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## VERMONT CORRECTIONAL ACADEMY RULES AND REGULATIONS

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### I. 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 that 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 learning that must occur throughout the Academy experience. These rules serve two major purposes:

- A) VCA staff essentially believes that 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 trainees 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.
- B) 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.

### II. 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.

### III. 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 College community. 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(s).

## Supervisory Practices cont'd:

### A) **Minor Discrepancies**

- 1) *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.
- 2) *Supervisory Notes*: Academy staff creates and maintain 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 their supervisory file at any time simply by making a request to an Academy staff member.
- 2) *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.

### B) **Major Discrepancies**

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

- 1) A written reprimand; copy to local appointing authority.
- 2) Suspension from the Correctional Academy pending an internal investigation.
- 3) Dismissal from the Correctional Academy.

## IV. **GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Any trainee who wishes to file a grievance/complaint regarding the administration or conduct of any training program instructor or VCA personnel shall immediately contact the Academy Administrator. 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 Academy Administrator, he/she may then appeal to the Director of Human Resource Development (HRD).

## V. **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

The paramilitary chain of command structure is applied throughout the VCA training curriculum. Trainees are expected to line up in formation, march, 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 Trainers.

### *Chain of Command*

- 1) Class Leader: As assigned
- 2) Squad Leader: As assigned
- 3) Training Assistant: As assigned
- 4) Training Coordinator(s): Ross Farnsworth, William Cathcart
- 5) Academy Administrator: Barry Mulcahy
- 6) DOC HRD Director: Robert Smith

## **VI. COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT**

Trainee competence will be assessed by Academy staff and trainers through testing and skill proficiencies evaluations.

### **A) Testing**

Tests will be given periodically. A minimum passing score of 80 percent is required on all tests. Tests might 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 can 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.

### *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 will leave the classroom when finished if authorized by the instructor.

### **B) Skill Proficiencies**

As part of the testing process, trainees will be asked to demonstrate physical motor 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.

### **C) 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.

## VII. ACADEMY UNIFORM/ROOM 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.

### A) **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 is also 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.

### B) **Haircut/shave**

- 1) *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. Mustaches 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.
- 2) *Females*: Hair shall be well groomed and short in length. Or, if long, shall be rolled up to be as short as possible and will not touch the collar and will be out of the face.

### C) **Uniform**

- 1) Uniform (provided by the Academy) [see Appendix A];
- 2) Duty belt (provided by the Academy) [see Appendix B].
- 3) Black shoes/boots (issued at Academy);
- 4) Black or dark blue socks (owned by trainee);
- 5) Shirts shall be kept buttoned except at the collar, and tucked into pants; and

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

- 6) Belt will be black and provided by the trainee,

### D) **Physical Fitness Uniforms**

- 1) Correctional Academy t-shirt (provided by Academy);
- 2) Correctional Academy sweat pants (provided by Academy);
- 3) Athletic socks (provided by trainee); and
- 4) Good pair of sneakers (provided by trainee).

E) **Living Quarters**

Living quarters shall be inspected daily with a focus on:

- 1) Dust;
- 2) Bed condition;
- 3) Footwear;
- 4) Desk;
- 5) Floor condition; and
- 6) Trash container(s).

F) **Dormitory**

Each trainee will be assigned residential quarters upon reporting to the Academy. At the discretion of the Academy staff, these quarters may be changed during the training period. Appropriate clothing must be worn in or when passing through common areas. Food and beverages are allowed in the dayroom only. Rooms are subject to inspection at any time. No trainee is allowed in any dorm suite other than the one they are assigned. In the event that trainees wish to converse with each other, study together, etc., they can do so in a common area such as the classroom or Tuttle Hall. Cable TV and computer outlets are available in the dormitories. The Academy provides a TV/DVD/VCR in the dayroom area of the dormitories. Trainees are not allowed to move them to another room. The Academy will provide computer access in the dormitories in cooperation with the College of St. Joseph. Trainees must provide their own computer and it must meet the requirements set forth by the College of St. Joseph IT staff.

G) **Inspections**

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

- 1) Uniform [including shoes];
- 2) Appearance (e.g., haircuts, shave and general cleanliness); and
- 3) Living quarters, assigned classroom, and any other area so designated by Academy staff.

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

## VIII. 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.

## IX. ABSENCES

Only an Academy staff member may excuse a trainee from any class and/or residential status. Absence from training will only be authorized for family emergencies or major illness/injury to a trainee. Requests for absences must be submitted in writing to the Academy Staff for approval.

Trainees must present a subpoena in order to be excused from training for court-related activities. All trainees must sign out when leaving the Academy for other than class related matters. Upon returning to the Academy, trainees must sign in.

*Curfew* – All trainees are required to be in their dormitory suites by 10pm. Failure to do so will be considered an unauthorized absence and result in a written reprimand.

#### **X. EQUIPMENT**

All instructional, facilities and athletic equipment will be handled with care and safety. Loss 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 also result in criminal prosecution.

#### **XI. 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.

#### **XII. ILLNESS**

Illness or injury must be reported immediately in writing to the Academy staff. Arrangements will be made for transportation to the doctor or hospital as required.

#### **XIII. FIRE DRILLS**

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

#### **XIV. REQUESTS**

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

#### **XV. 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:

- A) Guns [of any kind];
- B) Knives [of any kind];
- C) Swords;
- D) Martial arts weaponry;
- E) 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.

## XVI. COMMUTER STATUS

The Vermont Correctional Academy is a residential program. However, requests for commuter status may be submitted to the Academy administration for consideration. Commuter status is granted on a case-by-case basis and is not open to discussion with the class as a whole.

The VCA reserves the right to terminate commuter status if it deems it necessary for the success of the trainee.

## XVII. GENERAL RULES

- A) **Fraternization:** Trainees may not fraternize with any students at the College of St. Joseph. Always be professional, respectful, and polite to any student or College employee. If, for example, a college student says “hello,” respond in kind and move on.
- B) **Tobacco use:** While on campus, tobacco use is only permitted at two campus locations – the picnic tables and benches behind St. Joseph Hall and to the left of the Dorms. Tobacco use is only permitted during official breaks, after meals (if time allows); during off-duty hours and when otherwise given permission by a VCA staff member. No chew, snuff, etc is used in any building on the CSJ campus.
- C) **Maintenance:** Report any maintenance issues to Academy Staff as soon as they are noticed.
- D) **Trash:** Separate paper from cardboard and put them in the appropriate dumpster (e.g., take the paper out of shoe boxes before disposing of the cardboard).
- E) **Cell Phones** are not allowed in the classroom or during training hours. Trainees are allowed to possess cell phones in the dorms.
- F) **Pagers** of any type are not allowed in the classroom or during training hours. Trainees are allowed to possess pagers in the dorms.

## XVIII. Use of Facilities (College of St Joseph)

Trainees are allowed to use the following areas of the College:

1. Lounge in Tuttle Hall;
2. Laundry in Roncalli Hall (door to right of cafeteria main entrance);
3. Library and adjoining computer room;
4. Athletic Building with the following conditions;
  - A. Use limited to 0900 – 2100 hours (coordinated with TA)
  - B. Street shoes worn to Athletic Building. Trainees will change into sneakers before using the gym or workout areas
  - C. Trainees will “pack out” their trash
  - D. Trainees will not leave personal items in the Athletic Building

## **XIX. 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.

Appendix A.  
**Corrections Officer Trainee Uniform**



Appendix B.  
**Corrections Officer Trainee Duty Belt**



Glove Pouch

Belt Keeper (4)

Handcuff case

OC Case

Key Keeper