

RULES AND REGULATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Consistent with the professional principles of the Vermont Department of Corrections, the Vermont Correctional Academy (VCA) believes in the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals. This Academy strives to create a learning environment that promotes the trainees' ability to assess themselves in relationship to all they learn. The VCA will provide instruction that is fundamental to success as corrections professional.

While this Academy will encourage ambitious goals and challenge conventional thinking, every job has its boundaries. There are rules and boundaries in the Vermont Department of Corrections that the corrections professional must operate within. The learning associated with operating within those rules is a very real part of the Academy experience. These rules serve two major purposes:

1. VCA staff essentially believes the only rule obeyed is one that has been internalized. This Academy is committed to a high set of professional standards that are manifested through behavior. The rules represent a road map to professionalism. It is the trainee's job to give these rules personal meaning. It is the Academy staff's task to assist the trainee as necessary in adopting a high standard of professional principles.
2. Because the trainee will be asked to supervise offenders, holding them accountable for rule violations, it is our intent to model the skills associated with this function. We wish to create an environment in which we model professional supervision skills in rule interpretation and enforcement.

THE HONOR SYSTEM

Honor is the guiding principle of every endeavor involving the corrections profession. *Integrity* is the accepted basic attribute of every Corrections professional. Consistent with the principle of integrity, it is assumed that at all times trainees' work and reports are true and correct. Any action or conduct contrary to those principles will be considered conduct unbecoming a professional, and will result in corrective action.

SUPERVISORY PRACTICES

Employees of the Department of Corrections administer systems designed to correct behavior and restore circumstances through reparation of the harm done.

In this context, corrective action directed toward trainees at the Vermont Correctional Academy always includes consideration of harm done to the community. In a residential program, community generally refers to other trainees, VCA staff, and the community at large. Based on the nature and extent of a trainee's behavior and/or performance, there are varying levels of corrective action that may be directed toward the individual.

MINOR DISCREPANCIES

Active Addressing: Academy staff will utilize the skill of active addressing to provide routine feedback. You will be given feedback with the intention of assuring performance expectations are met. Where your performance is exceeding expectations, we will provide feedback as well.

Supervisory Notes: Academy staff creates and maintains a supervisory file on each participant. Notes are placed in this file consistent with any feedback provided. The file follows the new officer to the job where the practice is maintained forming the basis for annual performance review. The trainee can review his or her supervisory file at any time simply by making a request to an Academy staff member.

Letter of Supervisory Feedback: In some cases, Academy staff will utilize a letter of supervisory feedback documenting the performance issue and how to improve the trainee's performance in the future. The letter is placed in the supervisory file.

MAJOR DISCREPANCIES

The 13 Work Rules of the Vermont Department of Corrections serve as your guide to professional conduct. They also serve as the basis for corrective action. The following actions (not necessarily progressive) may be taken if necessary.

A Written Reprimand, copy to local appointing authority.

Suspension from the Correctional Academy pending an internal investigation

Dismissal from the Correctional Academy

GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any trainee who wishes to file a grievance/complaint regarding the administration or conduct of any training program instructor or VCA staff shall immediately contact the Corrections Academy Director. Depending on the nature of the grievance/complaint, the trainee may be required to submit the grievance/complaint in writing. If the trainee is not satisfied with the action taken by the Corrections Academy Director, he/she may then appeal to the Corrections Director of Training and Professional Development.

CHAIN OF COMMAND

A chain of command structure is applied throughout the VCA training curriculum. Trainees are expected to practice drill and ceremony and answer staff appropriately (e.g., “yes sir/ma’am”, no sir/ma’am,” etc.). Trainees will stand at their assigned seats until given the command to sit. Trainees should expect to follow orders as given and perform duties as assigned by Academy staff or Instructors. Trainees will always “make way” for others. “Making way” is demonstrated by the trainee loudly saying, “Make way.” The trainee will then put their back against a wall of turn their body to allow someone to pass by the trainee.

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| 1. Class Leader: | As assigned |
| 2. Squad Leader: | As assigned |
| 3. Training Assistant: | As assigned |
| 4. Training Coordinator(s): | Jonathan Leibold |
| 5. Corrections Academy Director: | James Rice |
| 6. Director of Training and Professional Development: | Heather Simons |

COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Academy staff and trainers through testing and skill proficiencies evaluations will assess trainee competence.

TESTING

Tests will be given periodically. A minimum passing score of 80 percent is required on all tests. Tests may be given in any of the subjects taught here at the Correctional Academy.

If a trainee scores below 80 percent on any test, they will be given an opportunity to retake the test. If the trainee is successful on the remedial test, they will receive the original score, regardless of the retest score. The original grade will be included in determining the trainee’s course average. If a trainee fails three or more tests, he/she will be placed on academic probation. The failure of any additional tests could result in the trainee’s dismissal from the Academy. The Vermont Correctional Academy reserves the right to place a trainee on academic probation for reasons other than stated above. There is no requirement for someone to be placed on academic probation as pre-requisite for termination.

Several subjects delivered at the Academy are Core Competency trainings. Core Competency trainings are subjects that trainees have to pass in order to become certified as a Corrections Officer. If a Trainee fails a Core Competency test, they will have the opportunity to review and prepare for a second attempt at the test. Failure of the second attempt of the test will result in dismissal from the Academy.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/CHEATING

Trainees will not cheat, attempt to cheat, copy, or crib during any written test, project, assignment or practical exercise. Doing so is grounds for suspension or dismissal from employment. During a test, trainees may leave the classroom when finished if authorized by the instructor.

SKILL PROFICIENCIES

As part of the testing process, trainees will be asked to demonstrate physical skills. It is vital to the safety of the trainee, fellow staff and inmates that the trainee becomes as proficient as possible in the subject areas. Skills may be tested in any of the subjects taught at the VCA.

BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT

The Behavior Assessment is a tool used by academy staff to quantify professional behavior of trainees and if needed provide further training or corrective action in their professional development. Trainees will earn up to 20 points each day for their attention to detail. Violations will result in a failure to earn points for that day of the academy. Trainees must earn at a minimum 80 points a week, Failing Behavior Assessment is grounds for separation from the Department.

Timeliness, as stated in the rules and regulations trainees are expected to be timely i.e. be on time for duty, on time returning from break.

1. **Class participation/completion of assignments**, Failure to earn points will result with Incomplete or late work, Failure to participate, sleeping on duty. This list is not inclusive.
2. **Interpersonal Interactions**, Trainees will earn points through demonstrating pro-social and professional behavior. Trainees will experience conflict and are expected to deal with that conflict in an appropriate manner. Trainees should seek out academy staff for assistance and training if needed.
3. **Accountability**, Trainees are responsible to follow lawful orders of academy staff and report any of the following:(list is not inclusive)Trainee was unprepared for class or is missing equipment, Omitting facts, failure to take responsibility for behavior, failure to complete assigned tasks i.e. general housekeeping of classroom, Not following chain of command.
4. **Uniform**, as stated in the Rules and Regulations trainees are expected to wear the uniform of the day to standard, the uniform standard includes personal hygiene and grooming. If a trainee needs assistance in meeting this standard, they should contact academy staff.

FINAL GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Academy staff track grades and produce a report card at the end of an Academy on each trainee. All trainees must have a final grade point average of 80% or higher in order to graduate. Failure to obtain at least an 80% will result in non- certification of the trainee and could affect their employment status with the department.

ACADEMY UNIFORM/LIVING QUARTER STANDARDS

All trainees participating in the Academy will work with the assigned Training Assistant (TA) to establish and maintain a system of supervising the following standards.

JEWELRY

Trainees are allowed to wear a wristwatch and wedding band throughout the training program as well as Medic Alert ID bracelet, if needed. Any other form of jewelry (e.g., rings, bracelet, anklets, necklaces, neck chains, earrings), piercing of any kind, and any other adornments may not be worn during training. Jewelry will not to be worn during any physical activity outside of designated work hours. This includes, but is not limited to, lifting weights, volleyball or basketball. If a trainee has any jewelry that is not approved by the Academy, the trainee must secure that jewelry or leave it at home. The VCA is not responsible for trainees' personal items.

HAIRCUT/SHAVE/FINGERNAILS MALES:

Hair shall be worn short and off the ears and neck (no ponytails) and well groomed. Sideburns and mustaches will be well trimmed. Sideburns shall be short, no longer than the middle of the ear. A Mustache will not extend beyond the edge of the mouth and will be neatly trimmed (not below the top lip). No other facial hair (goatees, beards, etc.) is allowed.

FEMALES:

Hair shall be well groomed and short in length. Alternatively, if long, shall be rolled up, in a bun, to be as short as possible, will not touch the collar, and will be out of the face.

All trainees will keep their fingernails clean and short. Paint or polish is not allowed.

UNIFORM

Uniform (provided by your facility); White crew neck T-shirt (owned by trainee); Duty belt (provided by the Academy) [see Appendix A]; Black shoes/boots (issued at Academy); Black socks (owned by trainee); Shirts shall be kept buttoned except at the collar, and tucked into pants; and Belt will be black and provided by the trainee.

Trainees shall not appear with toothpicks, matchsticks, or other similar objects protruding from the mouth at any time. No chewing gum or tobacco is permitted in the classroom.

PHYSICAL FITNESS UNIFORMS

Correctional Academy t-shirt (provided by Academy); Correctional Academy sweat pants (provided by Academy); Correctional Academy sweatshirt (provided by Academy); Athletic socks (provided by trainee); and Good pair of sneakers (provided by trainee)

LIVING QUARTERS (HOTEL ROOMS)

Some of the trainees will be assigned a Hotel room upon reporting to the Academy. The only people allowed in these rooms are the trainees assigned to them; No one else should be in the room. This is considered state property and falls under Academy rules and regulations. At the discretion of the Academy staff, these quarters may be changed during the training period. Living quarters are subject to inspection at any time. No trainee is allowed in any living quarters other than the one assigned. In the event that trainees wish to converse with each other, study together etc., they can do so in a common area.

INSPECTIONS

Personal inspections will be held every day during training. Trainees are responsible for the following during inspections:

Uniform [including shoes]; Appearance (e.g., haircuts, shave, and general cleanliness); and Living quarters, assigned classroom, kitchen/cafeteria, and any other area designated by Academy staff.

(Note: Trainees and VCA are subject to inspection at any time).

SCHEDULE

Each trainee will be given a class schedule. This schedule is subject to change and revisions will be announced as soon as practical. Trainees are required to read and study all handouts. Work assignments, oral presentations, and/or reading assignments must be completed as scheduled.

ABSENCES

Only an Academy staff member may excuse a trainee from any class. Trainees will contact Academy staff at least one hour before class starts to report an unexpected absence due to illness, etc. Absence from training will be authorized on a case-by-case basis. Anticipated absences from training must be approved by Academy staff. Requests for absences must be submitted in writing to the Academy Staff. Trainees must present a subpoena or a letter from a court in order to be excused from training for court-related activities.

CURFEW (IF IN RESIDENCE)

Trainees will be in their assigned rooms by 2200 hours, and lights out by 2300. Failure to return to your assigned hotel room by 2200 hours will be considered an unauthorized absence and could result in a disciplinary action.

EQUIPMENT

All instructional, facility, and athletic equipment will be handled with care and safety. Lost or damaged equipment will be reported immediately. Equipment will be returned to its proper storage position when trainees are finished. Trainees may be held responsible for any equipment negligently damaged, destroyed or lost. Unauthorized use or theft of any Academy property or that of any other person shall result in dismissal, and may result in criminal prosecution.

REGULATED DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Possession of any regulated drug without a doctor's prescription and/or alcoholic beverages on the grounds is forbidden. At no time shall any trainee be found to have an odor of intoxicating beverages on his/her breath. Being under the influence of alcohol and/or a drug not prescribed by a doctor could result in immediate termination from employment.

INJURY

Injuries must be reported immediately to the Academy staff. Arrangements will be made for transportation to the doctor or hospital as required. Trainees reporting an injury will complete incident reports as required by the Department of Human Resources or Buildings and General Services. Injuries incurred during non-Academy related activities are not covered by worker's compensation insurance i.e. after hour's activities such as weight lifting, basketball, volleyball, running.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills may be conducted at any time. When a fire alarm sounds, leave the building by the designated route and gather in the designated area as quickly as possible.

REQUESTS

Requests to operate outside the standard operating procedure of the Academy must be made in writing to VCA staff using the Academy Request Form. The request will be reviewed and answered in a timely manner.

WEAPONS

Weapons of any kind are not allowed on the grounds of the Vermont Correctional Academy or any site where the trainees are working or visiting. Weaponry includes, but is not limited to:

Guns [of any kind]; Knives [of any kind]; Swords; Martial arts weaponry; or Ammunition of any kind.

If the trainee has arrived at the Academy with a weapon of any kind, he/she must inform VCA staff and secure the weapon in their vehicle. The trainee shall not bring the weapon back on-site once it is removed.

GENERAL RULES

FRATERNIZATION

Trainees will limit their contact with other state staff or visitors during training hours. Trainees will respond appropriately when spoken to. Romantic and/or sexual relationships between trainees are prohibited on the site of the Vermont Department of Corrections Training Center and/or any Academy training.

TOBACCO USE

While at Academy, tobacco use is only permitted after breakfast and lunch (if time allows); during off-duty hours and when otherwise given permission by a VCA staff member. Trainees will only use tobacco products in designated areas. No chew, snuff, etc. is allowed in any building. Only the Corrections Academy Director or designee may authorize tobacco use other than stated above.

MAINTENANCE

Report any maintenance issues to Academy Staff as soon as they are noticed.

CLEANING

All training areas will be cleaned daily, including sweeping and mopping the floors.

CELL PHONES/PAGERS

Trainees are not allowed to possess a cell phone or pager while on-duty regardless of the location of the training. Cell phones are not to be used during Academy hours; this includes breaks unless otherwise authorized by Academy Staff.

PROFANITY

Trainees will not use profanity on or off duty.

TARDINESS

Trainees must be punctual; tardiness is unacceptable behavior in the facility and at the academy. Trainees are expected to be on time to all scheduled activity. This type of behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, regardless of the circumstances. Late arrivals will be documented.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Trainees will sit at attention when Academy staff or visitors enter the classroom. Sitting at attention is defined as the trainee sitting straight up in their chairs looking straight forward and not moving the head or eyes. The trainee's forearms will be on the table in front of them at shoulder width. Trainees are expected to announce Academy staff or visitors entering the room bringing the class to attention in their chairs. Trainees will remain at attention until an order is given putting them at "At ease" or "As you were."

Trainees may have water on their tables for consumption during class. Coffee, Soda and other beverages are not allowed at the tables. Food is not allowed at the tables and may only be consumed during breaks in the back of the classroom unless otherwise permitted by Academy staff.

Trainees are expected to remain seated during instruction unless they need to use the restroom or are falling asleep. If the trainee is sleepy, they may stand in the back of the classroom to help them stay alert. The trainee is not allowed to lean against an object such as a wall or chair.

Trainees will raise their hand to answer or ask questions. An instructor can change the above direction during their class at their discretion.

MEALS

Trainees are expected to take one serving of each item at the beginning of the meal i.e. one entrée, one salad, one milk, one condiment packet. After all trainees and Academy staff have been served their meal if there is additional food left a trainees may help themselves within reason being sure to share as necessary.

HOTEL AMENITIES

The hotel has a pool, gym, Wi-Fi, arcade and laundry facilities these can be used by VCA. Be respectful of hotel guests and staff, clean up after yourself and report any issues or concerns.

EXPECTATIONS

Any trainee failing to meet the above standards will be provided with the necessary feedback and will be expected to complete some kind of physical exercise requirement i.e. push-ups, squats, jumping jacks (list is not all inclusive) to build their attention to detail and their wellness. This physical requirement will most likely include the whole class as trainees enjoy their success together in learning, so shall they exercise together to reinforce a concept.

CHANGES TO VCA RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules and Regulations of the Vermont Correctional Academy are subject to change at any time without immediate additions, deletions or edits to the student manual section. Additions, deletions or edits can be made in writing utilizing memos, letters, etc. The Vermont Correctional Academy reserves the right to make these changes as necessary for the benefit of the trainee, Academy, Department of Corrections and the State of Vermont.

LYNDONVILLE ACADEMY/HOTEL ADDRESS

The Lyndonville academy is being held at the Carter Center 1713 Industrial Parkway Lyndonville, VT. The Hotel is the Comfort Inn 703 US Route 5, Saint Johnsbury VT (802)748-1500.

Appendix A

CORRECTIONS OFFICER TRAINEE DUTY BELT



Figure 1 Orientation