

17. Inmate Handbook Checklist

[Rule §283.2](#)

Every facility shall have prescribed rules and regulations governing inmate conduct. A copy of the institutional rules and regulations shall be made available to each inmate and read to illiterate inmates. A written acknowledgment by the inmate that the rules have been explained shall be retained. A translation shall be provided in an understandable language when necessary. The rules and regulations shall outline both Major and Minor Infractions, the types and ranges of possible sanctions for each category, due process requirements and specific procedures for filing a grievance. The rules and regulations, as provided to the inmate, shall be submitted to the Commission for approval.

- Inmate Handbook **must contain** at a minimum, the following:

1. Discipline Process

- [Rule 283.1](#)
- Definitions of Major & Minor Infractions
- Possible sanctions for both Major & Minor Infractions
- List of Minor & Major Infractions
 - Specific infractions must be listed for each.
- Due Process** Requirements
 - Discipline plan [Rule 283.1 \(3\)\(A-J\)](#) must be included in handbook
 - Reminder: Rule [283.1 \(3\)\(D\)](#) A waiver shall not include the loss of good time as a sanction.
- Appeal Process
- Written acknowledgment*** by the inmate that the rules have been explained shall be retained.
- Include the **highlighted section** above.
- If a county seeks **restitution for damage** to jail property as a sanction, the following **statement must be included** in **both** the **discipline plan** and **inmate handbook**.
 - *'An inmate causing damage to jail property may have the actual costs incurred deducted from his or her commissary account following a due process hearing establishing the inmate's liability.'*
- Info in handbook **must match** info in discipline plan.

2. Grievance Process

- [Rule 283.3](#)
- What constitutes a grievance?
- How to file a grievance.
- Procedures & Appeal Process
- Info in handbook must match info in grievance plan.

3. Complaint Process

- The **entire page below must** be included **verbatim** in the inmate handbook.

17. Inmate Handbook Checklist

[Rule §283.2](#)

Include Verbatim

INMATE HANDBOOK COMPLAINT PROCESS

The Texas Commission on Jail Standards will investigate any complaint regarding a violation of minimum jail standards. If you have a complaint about a county jail, you may write to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. Once your complaint is received, it will be reviewed to determine if the complaint falls within the purview of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. Non-jurisdictional complaints will not be reviewed. If the complaint is determined to be within the purview of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, it will be reviewed in the order it was received (emergency complaints will be given priority). If your complaint has not been resolved within 45 days of receipt by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, you will be provided an interim response. If you disagree with the findings of the investigation you may appeal, in writing, to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards. All appeals must be received within 30 days after the complaint is closed.

Mail complaints to: Complaint Inspector
 Texas Commission on Jail Standards
 P.O. Box 12985
 Austin, TX 78711

Please be aware that The Texas Commission on Jail Standards cannot investigate certain claims, these include:

- Violation of Civil Rights as defined by state or federal statute
- Criminal acts committed by staff or others
- Unjust denial or restriction of privileges prior to a disciplinary hearing (visitation, phone access, commissary, etc.)
- Acts by staff prohibited by departmental policy
- Staff conduct (rudeness or unprofessionalism, etc....)
- Concerns related to your arrest, your attorney, the judge, or your case
- PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) Complaints
- Allegations of excessive force

If you have a complaint or concern that is listed above, you are required to use the local grievance process. The Texas Commission on Jail Standards will only review to ensure grievance procedures have been followed and will only override the decision of the Grievance Board or appeal decision if it is determined minimum jail standards have been violated. Alleged criminal acts will be referred to the appropriate law enforcement entity for investigation.

17. Inmate Handbook Checklist

[Rule §283.2](#)

Notes:

- **Disclaimer:** The **bolded**, underlined, and/or **red** sections identify areas that most commonly require revision. However, **all provisions of the standard remain mandatory**, regardless of formatting or emphasis.
- Anything in **blue** is a **hyperlink** that can be clicked on to view pertinent info.
- It is helpful to preserve as much of the language in the standards as possible.
- Must send in the **actual handbook** that is given to inmates upon entering the jail. Counties cannot send in a 'plan' for the Inmate Handbook.
- ***A written acknowledgment by the inmate that the rules have been explained shall be retained.** Record to be kept in inmate file.
- There are 17 operational plans. Any content from any of these plans that is also mentioned in the handbook must match and agree with each other. This means anytime you update a plan that is also mentioned in the handbook, you must also update your handbook. If you are updating several plans at once, please update each plan and the handbook. You can send me updated plans as you go but please save the handbook for last so I only have to review it one time versus each time you update and submit another plan.
 - Example:
 - Visitation Plan - **if days or times change** in the visitation plan, it must be changed in the handbook if those details are discussed there.
 - Anything that mentions a **number, time, day of week, process, etc.** should be checked in both the individual plan and the handbook.
- My Request - If you make minor changes to your handbook, please explain the changes in an email so I can more easily find what has changed.
- Medical - Very important part of the handbook. Make sure it matches your Health Services Plan.
- Many inmate requests are made via technology now. Add wording to your plans and handbook for an alternative method to make requests if any of the electronic systems or kiosks are down. Examples - medical, religious services, commissary, etc. Good to put this info at the beginning of the handbook versus in each section.
 - Questions to consider:
 - How will inmates make requests?
 - What happens when the electronic system is down or unavailable?
 - What happens if the electronic privilege is taken away? How will medical requests still be made?