

Prison Rules and Regulations 1844

1. Every prisoner must wash himself thoroughly, at least once every day, and his feet at least once each week. All prisoners, except debtors and misdemeanants of the first division, with the approval of the Surgeon, shall occasionally go into a tepid bath, but no prisoner shall be stripped or bathed in the presence of any other prisoner.

2. In no case the hair of any female prisoner be cut, except when necessary on account of vermin or dirt, or when the medical officer deems it requisite on the ground of health; and that the hair of male prisoners be not cut except for the purpose of health and cleanliness. Male prisoners shall be shaved at least once a week.

3. All convicted prisoners must be supplied with a complete prison dress, and all such prisoners, except misdemeanants of the first division, be required to wear it; and that prisoners before trial and misdemeanants of the first division be allowed to have the prison dress, if their own clothes be insufficient or unfit for use, or necessary to be preserved for the purposes of justice. The prison dress to be of a different colour from that of convicted prisoners.

4. Every prisoner to be supplied with clean linen, including shirt, (whether of linen, cotton, or flannel,) stockings, and handkerchief, at least once in every week.

5. Every prisoner under charge or conviction of any crime, be supplied with sufficient bedding for warmth and health; and that every debtor be allowed the option of using the prison bedding.

6. The bed clothes to be well aired every day; and when the weather permits, this to be done in the open air.

7. Where sheets are used, they are to be washed not less often than once each month, and, for prisoners under medical treatment, not less than once each fortnight, or as often as the medical officer may deem necessary; and where sheets are not in use, that blankets be washed with the same frequency as that prescribed for the sheets. The sheets which have been used by one prisoner shall not be transferred to another until they have been washed.

8. Prisoners are to have three meals each day; and at least two of them to be hot.

9. No wine, beer, cider, or other fermented liquor to be admitted for the use of any prisoner without a written order from the Medical officer, specifying the quantity, and for whose use: except in the case of debtors, prisoners for trial or examination, or misdemeanants of the first division.

10. As far as is practicable useful employment shall be provided with the necessary materials and instruction, for all prisoners; in order that all convicted prisoners sentenced to hard labour, but not placed on the tread-wheel, and all prisoners sentenced to simple imprisonment (except those of the first division) be set to work. No prisoner to be set to work immediately after any meal.

11. No female prisoner, and no boy under fourteen years of age, and no other prisoner not sentenced to hard labour, be, under any circumstances, placed on the tread-wheel, or put to hard labour, without the previous sanction of the medical officer; that 12,000 feet be the maximum height which any one prisoner shall ascend on the tread-wheel in a single day; and that measures be taken to prevent the exposure of prisoners to cold on leaving the tread-wheel.

12. No prisoner who is a Jew to be compelled to labour on his Sabbath.

13. All prisoners, including those sentenced to hard labour, to have such an amount of time allowed to them for instruction as the chaplain may think proper; whether such instruction withdraws them from their labour for a time or not.

14. No punishment or privations of any kind shall be awarded except by the governor, or by a visiting or other justice. He shall not, under any pretence, continue close confinement in any cell with bread and water for prison offences, for a longer period than three days; but in the event of continued or renewed misconduct, he shall submit the case to a visiting or other justice, under the provisions of the 42nd section of the Gaol Act.

15. Handcuffs or any other description of irons shall not be put on a prisoner, except in cases of absolute necessity; and shall not be continued on a prisoner longer than twenty-four hours without an order in writing from a visiting justice, specifying the cause thereof, and the time during which the prisoner is to be ironed.

16. Convicted prisoners are not to be allowed to see their relations and friends until after the expiration of the first three months of their imprisonment; but subsequent to that period they shall be allowed to receive visits once in the course of each successive three months.

Prisoners in separate confinement

17. No cell shall be used for the separate confinement of prisoners unless previously certified to the Secretary of State by an Inspector of prisons.

18. Every prisoner in separate confinement shall be supplied with employment.

19. He shall be furnished with the means of moral and religious instruction, and with suitable books.

20. He shall have the means of daily taking as much exercise in the open air as the medical officer may deem necessary.

21. He shall be daily visited in his cell by the governor, chaplain, and surgeon; and by the school-master, at such times as may be prescribed by the chaplain; and each prisoner shall also be daily visited by a subordinate officer for the purpose of serving each meal, and also at such other times, daily, as may be necessary to superintend his employment.

Prisoners Condemned to Death

22. Every prisoner condemned to death shall be confined in some safe place within the prison, apart from all other prisoners, and shall be allowed such dietary as the visiting justices may direct, and exercise in the open air for a reasonable time every day. He may be visited by his relations, friends, and legal advisors, at his own request, by an order in writing from any visiting justice. No other person shall have access to such prisoner except the governor or other officer of the prison, the chaplain, and surgeon; or if such convict shall be of a religious persuasion differing from that of the Established Church, a minister of that persuasion attending at his request. If any person however, shall make it appear to a visiting justice that he has important business to transact with the convict, such visiting justice may grant permission in writing to such person to have a conference with the convict in the presence of the governor.

(Based on 'Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Norfolk County Gaol at Norwich Castle' 1844)