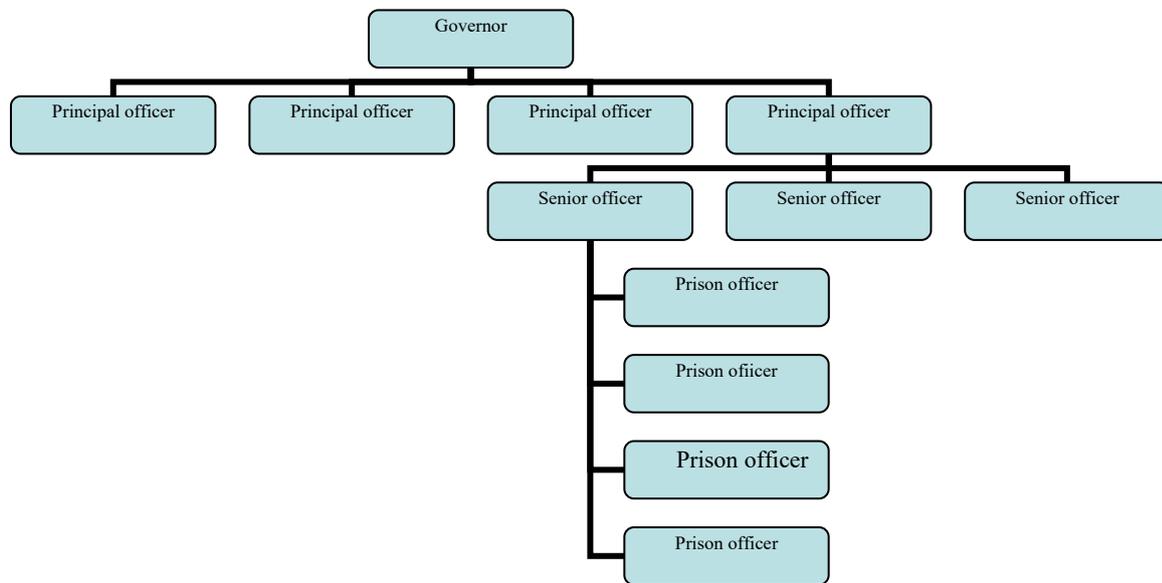


PRISON OFFICERS IN THE NORWEGIAN PRISON SYSTEM: Organizational position and training

There are 4 levels of uniformed staff in the Norwegian prisons



Governor: the head of the prison

Principal officer: the head of one block, that means the head of senior officers

Senior officer: the head of one section in one block, that means the head of prison officers

Prison officers: working on the “floor” in one section, with a senior officer as their boss, or in special positions as in the operation-central, guard, in the transport etc.

The position and the tasks of the prison officers:

The main tasks are divided into 2 areas, which may appear as difficult to combine:

1. security measures
2. rehabilitating measures

and all practical daily routines in the sections.

Basic training of the prison officers.

We say that our prison officers shall be “all-round-officers”, that means that they have the responsibility for everything that concerns the inmates in their section. In the basic training in the Prison officers`training center this intention is materialized in the subjects taught, where security-thinking and resocialization-items are integrated.

The goal of the basic training of prison officers:
at the end of the training they should have acquired the following competency, jfr § 8 in European Prison Rules:

- To be aware of the responsibility which lies in the professional role of having the authority to use power towards other people
- To be able to use security-measures in a correct and decent way
- To do what is possible to reduce the detrimental effects of prison term, jfr §65 in European Prison Rules
- To see to that the prisoners` rights are respected
- To be able to plan, organize and implement rehabilitative measures
- To have the necessary administrative skills
- To be competent to advise the inmates in personal matters, and also in judicial and social problems
- To have sufficient knowledge of other relevant official agencies to cooperate for the best of the inmate
- To optain a positive constructive attitude towards the work and the organization of the penitentiary system
- To be receptive and flexible to changes in the service to be done

Methodical/pedagogical guidelines for the basic training:

The teaching is based on the method of “problem-based learning”. That means that practical situations and problems are put up as targets for learning in different subject-areas. Each theoretical subject is not seen as important in itself, but is brought into the teaching as useful tools to reflect about the described problem, and to find solutions to the problem set.

This method may also be said to build on the exemplary-principle, that is, that the reflections and the solutions shall be applicable to other situations with professional challenges, because of their relevance and the quality.

1.Training in security measures.

Security in prison terms is defined as the totality of measures to prevent and handle situations where the safety of the society, the staff or the inmates may be at risk.

The basic training includes the following subjects:

- Technical security/security routines: knowledge and skills in using security equipment, and the routines of searching, guarding etc.
- Control and restraint: to be skilled in the methods of calming down physically aggressive inmates. It is strictly forbidden to use more than necessary force to calm the person, jfr.§ 3 in European Prison Rules.
- Coercion measures: to be familiar with the relevant laws and rules and being competent in using the restraint means. There are no arms in the prisons.
- Conflicts: to understand what creates conflicts between people, how to prevent them and how to handle them

- Crisis: to understand the individual experience of crisis, acute crisis happening in an organization, or in groups of inmates. And how to handle these different types of crisis.
- Aggressive/dangerous behaviour: to know how to assess risks, in the individual inmates and in groups
- Dangerous types of crime for society. Organized crime: risk assessment

The last years all the prisons have introduced an universal method of security-thinking and risk-assessment which is used in many countries in organizations with risk-potential.

The basic assumption is that all accidents stems from human flaws.

This method/program teaches how to analyze to find the important factors to change, to reduce this risk to a minimum.

2. Training in rehabilitating measures.

As mentioned above, the same officers are trained in rehabilitation as in security. And, many of these subjects intertwine in the lessons.

In the Norwegian correctional services it is a strong belief that social interaction is basic for personal development and change, and therefore the prison officers have to be skilled in interpersonal relations:

Every inmate is entitled to have their “personal officer” if they want to. That means, that the inmate has one officer who sees him through the prison-term, with the task of motivating and giving support when needed, to make the time spent as rehabilitating as possible. The personal officer is supposed to be a role-model and an advisor. To be able to do this the officer has to be open, tolerant and good at communication. Even if the same officer also has the responsibility of the security in that section.

The professional role of the prison officer, with the ethics and norms for this role, are subjects which are repeated in many of the lessons of training, and, of course, items of psychology and psychiatry to understand the sane and the more abnormal thinking and behaviour.

Communication, verbal and body-language, is also important to fulfil the many tasks.

This, we also call **dynamic security**, that is, security by building relations and getting knowledge through participating in the daily life of the inmates.

3. Besides these main areas in the training as mentioned above, there are of course lessons with the **relevant laws, conventions and recommendations** for this type of work, lessons with general physical training, and also other items.

If it is of interest we may of course go into any subject more detailed, or the system of training in general.

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3 December 2007*