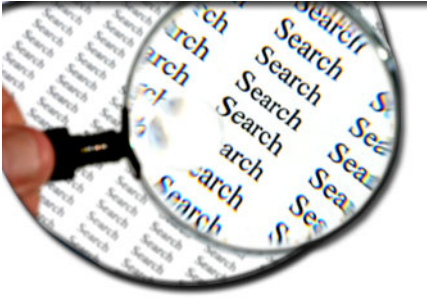
#### 1. An inmate's file should include:

- Medical records, prior visitors, gang affiliations
- Gang affiliations, pre-incarceration medical appointments, place of birth
- Transport history, release plans, probation scheduled events
- Location of arrest, preferred foods, father's high school



# Course Content

## Lesson 4 Overview



This lesson will highlight both Investigative and Administrative files that are imperative in proper inmate record keeping.

## Course Content

### Investigative Files



Investigative Files include any documentation related to active investigations involving the inmate. These files can include information pertaining to new criminal investigations where the inmate is a suspect, records related to a sexual misconduct investigation involving the inmate, gang investigations, or even an ongoing investigation where the inmate is an informant or witness.

Open Investigative Files should not be kept with the general Inmate Files. These files are not available to inmates or others via the Freedom of Information Act. The assigned investigator maintains tight control over all open files and is responsible for maintaining the security of these documents.

Once the investigation is closed, Investigative Files can be stored with any other archived inmate records.

## Course Content

### Administrative Files

In addition to all of the inmate-specific information your institution must maintain, your facility is also responsible for generating reports and keeping records for the facility as a whole. These Administrative Files should include the following logs:

- Meals served
- Recreation provided
- Counts conducted
- Medication dispensed
- Mail delivered

#### Keep in Mind:

Your state, county or institution may require that additional specific logs be kept. Check with your supervisor to determine what information must be logged, and where at your facility.



## Course Content

### Jail Population Reports

Your facility must also maintain jail population reports listing the number and types of inmates confined. These reports (including a complete inmate roster) are submitted monthly to the appropriate state jail standards commission.

These Jail Population Reports will be used by your state's administrators and advisory boards when reviewing the needs and performance of your facility. The information contained in these reports will be used when determining how resources will be allocated to your institution.

Be sure to review the policies and requirements maintained by your particular state, county, or institution.



## Course Content

### Medical Records



Medical records are extremely sensitive documents and should exclusively be handled by your facilities Medical Department. HIPAA Compliance Standards are very strict and are in place to protect the patient (in this case, the inmates) from unnecessary disclosure of confidential medical information. The Privacy Rule generally requires covered entities to take reasonable steps to limit the use or disclosure of, and requests for, protected health information to the minimum necessary to accomplish the intended purpose. Protected health information refers to any information about the individual's health status, healthcare provisions or payments regarding those provisions.

In simple language, very little is disclosed about an inmate's medical status and therefore, the less people that have access to these files, the easier to maintain compliance with these standards. Correctional staff should not need to handle any inmate medical records. If your agency requires you to maintain medical records of inmates, be sure that you are doing so in accordance to all HIPAA guidelines!

# Course Content



## Incident Reports

Each report you generate becomes part of an inmate's record. Furthermore, it has the potential to go all the way to a courtroom since it is a legal document, so BE SURE to remember the following tips for your reports:

- All information must be factual, accurate, and free of opinion.
- Avoid use of jargon or lingo as the general public typically has no knowledge of what it means to "get lugged" or what a "turtle suit" is.
- Remember to answer the Six Interrogatives:
  - Who
  - What
  - When
  - Where
  - Why (if applicable)
  - How
- Keep your reports clear and concise. There is never a need for rambling and fillers. This is a report that maybe read by a jury, not your Senior Thesis.
- Attorneys will destroy an officer on the stand who submits a report that has spelling and grammatical errors, as well as lacks punctuation and flow.
- Read your report OUT LOUD to yourself or to and have a colleague read it to ensure that it makes sense and sounds like a quality piece of documentation. You will be surprised how many errors you will find by just doing this one practice!

## Course Content

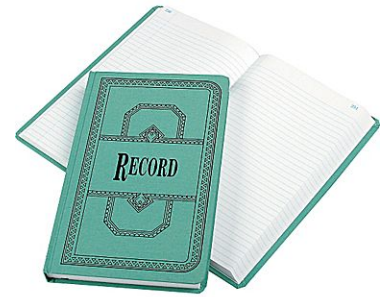
### Facility Logs: Housing Unit, Head Counts, Hot Books

Though these daily tasks may not be secured in an inmate's folder, these are maintained on file with Administration. Some facilities still maintain paper logs while others have progressed to electronic logging under formats like Spillman or simply Excel. Either way, be sure that these events are accurately reported in a timely fashion and in compliance with facility Policy and Procedure.

**Housing Unit Logs:** These are generated by the Corrections Officers working within the pod. They record such events like Head Counts, Inmate Movement, Breaks, Medication pass and Inmate Work just to name a few.

**Head Counts:** All facilities have their own schedule for counting the inmates within their walls. Regardless of what that schedule is, the one thing that remains the same in every institution across the nation is the TIMING of these events. If you are required to do a Head Count at 1200 hours, you better make sure that the Head Count is conducted accurately at 1200. Not 1215, not 1145, but 1200. If an extenuating circumstance makes for a late Head Count, be sure to note that in the Log so that there is documented reason for the tardiness.

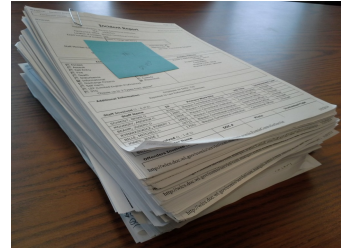
**Hot Books:** In general, Hot Book entries are small snippets of information that officers feel are pertinent to pass along to other staff members working in the area. They may include meal refusals, arguments between inmates that bears watching, facilities issues like clogged toilets or burnt out lights. Though these are merely notes to refer back to for officers working in the area, these are still considered legal documents so refrain from disparaging comments about inmates or staff. It will come back to bite you some day You should not if you write opinionated, heated, or inflammatory comments in the Hot Book as it can be discoverable in court, or lawsuits. .



## Course Content

### Lesson 4 Summary

This lesson highlighted both Investigative and Administrative files that are imperative in proper inmate record keeping.





## Quiz IV



### Quiz

**1. All written grievances from inmates must be destroyed immediately after the matter is investigated in order to protect the corrections facility from legal liability.**

- True
- False

## Quiz IV



### Answer Key

**1. All written grievances from inmates must be destroyed immediately after the matter is investigated in order to protect the corrections facility from legal liability.**

- True
- False

## Course Content

### Lesson 5 Overview



This lesson will focus on record keeping procedures, whether this pertains to initiation, storage and issue, inmate release, inmate requests, and retiring files.

## Course Content

### Record Keeping Procedure: Initiation

The admitting staff member is responsible for the initiation and organization of an inmate's file. All new files should be:

- Assembled in an individual folder
- Assigned an appropriate individual identifying marker (ID number, color code, etc.)
- Filed either alphabetically or according to ID number for easy access



## Course Content

### Record Keeping Procedure: Storage and Issue



Inmate records must be kept in a secure location with strictest confidentiality maintained at all times. No unauthorized persons (staff or inmates) should ever have access to inmate files.

When files are issued to authorized personnel, they must be signed out and closely supervised and controlled by a staff member.

Files should be tracked using a receipt system wherein each file is accountable to a specific staff member, whether in storage or temporarily checked out to a specific, authorized person.

## Course Content

### Record Keeping Procedure: Retiring Files

When an inmate is released, his or her file must be retired to a secure storage facility. The file will remain in storage until it is destroyed in accordance with your facility's record-destruction procedures. Until the record is destroyed, your facility is responsible for securing the files and maintaining the inmate's privacy.

Copies of each inmate file are maintained for a one-year period following the inmate's transfer or release. If the record is not regulated or controlled by a specific court order or supervisory board, it may be destroyed after five years.

#### Keep in Mind:

Be sure to check if your facility is bound by regulations, or county restrictions that require records to be maintained longer than five years following an inmate's transfer or release.



## Course Content



### Record Keeping Procedure: Release

Inmate file information must be made available to appropriate federal, state, and local authorities with an official "need to know." No inmate file information can be removed or reproduced for any authority without a written request or court order and official approval.

Your facility's records office supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the release process is conducted according to federal, state, and local guidelines. In addition, the records office supervisor is the official custodian of inmate records when these records must be presented in court.



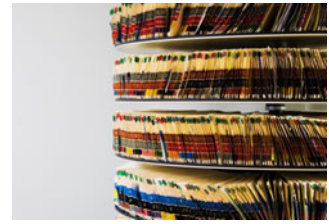
## Course Content

### Record Keeping Procedure: Inmate Requests

An inmate may request to see any non-confidential portions of his or her own file. Prior to releasing the information to the inmate, a record office employee should evaluate the information to ensure that the information will not endanger the inmate or others. The inmate and supervising staff member are required to provide a signature and date to document that the inmate's file review took place.

Keep in Mind:

Inmates are not permitted to access other inmates' files under any circumstances. Inmates are also not allowed to authorize viewing of any record by a third party other than their own attorney.





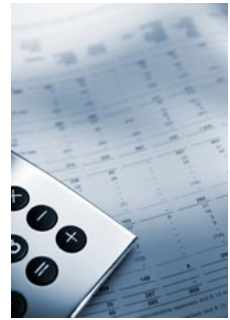
## Course Content

### Importance of Accurate and Secure Records

Without accurate, secure records, your facility could risk:

- Insufficient resources because supervisors will not be aware of your needs
- Security breaches because inaccurate documentation allowed an inmate to be released early
- Safety concerns when an inmate's undocumented violent behavior is unknown to your staff
- Legal action when an inmate's grievances are not documented and he/she claims that his/her rights were violated
- A medical emergency when an inmate's heart condition was ignored because it was not recorded in his/her medical file

All staff members at your institution are responsible for maintaining the integrity of your records. Without the vital information stored in your facility's files, supervision and security become almost impossible. In a worst case scenario, improper record keeping can pose a serious risk to the safety of all staff and inmates.



## Course Content

### Lesson 5 Summary



This lesson focused on record keeping procedures, whether this pertains to initiation, storage and issue, inmate release, inmate requests, and retiring files.

### Quiz V

## Quiz V



### Quiz

1. Federal law mandates that all inmate records be stored for 10 years after the inmate is released.

- True
- False

## Quiz V



### Answer Key

1. Federal law mandates that all inmate records be stored for 10 years after the inmate is released.

- True
- False

## Course Content

### Summary/Wrap Up

Creating and maintaining accurate records may seem like little more than tedious paperwork. However, your corrections facility is only as smart, efficient and safe as its records. This vital information is the sum total of every recorded note, release form, and log update that individual staff members create during the course of their shifts. Without all of these seemingly minor bits of information, your institution will not have the accurate “big picture” needed to ensure that your facility is operating efficiently and effectively.

Not only do records need to be accurate, but they must also be kept secure. Federal, state, and local laws mandate that inmate files be kept confidential. Maintaining the confidentiality of these files isn't just a legal matter. Failure to protect an inmate's privacy could potentially endanger that inmate and leave you and your facility liable for any harm that comes to him or her.

By the end of this course, the learner should be able to:

- Explain the importance of maintaining accurate and secure inmate records.
- Identify the types of records that your facility must maintain.
- Recognize the risks and liabilities that your facility faces if proper inmate records are not maintained and kept secure.



## Course Content



### Assessment for Course Completion



You've arrived at the end of the module. Complete the following assessment to receive course completion credit.

# Inmate Record Keeping Final Exam



## Quiz

1. Inmates are permitted to review their record \_\_\_\_\_.

- Any time during the day
- Upon their release
- After release and after making an appointment
- At any time they wish and the desire is able to be accommodated.

2. Considering the six interrogatives of a quality report, which of the following examples best meets those demands:

- Inmate Smith stole something from Inmate Jones on my last shift.
- Inmate Smith stole a bag of chips from Inmate Jones' cell on June 1, 2016 at approximately 1800 hours while Inmate Smith was using the shower.
- Inmate Smith stole a bag of chips from Stewart Jones. I think it was because he was owed money from the poker table.
- Shifty lifted a bag of chips off Big Money while he was in the shower because they had a beef over a poker game.

3. An inmate's file should include:

- Medical records, prior visitors, gang affiliations
- Gang affiliations, pre-incarceration medical appointments, place of birth
- Transport history, release plans, probation scheduled events
- Location of arrest, preferred foods, father's high school

4. Your facility must maintain a log of:

- All meals served
- The time when each inmate wakes in the morning
- Changes in commissary item costs
- Weather conditions

5. Open Investigative Files are not kept with the general Inmate Files. Instead these records are controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_ until the investigation is closed.

- Jail Administrator
- Investigator
- Inmate
- Inmate's attorney

6. Medical records are highly sensitive, confidential documents that are not to be shared inappropriately or left lying around. If they are handled carelessly, the facility may be in violation of \_\_\_\_\_ laws and subject to legal action.

- Criminal
- Civil Family
- Tort
- HIPAA

7. The primary reason for filing inmate grievances is to provide a complete record of issues raised by a particular inmate and to ensure that the complaint \_\_\_\_\_.

- Was addressed at the lowest level
- Received a fair, systematic hearing
- Is handled in a manner that conceals any officer wrong doing
- Simply goes away

8. Open Investigative Files should be not available to inmates or others via the \_\_\_\_\_ Act.

- Prison Rape Elimination
- Prison Litigation Reform
- Freedom of Information
- Americans with Disabilities

9. Accurate records are vital when budgeting and preparing administrative plans. Inaccurate records can cause your facility to be \_\_\_\_\_.

- Investigated
- Audited
- Placed on probationary status with the state
- Underfunded or understaffed

10. Corrections staff should be encouraged to write reports that are factual, free of opinion and are not based upon \_\_\_\_\_.

- Past history with inmate
- Hearsay
- Anticipated negative behavior
- Predictions

# Inmate Record Keeping Final Exam



## Answer Key

1. Inmates are permitted to review their record \_\_\_\_\_.

- Any time during the day
- Upon their release
- After release and after making an appointment
- At any time they wish and the desire is able to be accommodated.

2. Considering the six interrogatives of a quality report, which of the following examples best meets those demands:

- Inmate Smith stole something from Inmate Jones on my last shift.
- Inmate Smith stole a bag of chips from Inmate Jones' cell on June 1, 2016 at approximately 1800 hours while Inmate Smith was using the shower.
- Inmate Smith stole a bag of chips from Stewart Jones. I think it was because he was owed money from the poker table.
- Shifty lifted a bag of chips off Big Money while he was in the shower because they had a beef over a poker game.

3. An inmate's file should include:

- Medical records, prior visitors, gang affiliations
- Gang affiliations, pre-incarceration medical appointments, place of birth
- Transport history, release plans, probation scheduled events
- Location of arrest, preferred foods, father's high school

4. Your facility must maintain a log of:

- All meals served
- The time when each inmate wakes in the morning
- Changes in commissary item costs
- Weather conditions

5. Open Investigative Files are not kept with the general Inmate Files. Instead these records are controlled by the \_\_\_\_\_ until the investigation is closed.

- Jail Administrator
- Investigator
- Inmate
- Inmate's attorney

6. Medical records are highly sensitive, confidential documents that are not to be shared inappropriately or left lying around. If they are handled carelessly, the facility may be in violation of \_\_\_\_\_ laws and subject to legal action.

- Criminal
- Civil Family
- Tort
- HIPAA

7. The primary reason for filing inmate grievances is to provide a complete record of issues raised by a particular inmate and to ensure that the complaint \_\_\_\_\_.

- Was addressed at the lowest level
- Received a fair, systematic hearing
- Is handled in a manner that conceals any officer wrong doing
- Simply goes away

8. Open Investigative Files should be not available to inmates or others via the \_\_\_\_\_ Act.

- Prison Rape Elimination
- Prison Litigation Reform
- Freedom of Information
- Americans with Disabilities

9. Accurate records are vital when budgeting and preparing administrative plans. Inaccurate records can cause your facility to be \_\_\_\_\_.

- Investigated
- Audited
- Placed on probationary status with the state
- Underfunded or understaffed

10. Corrections staff should be encouraged to write reports that are factual, free of opinion and are not based upon \_\_\_\_\_.

- Past history with inmate
- Hearsay
- Anticipated negative behavior
- Predictions