

Earnings

Median hourly earnings of recreation workers who worked full time in 2000 were \$8.24. The middle 50 percent earned between about \$6.75 and \$10.65, while the top 10 percent earned \$14.61 or more. However, earnings of recreation directors and others in supervisory or managerial positions can be substantially higher. Most public and private recreation agencies provide full-time recreation workers with typical benefits; part-time workers receive few, if any, benefits. Hourly earnings in the industries employing the largest number of recreation workers in 2000 were:

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| Nursing and personal care facilities | \$8.70 |
| Local government, except education and hospitals | 8.40 |
| Individual and family services | 8.27 |
| Civic and social associations | 7.62 |
| Miscellaneous amusement and recreation services | 7.46 |

Median hourly earnings of fitness trainers and aerobics instructors in 2000 were \$10.96. The middle 50 percent earned between \$7.65 and \$17.84, while the top 10 percent earned \$25.98 or more. In 2000, earnings of these workers in the miscellaneous amusement and recreation services industry, which includes commercial fitness clubs, were \$12.22 an hour; fitness trainers and aerobics instructors in civic and social associations earned \$9.03. Earnings for successful self-employed personal trainers can be much higher.

Related Occupations

Recreation workers must exhibit leadership and sensitivity when dealing with people. Other occupations that require similar personal qualities include counselors, probation officers and correctional treatment specialists, psychologists, recreational therapists, and social workers. Occupations that focus on physical fitness, as do fitness workers, include athletes, coaches, umpires, and related workers.

Sources of Additional Information

For information on jobs in recreation, contact employers such as local government departments of parks and recreation, nursing and personal care facilities, local YMCAs, or the Boy or Girl Scouts.

Ordering information for materials describing careers and academic programs in recreation is available from:

► National Recreation and Park Association, Division of Professional Services, 22377 Belmont Ridge Rd., Ashburn, VA 20148. Internet:

<http://www.activeparks.org>

For information on careers and certification in the fitness field, contact:

► American Council on Exercise, 5820 Oberlin Dr., Suite 102, San Diego, CA 92121-3787. Internet: <http://www.acefitness.org>

► American College of Sports Medicine, P.O. Box 1440, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1440. Internet: <http://www.acsm.org>

► National Strength and Conditioning Association, 1955 North Union Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80909. Internet: <http://www.nasca-lift.org>

Protective Service Occupations

Correctional Officers

(O*NET 33-1011.00, 33-3011.00, 33-3012.00)

Significant Points

- The work can be stressful and hazardous.
- Job opportunities are expected to be excellent, due to fast growth and high replacement needs.
- Most jobs are in prisons in rural areas or in large regional jails.

Nature of the Work

Correctional officers are responsible for overseeing individuals who have been arrested and are awaiting trial or who have been convicted of a crime and sentenced to serve time in a jail, reformatory, or penitentiary. They maintain security and inmate accountability to prevent disturbances, assaults, or escapes. Officers have no law enforcement responsibilities outside the institution where they work. (For more information on related occupations, see the statements on police and detectives and probation officers and correctional treatment specialists elsewhere in the *Handbook*.)

Police and sheriffs' departments in county and municipal jails or precinct station houses employ many correctional officers, also known as *detention officers*. Most of the approximately 3,300 jails in the United States are operated by county governments, with about three-quarters of all jails under the jurisdiction of an elected sheriff. Individuals in the jail population change constantly as some are released, some are convicted and transferred to prison, and new offenders are arrested and enter the system. Correctional officers in the American jail system admit and process more than 11 million people a year, with about half a million offenders in jail at any given

time. When individuals are first arrested, the jail staff may not know their true identity or criminal record, and violent detainees may be placed in the general population. This is the most dangerous phase of the incarceration process for correctional officers.

Most correctional officers are employed in large jails or State and Federal prisons, watching over the approximately one million offenders who are incarcerated in Federal and State prisons at any given time. In addition to jails and prisons, a relatively small number of correctional officers oversee individuals being held by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service before they are released or deported, or they work for correctional institutions that are run by private for-profit organizations. While both jails and prisons can be dangerous places to work, prison populations are more stable than jail populations, and correctional officers in prisons know the security and custodial requirements of the prisoners with whom they are dealing.

Regardless of the setting, correctional officers maintain order within the institution, and enforce rules and regulations. To help ensure that inmates are orderly and obey rules, correctional officers monitor the activities and supervise the work assignments of inmates. Sometimes, it is necessary for officers to search inmates and their living quarters for contraband like weapons or drugs, settle disputes between inmates, and enforce discipline. Correctional officers periodically inspect the facilities, checking cells and other areas of the institution for unsanitary conditions, contraband, fire hazards, and any evidence of infractions of rules. In addition, they routinely inspect locks, window bars, grilles, doors, and gates for signs of tampering. Finally, officers inspect mail and visitors for prohibited items.

Correctional officers report orally and in writing on inmate conduct and on the quality and quantity of work done by inmates. Officers also report security breaches, disturbances, violations of rules, and any unusual occurrences. They usually keep a daily log or record



Correctional officers ensure the security and safety of penal facilities.

of their activities. Correctional officers cannot show favoritism and must report any inmate who violates the rules. Should the situation arise, they help the responsible law enforcement authorities investigate crimes committed within their institution or search for escaped inmates.

In jail and prison facilities with direct supervision cellblocks, officers work unarmed. They are equipped with communications devices so that they can summon help if necessary. These officers often work in a cellblock alone, or with another officer, among the 50 to 100 inmates who reside there. The officers enforce regulations primarily through their interpersonal communications skills and the use of progressive sanctions, such as loss of some privileges.

In the highest security facilities where the most dangerous inmates are housed, correctional officers often monitor the activities of prisoners from a centralized control center with the aid of closed-circuit television cameras and a computer tracking system. In such an environment, the inmates may not see anyone but officers for days or weeks at a time and only leave their cells for showers, solitary exercise time, or visitors. Depending on the offender's security classification within the institution, correctional officers may have to restrain inmates in handcuffs and leg irons to safely escort them to and from cells and other areas to see authorized visitors. Officers also escort prisoners between the institution and courtrooms, medical facilities, and other destinations outside the institution.

Working Conditions

Working in a correctional institution can be stressful and hazardous. Every year, a number of correctional officers are injured in confrontations with inmates. Correctional officers may work indoors or outdoors. Some correctional institutions are well lit, temperature controlled, and ventilated, while others are old, overcrowded, hot, and noisy. Correctional officers usually work an 8-hour day, 5 days a week, on rotating shifts. Prison and jail security must be provided around the clock, which often means that officers work all hours of the day and night, weekends, and holidays. In addition, officers may be required to work paid overtime.

Employment

Correctional officers held about 457,000 jobs in 2000. Almost 6 of every 10 jobs were in State correctional institutions such as prisons, prison camps, and youth correctional facilities. Most of the

remaining jobs were in city and county jails or other institutions run by local governments. About 15,000 jobs for correctional officers were in Federal correctional institutions, and about 19,000 jobs were in privately owned and managed prisons.

There are 118 jail systems in the United States that house over 1,000 inmates, all of which are located in urban areas, though most correctional officers work in institutions located in rural areas with smaller inmate populations. A significant number work in jails and other facilities located in law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most institutions require correctional officers to be at least 18 to 21 years of age and a U.S. citizen; have a high school education or its equivalent; demonstrate job stability, usually by accumulating two years of work experience; and have no felony convictions. Promotion prospects may be enhanced through obtaining a postsecondary education.

Correctional officers must be in good health. Candidates for employment are generally required to meet formal standards of physical fitness, eyesight, and hearing. In addition, many jurisdictions use standard tests to determine applicant suitability to work in a correctional environment. Good judgment and the ability to think and act quickly are indispensable. Applicants are typically screened for drug abuse, subject to background checks, and required to pass a written examination.

Federal, State, and some local departments of corrections provide training for correctional officers based on guidelines established by the American Correctional Association and the American Jail Association. Some States have regional training academies which are available to local agencies. All States and local correctional agencies provide on-the-job training at the conclusion of formal instruction, including legal restrictions and interpersonal relations. Many systems require firearms proficiency and self-defense skills. Officer trainees typically receive several weeks or months of training in an actual job setting under the supervision of an experienced officer. However, specific entry requirements and on-the-job training vary widely from agency to agency.

Academy trainees generally receive instruction on a number of subjects, including institutional policies, regulations, and operations, as well as custody and security procedures. As a condition of employment, new Federal correctional officers must undergo 200 hours of formal training within the first year of employment. They also must complete 120 hours of specialized training at the U.S. Federal Bureau of Prisons residential training center at Glynco, Georgia within the first 60 days after appointment. Experienced officers receive annual in-service training to keep abreast of new developments and procedures.

Some correctional officers are members of prison tactical response teams, which are trained to respond to disturbances, riots, hostage situations, forced cell moves, and other potentially dangerous confrontations. Team members receive training and practice with weapons, chemical agents, forced entry methods, crisis management, and other tactics.

With education, experience, and training, qualified officers may advance to correctional sergeant. Correctional sergeants supervise correctional officers and usually are responsible for maintaining security and directing the activities of other officers during an assigned shift or in an assigned area. Ambitious and qualified correctional officers can be promoted to supervisory or administrative positions all the way up to warden. Officers sometimes transfer to related areas, such as probation officer, parole officer, or correctional treatment specialist.

Job Outlook

Job opportunities for correctional officers are expected to be excellent through 2010. The need to replace correctional officers who transfer to other occupations, retire, or leave the labor force, coupled with rising employment demand, will generate thousands of job openings each year. In the past, some local and State corrections agencies have experienced difficulty in attracting and keeping qualified applicants, largely due to relatively low salaries and the concentration of jobs in rural locations. This situation is expected to continue.

Employment of correctional officers is expected to increase faster than the average for all occupations through 2010, as additional officers are hired to supervise and control a growing inmate population. The adoption of mandatory sentencing guidelines calling for longer sentences and reduced parole for inmates will continue to spur demand for correctional officers. Moreover, expansion and new construction of corrections facilities also are expected to create many new jobs for correctional officers, although State and local government budgetary constraints could affect the rate at which new facilities are built and staffed. Some employment opportunities also will arise in the private sector as public authorities contract with private companies to provide and staff corrections facilities.

Layoffs of correctional officers are rare because of increasing offender populations. While officers are allowed to join bargaining units, they are not allowed to strike.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of correctional officers were \$31,170 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$24,650 and \$40,100. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$20,010, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$49,310. Median annual earnings in the public sector were \$37,430 in the Federal Government, \$31,860 in State government, and \$29,240 in local government. In the management and public relations industry, where officers employed by privately operated prisons are classified, median annual earnings were \$21,600. According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the starting salary for Federal correctional officers was about \$27,000 a year in 2001. Starting Federal salaries were slightly higher in selected areas where prevailing local pay levels were higher.

Median annual earnings of first-line supervisors/managers of correctional officers were \$41,880 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$32,460 and \$55,540. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$28,280, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$67,280. Median annual earnings were \$40,560 in State government and \$49,680 in local government.

In addition to typical benefits, correctional officers employed in the public sector usually are provided with uniforms or a clothing allowance to purchase their own uniforms. Civil service systems or merit boards cover officers employed by the Federal Government and most State governments. Their retirement coverage entitles them to retire at age 50 after 20 years of service or at any age with 25 years of service.

Related Occupations

A number of options are available to those interested in careers in protective services and security. Security guards and gaming surveillance officers protect people and property against theft, vandalism, illegal entry, and fire. Police and detectives maintain law and order, prevent crime, and arrest offenders. Probation officers and correctional treatment specialists monitor and counsel offenders in the community and evaluate their progress in becoming productive members of society.

Sources of Additional Information

Information about correctional jobs in a jail setting is available from:

- The American Jail Association, 2053 Day Rd., Suite 100, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Internet: <http://www.corrections.com/aja/index.html>

Information on entrance requirements, training, and career opportunities for correctional officers at the Federal level may be obtained by calling the Federal Bureau of Prisons at (800) 347-7744. Internet: <http://www.bop.gov>.

Information on obtaining a position as a correctional officer with the Federal Government is available from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) through a telephone-based system. Consult your telephone directory under U.S. Government for a local number or call (912) 757-3000; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339. The first number is not tollfree and charges may result. Information also is available from the OPM Internet site: <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>.

Firefighting Occupations

(O*NET 33-1021.01, 33-1021.02, 33-2011.01, 33-2011.02, 33-2021.01, 33-2021.02, 33-2022.00)

Significant Points

- Firefighting involves hazardous conditions and long, irregular hours.
- Keen competition for jobs is expected; many people are attracted to the occupation because it provides considerable job security and the opportunity to perform an essential public service.

Nature of the Work

Every year, fires and other emergencies take thousands of lives and destroy property worth billions of dollars. Firefighters help protect the public against these dangers by rapidly responding to a variety of emergencies. They are frequently the first emergency personnel at the scene of a traffic accident or medical emergency and may be called upon to put out a fire, treat injuries, or perform other vital functions.

During duty hours, firefighters must be prepared to respond immediately to a fire or any other emergency that arises. Because fighting fires is dangerous and complex, it requires organization and teamwork. At every emergency scene, firefighters perform specific duties assigned by a superior officer. At fires, they connect hose lines to hydrants, operate a pump to send water to high pressure hoses, and position ladders to enable them to deliver water to the fire. They also rescue victims and provide emergency medical attention as needed, ventilate smoke-filled areas, and attempt to salvage the contents of buildings. Their duties may change several times while the company is in action. Sometimes they remain at the site of a disaster for days at a time, rescuing trapped survivors and assisting with medical treatment.

Firefighters have assumed a range of responsibilities, including emergency medical services. In fact, most calls to which firefighters respond involve medical emergencies, and about half of all fire departments provide ambulance service for victims. Firefighters receive training in emergency medical procedures, and many fire departments require them to be certified as emergency medical technicians. (For more information, see the *Handbook* statement on emergency medical technicians and paramedics.)

Firefighters work in a variety of settings, including urban and suburban areas, airports, chemical plants, other industrial sites, and