



# Virginia Department of Corrections

## Human Resources

### Operating Procedure 150.6

#### *Corrections Officer Career Progression Program*

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None

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## REVIEW

The Content Owner will review this operating procedure annually and re-write it no later than three years after the effective date.

## COMPLIANCE

This operating procedure applies to all units operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC). Practices and procedures must comply with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, American Correctional Association (ACA) standards, Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) standards, and DOC directives and operating procedures.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Corrections Officer (CO1)** - Newly hired Officer on probation who is a minimally qualified candidate that possesses the demonstrated ability to perform the essential functions of the position.

**Corrections Officer Senior (CO2)** - Certified Officer who has successfully completed a 12-month probationary period. Corrections Officer Seniors (CO2) possess working knowledge and understanding of correctional policies, procedures, and practices.

**Lead Corrections Officer (CO3)** - Designation for a lead, non-supervisory officer seeking additional training, advanced knowledge, and increased responsibility.

**Master Corrections Officer (CO4)** - Designation for a tenured Corrections Officer who serves as a subject matter expert, supports the shift Sergeant, and serves as a mentor and coach to other Corrections Officers.

**Lead Sergeant (S2)** - Designation for a tenured Sergeant who serves as a subject matter expert, supports the shift Lieutenant, and serves as a mentor and coach to other Corrections Officers and Sergeants.



**PURPOSE**

The operating procedure identifies opportunities for career progression and a pathway for professional development, in lieu of competitive promotion, and supports the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) public safety mission through *Corrections Officer Career Progression Program*.

**PROCEDURE****I. Organization and Administration**

- A. The *Corrections Officer Career Progression Program* (COCPP) is administered by the DOC Office of Human Resources and is led by the *Career Progression Manager*.
- B. The Career Progression Manager is responsible for the implementation, coordination, management and oversight of the DOC's career progression and advancement program and will establish activities, programs, policies, practices, goals and key performance measures.
  1. Specifically, this position provides leadership, direction, and organization to the development and implementation of the DOC's Master Corrections Officer program for uniformed security staff.
  2. COCPP is designed to enhance Officer's individual competencies through career progression and professional development in support of the DOC's mission, vision, and values.
  3. Using evidence-based practices, this position will positively impact recruitment, retention, and success by developing and implementing career development programs. This position is accountable for developing and implementing internally-focused, strategic programs that enhance the internal mobility of employees, emphasize skill building and focus on improving the overall employee experience and retention.
- C. This program will be used to recognize staff after July 1, 2024. To the extent authorized funding continues each fiscal year, employees will be recognized and rewarded through the program. The DOC Director has the authority to amend, adjust, suspend and/or terminate the program at any time.
- D. An oversight committee consisting of the Director of Human Resources, Regional Operations Chiefs and Administrators, the HR Manager Senior for Talent Acquisition and Compensation, and the Human Resource Coordinator Senior/Compensation will be responsible for monitoring plan implementation, evaluating effectiveness, recommending revisions, providing interpretation, and determining decisions for any program exceptions.
- E. The Human Resources Director will have final authority over the provisions of this plan.

**II. The Corrections Officer Career Progression Program (COCPP)**

- A. The COCCP program is intended to recognize and reward the expertise of experienced Corrections Officers and Sergeants by providing them a pathway for career progression and professional development.
- B. In addition, it provides security staff with professional development opportunities through tenure and specialized skill.
- C. *Lead Corrections Officers* (CO3), *Master Corrections Officers* (CO4), and *Lead Sergeants* (S2) will provide effective coaching, mentoring, and guidance to other officers, which will increase retention of new staff.

**III. Correctional Officer Pathway Designations**

- A. Corrections Officer Senior (CO2) - Newly hired Officer on probation who is a minimally qualified candidate that possesses the demonstrated ability to perform the essential functions of the position.
- B. Corrections Officer Senior (CO2) - Certified Officer who has successfully completed a 12-month probationary period. Corrections Officer Seniors (CO2) possess working knowledge and understanding



of correctional policies, procedures, and practices.

- C. Lead Corrections Officer (CO3) - Designation for a lead, non-supervisory officer seeking additional training, advanced knowledge, and increased responsibility. Lead Officers are expected to independently perform their core responsibilities with high proficiency. Lead Officers have at least two years of continuous service and provide general and advanced support to Officers in Training, newly certified Corrections Officers, and Corrections Officers Seniors. Additionally, they identify and pursue specialized skills training, with supervisory approval, that will benefit their work unit and the agency.
- D. Master Corrections Officer (CO4) - Designation for a tenured Corrections Officer who serves as a subject matter expert, supports the shift Sergeant, and serves as a mentor and coach to other Corrections Officers. Master Corrections Officers (CO4) have at least five years of continuous service working with the VADOC or two years of previous certified law enforcement experience and have successfully completed the probationary period with the VADOC. Additionally, they possess advanced knowledge and skills in one or more specialty areas. They may temporarily supervise others in the absence of the Sergeant however, they are a working team member on the roster and are expected to carry out all general duties of a Corrections Officer with a high level of proficiency.
- E. Lead Sergeant (S2) - Designation for a tenured Sergeant who serves as a subject matter expert, supports the shift Lieutenant, and serves as a mentor and coach to other Corrections Officers and Sergeants. A Lead Sergeant (S2) has at least three years of continuous service working with the VADOC or two years of previous certified law enforcement experience and one year of service with the VADOC. Additionally, they possess advanced knowledge and skills in one or more specialty areas. They may temporarily act in a senior supervisory role in the absence of the Lieutenant and are expected to carry out all duties with a high level of proficiency when serving in this role.

#### IV. Minimum Proficiency Certifications and Competencies

- A. Each approved candidate must be evaluated at each level to be considered for advancement. Approved candidates must meet minimum proficiency certifications as outlined below. The Chief of Security, in conjunction with the Unit Head, will review the employee's performance and assign a numerical value to each of the categories, using the matrix provided below:

- 1 = Below Performance Expectations
- 2 = Minimally Meets Performance Expectations
- 3 = Meets Performance Expectations
- 4 = Exceeds Performance Expectations
- 5 = Demonstrates Extraordinary Performance

- B. Competency Review for Lead Corrections Officer (CO3)

- 1. The following categories will be included in the CO3's evaluation and will be assigned one of the numerical values from the matrix above based on the individual's performance during the past evaluation cycle:
  - a. Judgement - Routinely exercises independent critical thinking skills.
  - b. Resiliency - Remains poised in stressful situations.
  - c. Flexibility - Works assigned posts and adheres to schedule adjustments to include overtime.
  - d. Coaching - Orients others to work expectations/environment, provides relevant feedback, and assists them in developing knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for successful performance.
  - e. Mentoring - Works with others to help them develop advanced professional knowledge, skills, and abilities, shows concerns about others well-being on the job, and provides a safe environment for them to discuss concerns and questions.
  - f. Communication - Demonstrates effective written and verbal communication skills.
  - g. Problem Identification and Solving - Identifies problems and suggest appropriate solutions.



- h. Documentation - Completes all documentation in an accurate and timely manner.
  - i. Retention - Works with others to address questions and concerns about job performance and models a professional work environment that promotes a supportive culture and encourages employees to remain with the agency.
2. Employees must complete the Advanced Training for Lead and Master Officers offered by the Academy for Staff Development within 12 months of approval for this designation. If unable to complete the required training, the participant will be removed from the program and may reapply for consideration after a six-month waiting period.
  3. Employees must remain current on all required DOC Training for their current role, and complete the training required for their current Career Progression step, Attachment 2, *CO Career Progression Training Matrix*.
  4. Employees must attend and participate in the virtual quarterly workshop meetings. Employees must attend and participate in three workshops during the first 12 months of acceptance in the program.
  5. Employees must maintain DCJS certification for this program.
- C. Competency Review for Master Corrections Officer (CO4)
1. The following categories will be included in the CO4's evaluation and will be assigned one of the numerical values from the matrix above based on the individual's performance during the past evaluation cycle:
    - a. Demonstrates Competency- Continued demonstration of all Lead Corrections Officer (CO3) competencies
    - b. Serves in acting role in absence of Sergeant.
    - c. Works on special projects, work/focus groups, and volunteers for extra duties as approved by supervisor.
    - d. Represents facility at external events in a professional manner.
    - e. Conflict Management - Works with internal and external staff/stakeholders to resolve conflicts.
    - f. Advanced Communication Skills - Demonstrates effective public speaking skills and advanced writing skills in developing in-depth reports and preparing documentation for Sergeant's review/signature.
    - g. Accountability and Integrity - Demonstrates courage in challenging situations, accepts responsibility for actions and takes corrective action when necessary, is honest in their communication, and demonstrates inclusion among staff and teamwork with other departments.
    - h. Leadership - Demonstrates the ability to achieve results by being adaptable and resourceful, inspires others to complete tasks, and takes responsibility for work tasks/projects while delegating appropriate tasks to others to maximize operational efficiency.
    - i. Interpersonal Skills - Demonstrates compassion to others, models an inclusive work culture, and shows interest in other's success.
  2. Employees must complete the Advanced Training for Lead and Master Officers offered by the Academy for Staff Development within 12 months of approval for this designation. If unable to complete the required training, participant will be removed from the program and may reapply for consideration after a six-month waiting period.
  3. Employees must remain current on all required DOC Training for their current role, and complete the training required for their current Career Progression step Attachment 2, *CO Career Progression Training Matrix*.
  4. Employees must attend and participate in the virtual quarterly workshop meetings. Employees must attend and participate in three workshops during the first 12 months of acceptance in the program.
  5. Employees must maintain required DCJS certification while participating in this program.

**D. Competency Review for Lead Sergeant (S2)**

1. The following categories will be included in the S2's evaluation and will be assigned one of the numerical values from the matrix above based on the individual's performance during the past evaluation cycle:
  - a. Demonstrates Competency - Continued demonstration of all Master Corrections Officer (CO4) competencies.
  - b. Time Management - Organizes projects and tasks to effectively and efficiently complete goals and objectives given multiple competing priorities.
  - c. Collaboration and Negotiation - Works with other individuals, departments, and units to determine best outcomes for projects/tasks based on VADOC mission
  - d. Fiscal Responsibility - Understands basic procurement and budgeting concepts to assist leadership in managing resources
  - e. Safety - Works in conjunction with the Institutional Safety Officer to ensure adherence to safety protocols
  - f. Performance Management - Provides feedback, coaching, and mentoring to others, addresses performance/disciplinary issues as they arise, provides realistic and relevant employee evaluations, and maintains appropriate documentation.
  - g. Operating Procedure Interpretation - Demonstrates proficiency in procedure interpretation and application determining when to act independently and when to seek guidance.
  - h. Operational and Security Control - Demonstrates an in-depth understanding, and has a performance history, of accurately implementing all the following: count procedures, inspections, inventory control, food service regulations, searches, and visitation procedures.
  - i. Audit Preparation - Works with the Lieutenant, the Operations Manager, and/or other facility leadership to provide accurate documentation needed for audits and inspections.
  - j. Emergency Management - Completed FEMA 100 and FEMA 200 and actively participates in the facility's emergency management exercises.
2. Employees must complete the required training outlined in the program guidelines within 12 months of approval for this designation. If unable to complete the required training, participant will be removed from the program and may reapply for consideration after a six-month waiting period.
3. Employees must remain current on all required DOC Training for their current role, and complete the training required for their current Career Progression step Attachment 3, *Sergeant Career Progression Training Matrix*.
4. Employees must attend and participate in the virtual quarterly workshop meetings. Employees must attend and participate in three workshops during the first 12 months of acceptance in the program.
5. Employees must maintain required DCJS certification while participating in this program.

**V. Plan Eligibility**

- A. The COCCP program covers all eligible uniformed Security personnel.
- B. The program is voluntary and there is no penalty for not participating.
- C. Although minimum requirements are obligatory for program participation, all employees can pursue professional development through the continuation of advanced and specialized training regardless of Career Progression Program participation.
- D. Employees may also seek advancement through competitive promotion outside of the Career Advancement program. Preference may be given to staff who have advanced through the COCCP.





**VI. Employee Eligibility**

- A. Human Resources will determine the number of available slots for the position of Corrections Officer Lead (CO3), Master Corrections Officer (CO4), and Lead Sergeant (S2) allocated to each facility by June 1 of each fiscal year. Available slots are determined by funding allocated for the COCCP program.
- B. Each designated employee must meet the following criteria:
  - 1. Successful completion of the tenure requirements
  - 2. Received performance rating of “Contributor” or above on the last performance evaluation
  - 3. Demonstrated willingness and physical ability to work all assigned work posts
  - 4. Worked assigned hours and schedule with no unacceptable absences. Unacceptable absences refer to a pattern of employee attendance that interferes with the efficient operation of the unit over and beyond the agency’s intent to have employees use allotted leave balances in accordance with Operating Procedure 110.1, *Hours of Work and Leaves of Absence*.
  - 5. No active Group notices in accordance with Operating Procedure 135.1, *Standards of Conduct*. Successful Interim Program Evaluation must be completed by the Chief of Security in conjunction with the Unit Head to certify active participation in the program, continued demonstration of competencies, and ability to meet the above required criteria.

**VII. Application Timeframes**

- A. Corrections Officers (CO1) candidates will automatically advance to the Corrections Officer Senior (CO2) level upon successful completion of the 12-month probationary period and certification of proficiency in core responsibilities.
- B. Officers who have had their probationary period extended for any reason will not be eligible for this advancement until the end of any extended probationary period.
- C. Candidates for Lead Corrections Officer (CO3), Master Corrections Officer (CO4), and Lead Sergeant (S2) positions will be processed twice each calendar year, typically in March and September. Interested candidates must submit an electronic application of interest, Attachment 1, *Corrections Officer Career Progression Program Application* during the application timeframe to be considered.

**VIII. Administrative Processes**

- A. The Office of Human Resources will process the candidates for Lead Corrections Officer (CO3), Master Corrections Officer (CO4), and Lead Sergeant (S2) twice per calendar year. They will work with the Human Resource Officer for the work unit to request confirm receipt of any needed information and the Registrar’s Office at the Academy for Staff Development to confirm training completion.
- B. Once all relevant information is confirmed, the Career Progression Manager and Human Resource Coordinator Senior/Compensation will score each candidate based on the points assignments below. In the event of a points tie, the performance evaluation and educational achievement assignments will be used to make final designations.
- C. In addition to the timeframes noted above, consideration for movement to Lead (CO3), Master (CO4) Corrections Officer, and Lead Sergeant (S2) positions will be based on the following:
  - 1. Performance Evaluation
  - 2. Educational Achievement
  - 3. Military Service
  - 4. Tenure for Lead Sergeant (S2)
  - 5. Training Achievement





6. Special Teams Membership
7. Special Knowledge, Skills, or Abilities

D. Point Assignments

1. Performance Evaluation
  - a. Contributor - 6 points
  - b. Exceeds Contributor - 9 points
  - c. Extraordinary Contributor - 12 points

2. *Education Achievement*

Credit for education will be given at the rate of .1 point for each three semester hours that are successfully completed by the candidate. There is no limit on the number of points an individual can accumulate.

3. *Military Service*

Credit for military service (Active Duty, Reserves, and/or National Guard) will be given at the rate of .5 point for each year of service. Any person who has received a Dishonorable Discharge cannot be considered for this category of points.

4. Tenure (Lead Sergeant)

Credit for service as a Sergeant with the VADOC will be given at a rate of .5 point for each year of service.

5. *Training Achievement*

Credit for successful completion of the following training courses will be given at the rate of .1 point for each hour of awarded DOC training credit:

- Canine - Basic School
- Field Training Officer
- Strike Force Training
- Critical Incident Negotiation Training
- CISM Training
- Basic Skills for Institutional Investigators
- Vehicle Operations
- Corrections Crisis Response Team Training
- Serv-Safe
- Hearing Officer Training
- Trauma Informed Training
- Gender Responsivity Training
- Advanced Training for Lead and Master Corrections Officers
- Basic Skills for New Supervisors - Only available to persons promoted to supervisory positions

6. *Special Teams Membership*

Credit for membership on any of the special teams noted below will be given at the rate of .5 points for each year of service:

- Canine
- Strike Force



- Critical Incident Negotiation
- CISM
- Field Training Officer

7. *Special Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities*

Credit for the following specialized KSAs will be given at the following rate:

- Gang Specialist - .1/year of service
- Institutional Investigator/Intel Officer - .1/year of service
- Institutional Training Officer/Assistant ITO - .1/year of service
- Treatment Officer - .1/year of service
- Work Gang Officer - .1/year of service
- Hearings Officer/Alternate Hearings Officer - .1/year of service
- CDL License - 1 point – active
- Second Language - 1 point
- Safety Officer - .1/year of service
- Armory Officer - .1/year of service
- Adjunct Instructor - .1/year of service
- a. Firearms Instructor - 3 points – actively certified
- b. Defensive Tactics Instructor - 2 points – actively certified
- c. CPR/First Aid Instructor - 1 point – actively certified

IX. Recognition and Compensation

- A. Candidates that are selected for Lead Corrections Officer (CO3), Master Corrections Officer (CO4), and Lead Sergeant (S2) positions will be recognized in a formal regional ceremony at the Academy for Staff Development. This ceremony will be scheduled twice per year in conjunction with the selection/approval process.
- B. Compensation Provisions
  1. Special pay rates and adjustments will be handled by the Compensation Unit in accordance with Attachment 4 - *Career Progression Program Security Services Pay Chart*.
  2. Lead Corrections Officers (CO3) candidates who meet all minimum qualifications and are approved for the Lead program will receive a special pay rate adjustment in addition to their base salary.
  3. Master Corrections Officers (CO4) candidates who met all minimum qualifications and are approved for advancement will receive a role change to Master (CO4) with an in-band adjustment in accordance with Operating Procedure 102.4, *Compensation*.
- C. The Career Progression Manager, in conjunction with the Compensation Unit, will initiate a bi-annual review for each unit to confirm the slotting of CO3s and CO4s. The Unit Head must notify DOC Compensation immediately when employees are removed from the designation. The Unit Head and HRO must immediately remove ineligible employees from COCPP when they become ineligible and do not meet eligibility criteria. Lead Corrections Officers (CO3) candidates who fail to meet the minimum qualifications and requirements for their designation will be removed from the program with appropriate documentation and approval from the Director of Human Resources.
- D. Enhanced compensation for individuals with certified law enforcement, former corrections/jail/police patrol/public or military experience will be considered. Waivers to the criteria listed in Plan Eligibility may be granted when an employee is impacted by reduction in workforce.



- E. All career progressions are internal competitive moves. The CO4 designation results in a role change from Pay Band 3 to Pay Band 4. Once a CO achieves the designation of CO4, removal may only occur upon separation, promotion to a supervisory position, or through a disciplinary or voluntary demotion.

## REFERENCES

Operating Procedure 110.1, *Hours of Work and Leaves of Absence*

Operating Procedure 135.1, *Standards of Conduct*

Operating Procedure 102.4, *Compensation*

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1, *Corrections Officer Career Progression Program Application* – In Development

Attachment 2, *CO Career Progression Training Matrix*

Attachment 3, *Sergeant Career Progression Training Matrix*

Attachment 4 - *Career Progression Program Security Services Pay Chart*

## FORM CITATIONS

None

