

# PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL VOLUNTEER STAFF HANDBOOK



## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Pennington County Corrections is to provide a safe, secure, and humane environment for staff, inmates and public, while offering opportunities for inmates to improve themselves.

## PHILOSOPHY

The basic philosophy of the Pennington County Jail's Programming is to develop and implement programs and provide services that will benefit both the inmates and the staff. Although some of the rules and regulations that you encounter will seem unnecessary or mundane, they are enforced for security reasons. Our facility must maintain security for inmates, volunteers, and correctional staff.

The programs and services will operate at the convenience of the Correctional Staff on duty. You will experience delays on occasions due to the facility operations. Hopefully the delays will be minimal and you are not inconvenienced for very long. The objectives of our programs are to assist the inmate population to develop more positive attitudes and become productive and responsible members of society.

You, as a volunteer, will be supervised by the Correctional Staff. Any proposed plans or ideas must be cleared with the Program's Staff before being introduced to the inmate population.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

If you need to cancel the group or program that you were scheduled for, please contact Program's or Correctional Staff on duty. Please call **218-681-6161**.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the case of an emergency, please remain calm. Your ability to remain calm in the face of emergencies will help the inmate population and help them to remain calm as well. In the event of an evacuation, volunteer staff is evacuated with the inmate population. The Correctional Staff will follow the emergency procedures and determine if evacuation is necessary.

Although volunteer staff will remain with the inmate population, there are slight deviations in these emergency plans. If you are in the classroom, recreation room area, or an interview room, depending on the nature of the emergency, you may be kept there or escorted with the inmate population to a more safe and secure area. Again, you will remain there until the correctional officer has been given authorization to return to normal activities. During emergency operations, you will not be allowed to leave the facility.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is the wishes of the Pennington County Jail that you do not violate an inmate's confidence. Do not repeat what the inmate has told you in confidence unless one of the following elements is present:

- Violation of facility rules, regulations or policies
- Escape plans or attempt to breach security
- Any harmful behavior to the inmate, staff, or volunteer
- Any criminal matters
- Inmate progress
- Disclosure of being sexually assaulted or sexually harassed.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Do not make promises that you cannot keep. Many times, inmates are lax about promises they made to others. However, they can be unforgiving if someone they trust lets them down. Openness and honesty will go a long way towards winning an inmate's respect. These characteristics will also set an excellent example of how to be a happy and well-developed person when released back into society.

Do not visit the inmate's friends or family outside of the facility without permission from the inmate and consent of the family members. We strongly urge that you consult the Program's Staff before pursuing any related activities outside of the facility. Should you be given permission to perform this activity, you are not acting on behalf of the Pennington County Jail.

Working with inmates is slow, difficult, and often times exasperating work. Do not expect instant results. Many prisoners have spent a lifetime in irresponsible and antisocial behavior patterns. Your motivation and purpose in volunteering in our facilities is to be helpful. The progress will be made slowly.

Do not over identify. Become the inmate's friend, but do not sympathize with them. This will affect your objectivity. Many of our prisoners have problems that are not unique. They are manipulative by nature, and therefore tend to seduce people into their world. Be supportive, however, if you feel yourself beginning to identify with the prisoner's situation, talk it over with Program's Staff. They can help you regain your objectivity.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT**

When arriving at the Jail for your program, state your name and why you are there. The correctional staff will determine whether you should be allowed into the facility. Only those that have been pre-approved will be allowed to enter into the facility.

All rules, regulations, and policy statements governing the conduct in the Jail apply to the Volunteer staff. Violations of these rules may result in removal from our facility and possible termination of volunteer services. We encourage you to use common sense as your guide.

1. Each volunteer shall become familiar with the jail and program rules and regulations.
2. Volunteers shall immediately report any violation of jail rules or regulations to the Program's or Correctional Staff.
3. Each volunteer is expected to be mentally alert, personally neat, and shall render their services on an impartial basis. Conduct shall be consistent with the security and operation of the jail.
4. No volunteer shall solicit or accept a gift from an inmate, nor may any person acting on behalf of an inmate accept any gifts.
5. Volunteers may be subject to a body pat search, inspection of personal property and metal detectors.
6. No volunteer shall use physical force unless defending themselves, or staff.
7. Volunteers should not provide legal advice to inmates.
8. No volunteer shall report for any programs or services while under the influence of alcohol or unlawful chemicals.
9. Volunteers will not have access to inmates' confidential records.
10. Volunteers are expected to follow jail staff directives and respond in a respectful manner.
11. Volunteers shall comply with the facility safety regulations. Any injury sustained in the jail shall be reported to the Program's or Correctional Staff at the time of the injury, or as soon as possible thereafter.
12. Volunteers are encouraged to communicate with the Program's and Correctional Staff. Please feel free to discuss any concerns or ask questions as you feel necessary.
13. Volunteers or programs may be canceled when Program's or Correctional Staff determines that it is necessary. Notification shall be as early as possible.
14. Contraband Control. The control of contraband is one of the most important areas of jail security. As defined in our inmate handbook, contraband is defined as "Any item(s) not allowed when the inmate enters this facility, not given or assigned to an inmate by this facility or not purchased through commissary. And smuggling or possessing of any unauthorized item(s)". To define it more specifically; No person shall introduce any of the following articles into the jail:

- A. Intoxicating beverages
- B. Prescription medications or non-prescription medications
- C. Firearms, or instruments customarily used as, or intended to be used as, weapons.
- D. Any instrument that may be used as an aid in attempting an escape.
- E. Any other article, instrument, or substance specifically prohibited by the jail.
- F. Generally, anything not distributed by facility staff is contraband.

The best rule of thumb is NOT to bring anything into the jail and do not give anything to any inmate without getting the approval of the Program's Staff.

- 15. Volunteers may not take anything from an inmate out of the facility. Inmates have regular access to the telephones and U.S. Postal Service, so it is not necessary for volunteers to become involved in contacting friends or relatives of inmates, their attorneys, probation agents, or the judges. If you have questions concerning inmates requesting you to deliver messages, please contact the Program's Staff.
- 16. Volunteers may not provide inmate(s) transportation to and from appointments. Please contact programs staff if you have questions.
- 17. In cases of emergencies, volunteers should contact the Correctional Officer on duty or Central Control.
- 18. It is the volunteer's responsibility to inform the Program's Staff of any new investigations or criminal charges. The volunteer's services may be suspended on a temporary basis. The Jail reserves the right to determine if suspension is warranted.
- 19. The Pennington County Jail reserves the right to, at any time without prior notification, refuse admittance to any volunteer. Please contact Program's Staff if you have any questions. Each volunteer should understand that any violation of the conditions of this handbook may cause suspension or termination of the volunteer's services.

## **PROGRAM RULES**

There are a variety of chemical dependency, counseling, educational, recreational, religious, and vocational programs and services available for classified inmates on "good behavior". Participation is entirely voluntary.

- 1. All inmates participating in any program or service will be expected to act in a responsible manner. Any inappropriate or disruptive behavior will result in a loss of program privileges and face possible disciplinary sanctions as well.
- 2. Tentative program schedules are posted. Inmates wishing to attend a program or activity must be dressed appropriately and ready to attend when staff announces the program.
- 3. Inmates should plan to stay for the whole scheduled program session. An early return to the dorm room or cell areas may cause future restrictions to be imposed.
- 4. Inmates and volunteers are not allowed to embrace. Handshakes are acceptable.
- 5. Written notes are not allowed to be passed from inmate to inmate.
- 6. Program sessions must stick to the theme of the specified program. Inmates are not allowed to use the meeting for individual grievances.

Periodically circumstances dictate that activities must be canceled or rescheduled due to unforeseen difficulties. Please be understanding when this occurs.

## **PRISON RAPE ELIMINATION ACT (PREA)**

The Pennington County Jail has a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. As part of your volunteer orientation, you will be provided training on the facilities zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse and sexual harassment, along with your responsibility in prevention, detection, response and incident reporting. If during orientation or anytime you are serving as a volunteer and you have any questions or concerns regarding PREA, please speak with a jail staff employee immediately.

## **PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL VOLUNTEER TENNESSEAN WARNING**

In accordance with Minnesota Statute 13.43, we must inform you of your rights as a subject of data. The data you give us about yourself is needed to identify you and assist us in placing you as a volunteer with our agency.

The information we collect about you is classified as either Public or Private. Public means it is available to anyone who asks to see it. Private means the information is available only to the person the information is about and to the staff who must use it in the normal course of conducting County business and as otherwise provided for by law.

As a Pennington County Jail volunteer, only the following information about you will be public, meaning it is available to anyone who asks to see it. All other data will be private as defined above.

1. Your Name;
2. The basis for and the amount of any expense reimbursement;
3. Your volunteer job title;
4. Your volunteer job description;
5. The dates of your first and last volunteer work with us;
6. The existence and status of any complaints or charges against you;
7. The final outcome of any discipline action taken against you as a volunteer of Pennington County, including the specific reason and supporting documentation about your case; and
8. The terms of any agreement settling any dispute arising out of the volunteer relationship.

By signing the volunteer application on the following page, you are acknowledging you have read and understand the Tennesseean Warning provided above.

# PENNINGTON COUNTY JAIL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
First middle initial last name mm/dd/yyyy

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home #: ( )- \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: ( )- \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

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Which Jail Program are you volunteering for? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you wish to volunteer in our facility? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any volunteer experience you have: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been incarcerated? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, when/where: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently on probation or parole? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List the full names of any relatives or acquaintances incarcerated in the past two (2) years: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List any health limitations and/or medical concerns staff should be aware of (ex. Diabetic): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please list two personal references:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
First/Middle/Last mm/dd/yy

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
First/Middle/Last mm/dd/yy

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any certifications that you may hold (ex. pastoral license, education license, counselor certification, etc.):

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I declare that all above information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and that this information is classified confidential.

I understand the Pennington County Jail typically does not accept volunteers who are acquainted or related to inmates in their facility, however, the Pennington County Jail reserves the right to grant exceptions to this policy.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Pennington County Jail Volunteer Staff Handbook. I have read and understand the rules and agree to abide by them. I understand that any violation of the rules may result in the suspension and or termination of the privilege of entering the Pennington County Jail.

I understand that the Jail facility is tobacco free and I will not attempt to bring tobacco or any other contraband into the facility and understand that violators of this policy are subject to criminal prosecution. I agree that I will not be under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants while volunteering in the Jail.

I authorize the Pennington County Sheriff's Office to conduct a criminal background check before allowing me to volunteer in their Jail facility and absolve the Pennington County Sheriff's Office from any liability should I become ill or injured while volunteering.

I understand that the Pennington County Jail will conduct a criminal background records check every five (5) years on an active jail volunteer.

I understand it is my responsibility to notify Programs staff when I choose to terminate this agreement and be removed as an active jail volunteer.

I have read and understand the Tennessee Warning.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this completed application to: Jail Programs, Pennington County Jail,  
119 Main Ave S, Thief River Falls MN 56701 or Fax to (218) 681-6161.***

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For Pennington County Jail Staff Use Only

Background Check Completed

31 Check Completed

Application is:  Approved

Denied, reason: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Security Awareness Agreement Occasional Unescorted Access

You have access to a secured area where Criminal Justice Information (CJI) can be accessed, stored, and discussed. There Federal Bureau of Investigation's Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) Security Policy and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Policy 5050 require basic security awareness training about the appropriate ways to access and use CJI. The first training must occur within six months of initial assignment.

**Occasional Unescorted Access** is infrequent access needed for a task requiring access to a physically secure area. Examples are maintaining vending machines and watering plants. Custodial services are not included in this definition. People like yourself with only occasional unescorted access to CJI are required to sign this agreement instead of completing more formal security awareness training.

The BCA requires this agreement be signed before allowing any access to a physically secure area where there can be access to CJI.

This agreement is in effect for a period of two years from the date it is signed. It must be resigned every two years.

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*I am being allowed limited access to a physically secure location where CJI is accessed, stored, or discussed.*

*By signing this agreement, I understand I will be given unescorted access to areas containing CJI. I agree not to read or remove any CJI documents, including but not limited to any displayed-on bulletin boards, lying on desktops, placed in shredding bins, or thrown in garbage receptacles. I further agree that any CJI that I hear will not be shared with anyone at any time.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for Occasional Unescorted Access

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agency Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Effective Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date



# AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD CHECK

I authorize the Pennington County Sheriff's Dept. to conduct a criminal history record check on my background information for the purpose of determining my eligibility for issuance of a jail pass.

NAME (Please Print Clearly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
First Middle Last

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ MN Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_  
(What organization will you be volunteering for?)

Phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Who referred you to our program (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

**Any information obtained by this record check will be used solely for the purpose of determining the applicant's eligibility for issuance of a jail pass and will be kept confidential. If, however, a warrant or commitment is discovered, law requires that we act upon it.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date