

## *Volunteer Guidelines for San Quentin State Prison* *(Buddhadharma Sangha)*

The following materials offer a sense of the standards we observe in the prison, but some details do not apply to volunteers on gate clearances. This list is not exhaustive and does not take the place of an in-person orientation.

**New volunteers should be sure to discuss these guidelines with a group leader prior to attending.**

## GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH INMATES

Inmates have a great deal of frustration in their lives. Most have experienced repeated losses and failures and are suspicious of any offer of assistance or guidance.

Working with inmates cannot be reduced to a "cookbook" method. Much will be left to your good judgment. However, we have prepared the following guidelines to help you be most effective while avoiding difficulties during your volunteer service. Serious violations may result in the loss of your volunteer privileges.

1. **BE YOURSELF-** Don't establish a façade or create special status for yourself. Express yourself genuinely.
2. **BE HONEST AND MEAN WHAT YOU SAY-** Don't make a promise unless you have thought it through first and can carry it out. Inmates may test you, call your bluff, and see if you follow through on your promises.
3. **ACCEPT THE INMATE-** Accept the inmate as an individual. Categorizing an inmate is unfair and dehumanizing.
4. **BE SUPPORTIVE, ENCOURAGING, AND FRIENDLY-** Be friendly, but not overly familiar. Recognize inmate needs.
5. **BE FAIR, OBJECTIVE, AND CONSISTENT-**Inmates are used to day-to-day routine and your attitude and method of dealing with them are part of that routine. They may not like your attitude or method but if you are fair, objective, and consistent they will respect you for it. Enforcing rules for some and relaxing them for others is inconsistent and unfair. It is also a form of over-familiarity.
6. **SHOW RESPECT-** Respect is the key. You must respect the inmate's individuality and basic rights. Avoid prejudices and feelings of superiority. Respond to the inmates' needs and interests, not your own. Once you have earned the respect and trust of the inmate, he will be open with you.
7. **EARN RESPECT FOR YOURSELF-** Make it clear that you will not be manipulated. If a situation arises that you consider "borderline," check on how it is to be handled.
8. **BE PROFESSIONAL-** The volunteer service you provide should reflect professionalism at all times. An appropriate rapport with inmates is an important part of what you are trying to accomplish as a volunteer.
9. **DON'T PRY-** Let the inmate tell you on his own and at his own pace about the offense he committed, his family, or any other guilt-associated matters.
10. **BE AWARE OF (AND AVOID) STEREOTYPES-** Stereotypes oversimplify and misrepresent an otherwise complex situation. They are often demeaning and "poison" work and social environments. Some of the more common stereotypes in the prison setting include:

- ❖ "Inmates are nothing but lying con artists who will cheat you at the first opportunity."
- ❖ "Inmates are just poor, helpless victims of the system."
- ❖ "The guards are all lazy knuckle-draggers who don't care about the inmates, the programs, or doing a good job."

11. **BE FIRM, SET LIMITS, AND AVOID OVERFAMILIARITY-** Don't discuss personal matters with inmates. Inmates may push you until you say "stop." How hard and far they push will depend on how hard and far you allow them to push. If an inmate makes an improper advance, handle it appropriately. If you are unable to do so, notify your sponsor.

- ❖ Sharing your problems with an inmate may lead to a serious conflict of interest.
- ❖ Leave your professional experiences on the job. Don't relate institutional incidents.
- ❖ Don't hug inmates. Excessive personal contact is discouraged. Displays of affection are inappropriate and will be cause for termination of your volunteer activity.

12. **DON'T OVER-IDENTIFY-** Don't take the inmates' problems upon yourself. They are not your problems. Over-identifying with the inmates can bring about the we/they syndrome:

- ❖ "They are wrong about you."
- ❖ "They treat you like they treat us."
- ❖ "I'm okay, you're okay- they are not okay."

13. **NEVER COMPROMISE ON MATTERS OF SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- ❖ **NEVER** give out your address or phone number to an inmate.
- ❖ **NEVER** loan money to an inmate.
- ❖ **NEVER** offer a ride to an inmate.

14. **BE PREPARED FOR HOSTILITY-** Hostile situations are rare, but they can and do occur. An inmate, overwhelmed with problems and unmet needs may confront you with hostility. At such times, do not force the conversation upon him and don't respond in a hostile, sarcastic, or anxious manner. Instead, keep your composure and either acknowledge their situation and feelings and back off for awhile (or just back off immediately, depending on your best judgment and comfort level.) Chances are that the inmate will regain his composure. Discuss the situation with your program coordinator.

15. **DON'T PANIC**- In the event of an emergency or other difficult situation, try not to panic. Instead, attempt to keep the situation from escalating, proceed to a safe area, and report the situation to an employee.
16. **USE A "BUDDY SYSTEM"**- It is helpful, especially when you are a new volunteer, to stay within eye contact of another volunteer or staff member, and to assist each other when necessary.
17. **BE PATIENT**- Change often takes time. The positive effects of your patience with the inmate may not have a decisive influence until after you have stopped working with him.
18. **DON'T EXPECT THANKS**- You may not receive thanks or any show of gratitude from the inmate. He may feel it, but may not know how to express it. However, your effort will be appreciated.
19. **REPORT PROBLEMS IMMEDIATELY**- If you have a difficulty with an inmate, report it to an employee immediately.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

The following rules, regulations, and procedures are derived from the California Penal Code, the Director of Correction's rules, and the operational procedures at San Quentin. They must be adhered to at all times. Please familiarize yourself with the California Code of Regulations (Title 15) for further information.

### General:

1. You must be at least 21 years old to volunteer.
2. You cannot be a volunteer if you have a family member or close friend incarcerated at San Quentin.
3. Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation staff will not permit inmates to use hostages to escape from custody or otherwise interfere with orderly institutional operations.
4. Persons and the articles in their possession are subject to search.
5. Officers assigned to gates are responsible for identifying you and for the search of any car, package, and purse that passes through the gate.
6. You are expected to obey the officer when an order, command, direction, or instruction is given. This is for your protection and the security of the institution.
7. You are responsible for the dress and conduct of your guests.
8. Approval for guests to enter the institution is granted only after San Quentin Prison Administrators have approved clearance.
9. All gate clearances must be submitted to the Warden's Office within two (2) weeks of the expected visit. Failure to do so will result in the denial of the gate clearance.
10. In the event of an emergency, blow your whistle and inform staff of the location and nature of the emergency. If you can't be an asset during an emergency, stand away and allow others to respond.

**Vehicles & Parking:**

1. Vehicles entering or leaving the institution are subject to search at any time.
2. Keep contraband out of your vehicle.
3. Park in the designated visitors' parking area.

**What and What Not to Bring:**

1. Carry your official I.D. and a whistle with you at all times.
2. Leave your purses, wallets, and any unnecessary belongings locked in your vehicle. Valuables and large sums of money are best left at home. We recommend carrying a separate small purse or wallet for essential items only.
3. Anything brought into the prison for programs use must be listed on a gate clearance. Personal items (such as I.D., food, a small amount of money for the snack bar, sweaters, raincoats, small umbrellas) may be brought in without being listed on a gate clearance, but keep them with you at all times.
4. It is a felony to bring firearms, deadly weapons, explosives, intoxicating liquors, narcotics, or drugs into any facility where state prisoners are located. It is also a felony to give any of these items to an inmate.
5. Do not bring computers, cameras, tape recorders, cell phones, or pagers.
6. Special permission is required to bring cameras or tape recorders into the institution.
7. **DO NOT BRING POCKETKNIVES-** They can readily be turned against you.
8. **CONTRABAND**
  - a) Anything not approved by the institution for inmates to have in their possession.
  - b) Some items are obvious (guns, alcohol, knives, etc.) and some are not (chewing gum, etc.).
9. **MEDICATION SHOULD NOT BE OPENLY DISPLAYED**

**What and What Not to Wear:**

1. Inmates wear shirts, pants, jackets, and jump-suits colored blue, gray, orange, and yellow. Avoid clothing of these colors or that may look from a distance like inmate clothing. The following are examples of what should not be worn:
  - ❖ Blue jeans, Levi's, denims or similar clothing.
  - ❖ Yellow rain coats.
  - ❖ Blue shirts.
  - ❖ Sweat suits and loose fitting gym clothing.
2. Women should dress appropriately (miniskirts and low-cut blouses may invite unwanted advances.)

See Department Operations Manual, Section 33020.4 on Grooming Standards for Non-Uniform Staff, for more specific information on clothing.

**Conduct While Volunteering:**

1. Do not buy anything for or give anything to an inmate- not gifts, money, letters, tips, or rewards of any kind.
2. Do not take anything from an inmate- not gifts or letters to be mailed.
3. The delivery of verbal messages between inmates is a felony.
4. Do not give inmates your address or telephone number.
5. Correspondence with inmates is prohibited while you are a volunteer.
6. You are permitted to write a recommendation letter for an inmate you have gotten to know through your volunteer service, such as a letter to the parole board.
7. Volunteers are not allowed to visit inmates in the visiting room.
8. Do not hug inmates or engage in other intimate forms of physical contact.
9. Do not leave clothes or other personal belongings lying around; e.g., if it is raining, keep your raincoat with you at all times.

11. It is a felony to assist prisoners to escape.

12. Inciting people to violence could cause suspension of your privileges.

**13. DON'T RUN WHILE IN THE INSTITUTION!**

- ❖ Running usually indicates that someone is being chased or is chasing someone.
- ❖ Running is usually a danger signal.
- ❖ Armed posts react to people running and it not only causes anxiety but distracts the officer's attention.
- ❖ You may injure yourself.
- ❖ Use the sidewalks when walking around the institution.

**14. Personal Phone Calls**

- ❖ No out-going personal calls should be made on institutional phones. Public phones are available.
- ❖ Emergency in-coming personal phone calls will be relayed to you but routine messages will not.

15. When the officer at the gate is processing a line of inmates through the gate, do not interrupt him.

16. All matters pertaining to inmates are confidential and no information is to be given out by you unless approved through the proper channels.

17. Sign in and out at the Main/East Gate and in any log book(s) you pass while going to your work area.

18. Renew your Brown Card the month before it expires to ensure the smooth continuity of security clearance.



California  
Department of  
Corrections

**OPERATIONS  
MANUAL**

SUPPLEMENT

CSP SAN QUENTIN

Chapter: 30000

PERSONNEL TRAINING & EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Subchapter: 33000

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

Section: 33020

NON-UNIFORMED STAFF

33020.4  
GROOMING STANDARDS FOR  
NON-UNIFORMED STAFF

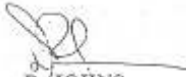
- A. The following types of clothing are prohibited for non-uniformed staff:
1. Clothing that resembles state issued inmate clothing:
    - a. No blue denim pants, shorts, shirts or jackets.
    - b. No blue chambray shirts, jackets or pants.
    - c. No blue sweatshirts.
    - d. No orange (Reception Center) pants, shirts, jumpsuits or shorts.
    - e. No yellow rain coats and/or rain pants.
  2. No fabrics made in such a manner to resemble blue denim material and/or state issued clothing:
    - a. Black denim slacks and jackets are approved, unless the materials are so faded that it cannot be distinguished from blue denim.
    - b. Acid washed or stone washed materials must be distinguishable from inmate clothing.
  3. Revealing clothing:
    - a. No transparent clothing.
    - b. No tank tops/sling shot tops.
    - c. No strapless, halter, spaghetti straps and/or bare midriff clothing.
    - d. Tights are acceptable alternative to hosiery for wear under dresses or skirts. However, tights and spandex type material shall not be worn in lieu of slacks.
    - e. Skirts will be no more than 2 inches above the knee. Slits in the garment shall not expose more than mid-thigh.
    - f. Dress or sport shirts/blouses unbuttoned past the second button from the top of the shirt/blouse are not authorized.
  4. No attire displaying obscene and/or offensive language and/or logos/drawings.
  5. No camouflage or military style clothing.

6. Athletic Clothing: These items are not deemed appropriate for the prison setting. The Warden may make exceptions by special memorandum because of certain employee intramural sports activities, practices, physical fitness abilities testing and special in-service training.

- a. No sweat suits, including conventional or designer jogging suits.
- b. No weight lifter pants.

7. Compliance:

- a. Division heads are to ensure subordinate supervisors enforce dress codes. In addition, it is the responsibility of each supervisor to ensure that their subordinate staff are in compliance with this procedure. Those employees who are inappropriately attired or their dress is inconsistent with the intent of this procedure will be sent home, pay docked for the time gone and instructed to return for the remainder of the work day appropriately attired. Further, they will be given instructions to make necessary corrections in their attire.
- b. All employees, including off-duty employees, will adhere to the above policy. Visitors to the institution, state employees or not, shall be required to dress in accordance with this procedure before entering the institution.



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J. WOODFORD  
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