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FIRST UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION  
OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

Geneva, 22 August - 3 September 1955

Plenary Meeting

STANDARD MINIMUM RULES FOR THE  
TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

Amendments included by Section I in the Secretariat  
Draft (Document A/CONF.6/L.4, pp. 93-114)

Preliminary Observations

Final text to be  
renumbered, rule  
3 being added to  
rule 2.

1. No change.
2. In view of the great variety of legal, social, economic and geographical conditions of the world, it is evident that not all of the Rules are capable of application in all places and at all times. They should, however, serve to stimulate a constant endeavour to overcome practical difficulties in the way of their application, in the knowledge that they represent, as a whole, the minimum conditions which are accepted as suitable by the United Nations. [3.] These rules shall be equally applicable to metropolitan countries and Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. It is hoped that Governments will use their best endeavours to ensure that the principles and practice of these rules are followed to the maximum extent compatible with prevailing conditions and available resources.
4. No change.
5. (1) Part I of the Rules covers the general management of Institutions, and is applicable to all categories of prisoners, criminal or civil, untried or convicted, including prisoners subject to "security measures" or corrective measures ordered by the judge.  
(2) No change (in English).
6. (1) No change.  
(2) The category of young prisoners should include at least all young persons who come within the jurisdiction of juvenile courts. As a rule such young persons should not be sentenced to imprisonment.

PART I: RULES OF GENERAL APPLICATION

Basic Principle

7. No change.

Register

8. No change.

Separation of Categories

9. No change.

Accommodation

10. (1) No change.

(2) Where dormitories are used, they shall be occupied by prisoners carefully selected as being suitable to associate with one another in those conditions. There shall be regular supervision by night, in keeping with the nature of the institution.

11. All accommodation provided for the use of prisoners and in particular all sleeping accommodation shall meet all requirements of health, due regard being paid to climatic conditions and particularly to cubic content of air, minimum floor space, lighting, heating and ventilation.

12, 13. No change.

14. Adequate bathing and shower installations shall be provided so that every prisoner may be enabled and required to have a bath or shower, at a temperature suitable to the climate, as frequently as necessary for general hygiene according to season and geographical region, but at least once a week in a temperate climate.

15. No change.

Personal Hygiene

16, 17. No change.

Clothing and Bedding

18. (1) No change.

(2) All clothing shall be clean and kept in proper condition. Underclothing shall be changed and washed as often as necessary for the maintenance of hygiene.

(3) In exceptional circumstances, whenever a prisoner is removed outside the institution for an authorized purpose, he shall be allowed to wear his own clothing or other inconspicuous clothing.

19, 20. No change.

Food

21. (1) No change.

(2) Drinking water shall be available to every prisoner whenever he needs it.

Exercise and Sport

22. (1) Every prisoner who is not employed in out-door work shall have one hour of suitable exercise in the open air daily if the weather permits.

(2) No change.

Medical Services

23. No change.

24. (1) In women's institutions there shall be special accommodation for all necessary pre-natal and post-natal care and treatment. Arrangements shall be made wherever practicable for children to be born in a hospital outside the institution. If a child is born in prison, this fact shall not be mentioned in the birth certificate.

(2) No change.

25. The medical officer shall see and examine every prisoner as soon as possible after his admission and thereafter as necessary, with a view particularly to the discovery of physical or mental illness and the **taking** of all necessary measures; the segregation of prisoners suspected of infectious or contagious conditions; the noting of physical or mental defects which might hamper rehabilitation, and the determination of the physical capacity of every prisoner for work.

26. No change.

27. (1) No change.

(2) The director shall take into consideration the reports and advice that the medical officer submits according to rules 26 (2) and 27 and, in case he concurs with the recommendations made, shall take immediate steps to give effect to those recommendations; if they are not within his competence or if he does not concur with them, he shall immediately submit his own report and the advice of the medical officer to higher authority.

Discipline and Punishment

28 to 33. No change.

Instruments of Restraint

34, 35. No change.

Information to and Complaints by Prisoners

36. No change.

37. (1), (2), (3) No change.

(4) Unless it is evidently frivolous or groundless, every request or complaint shall be promptly dealt with and replied to without undue delay.

Contact with the Outside World

38 to 40. No change.

Books

41. No change.

Religion

42. (1), (2) No change.

(3) Access to a minister of any religion shall not be refused to any prisoner. On the other hand, if any prisoner should object to the visit of any minister, his attitude shall be fully respected.\*

43. No change.

Retention of Prisoners' Property

44. No change.

Notification of Death, Illness, Transfer, etc.

45. No change.

Removal of Prisoners.

46. (1) No change.

(2) The transport of prisoners in conveyances with inadequate ventilation or light, or in any way which would subject them to unnecessary physical hardship, shall be prohibited.

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\* Minor drafting change.

(3) No change.

Institutional Personnel

47. No change.

48. (1), (2) No change.

(3) After entering on duty and during their career, the personnel shall maintain and improve their knowledge and professional capacity by attending courses of in-service training to be organized at suitable intervals.

49. All members of the personnel shall at all times so conduct themselves and perform their duties as to influence the prisoners for good by their examples and to command their respect.

50. (1) No change.

(2) The services of social workers, teachers and trade instructors shall be secured on a permanent basis, without thereby excluding part-time or voluntary workers.

51. (1), (2) No change.

(3) He shall reside on the premises of the institution or in its immediate vicinity.

(4) No change.

52 to 55. No change.

Inspection

56. No change.

PART II: RULES APPLICABLE TO SPECIAL  
CATEGORIES

A. PRISONERS UNDER SENTENCE

Guiding Principles

57. No change.

58. Imprisonment and other measures which result in cutting off an offender from the outside world are afflictive by the very fact of taking from the person the right of self-determination by depriving him of his liberty. Therefore the prison system shall not, except as incidental to justifiable segregation or the maintenance of discipline, aggravate the suffering inherent in such a situation.

59 to 63. No change.

64. (1), (2), (3). No change.

(4) On the other hand, it is undesirable to maintain prisons which are so small that proper facilities cannot be provided.\*

65. No change.

Treatment

66. No change.

67. (1) To these ends, all appropriate means shall be used, including religious care in the countries where this is possible, education, vocational guidance and training, social casework, employment counselling, physical development and strengthening of moral character, in accordance with the individual needs of each prisoner, taking account of his social and criminal history, his physical and mental capacities and aptitudes, his personal temperament, the length of his sentence and his prospects after release.

(2) No change.

(3) The reports and other relevant documents shall be placed in an individual file. This file shall be kept up to date and classified in such a way that it can be consulted by the responsible personnel whenever the need arises.

Classification and Individualization

68 to 70. No change.

Privileges

71. No change.

Work

72 to 77. No change.

Education and Recreation

78. (1) Provision shall be made for the further education of all prisoners capable of profiting thereby, including religious instruction in the countries where this is possible. The education of illiterates and young prisoners shall be compulsory and special attention shall be paid to it by the administration.

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\* Minor drafting change.

(2) No change.

79. No change.

Social Relations and After-Care.

80 and 81. No change.

82. (1) Services and agencies, governmental or otherwise, which assist released prisoners to re-establish themselves in society shall ensure, so far as is possible and necessary, that released prisoners be provided with appropriate documents and identification papers, have suitable homes and work to go to, are suitably and adequately clothed having regard to the climate and season, and have sufficient means to reach their destinations and maintain themselves in the period immediately following their release.

(2), (3) No change.

B. INSANE AND MENTALLY ABNORMAL PRISONERS

83, 84. No change.

C. PRISONERS UNDER ARREST OR AWAITING TRIAL

85. (1) Persons arrested or imprisoned by reason of a criminal charge against them, who are detained either in police custody or in prison custody (jail) but have not yet been tried and sentenced, will be referred to as "untried prisoners" hereinafter in these rules.

(2) Unconvicted prisoners are presumed to be innocent and shall be treated as such.

(3) No change.

86 to 94. No change.

D. CIVIL PRISONERS

95. No change.



This archiving project is a collaborative effort between United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. Any comments or questions should be directed to Cindy J. Smith at [CJSmithphd@comcast.net](mailto:CJSmithphd@comcast.net) or Emil Wandzilak at [emil.wandzilak@unodc.org](mailto:emil.wandzilak@unodc.org).