

OREGON DPSST  
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The Board on Public Safety Standards and Training (BPSST) has the legislative mandate to establish and enforce the physical, mental, and moral fitness standards for all law enforcement officers, telecommunicators and emergency medical dispatchers in the state.

This requirement also defines the procedure for the Department and Board to use when denying or revoking certification of an officer, telecommunicator or emergency medical dispatcher who has fallen below the moral fitness standards.

The Ethics Bulletin is published to provide insight into the types of misconduct that could result in revocation or denial of certification. The following cases of misconduct resulted in **revocation and denial** of certifications by DPSST in **October 2004**.

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**Case 1**

**Officer A** was discharged for cause after an internal investigation showed that he violated department policies when he improperly fraternized with female inmates, was involved in the theft of an inmate's mail, improperly touched a juvenile male while in custody, and lied during the internal investigation. Officer A's conduct ended his 1-year career.

**Officer A's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked.**

**Case 2**

**Officer B** resigned after being arrested for DUII and Possession of a Controlled Substance. Officer B crashed his vehicle into a parked, unoccupied vehicle. He was convicted of the DUII and received a conditional discharge on the PCS. Nearly one year later, Officer B was arrested for Recklessly Endangering Another, Reckless Driving and Driving while suspended. Officer B received a conviction on the DWS and the other charges were dismissed. Officer B agreed to sign a Stipulated Order Revoking his certifications. **Officer B's conduct resulted in the revocation of his 19-year Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced Police certifications.**

**Case 3**

**Officer C** was discharged for cause after he repeatedly violated agency policy and his conduct created a substantial breach of his duties. Examples of Officer C's violations included not conducting a head count which allowed a male prisoner to escape into a female prisoner's cell for a period of time, and allowing an inmate to retain a screw driver after a work detail. Officer C requested a hearing to contest the revocation action and after hearing the matter, the Administrative Law Judge issued a Proposed Order to revoke Officer C's certifications. Officer C's conduct ended his 1-year career.

**Officer C's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked.**

#### **Case 4**

**Officer D** was discharged for cause for insubordination. Examples included repeatedly failing to report for work at his scheduled shift time, failing to submit reports in a timely manner, and failing to appear at scheduled court hearings. Officer D's conduct ended his 1-year career.

**Officer D's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked.**

#### **Case 5**

**Officer E** resigned and was later arrested on two occasions for possession of heroin and methamphetamines that resulted in a conviction of two counts of felony Possession of a Controlled Substance.

**Officer E's Basic, Intermediate and Advance Corrections certifications were Revoked.**

#### **Case 6**

**Officer F** resigned after he was charged with felony Escape and Hindering Prosecution. Officer F became romantically involved with a female prisoner and facilitated her escape by falsifying paperwork that led to her release. Officer F signed a Stipulated Order Revoking his certification. Officer F's conduct ended his 5-year career.

**Officer F's Basic Corrections certification was Revoked.**

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**"Their job gives them authority, but their behavior earns them respect"**

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The recent violent assault on two corrections officers at the Oregon State Penitentiary reminded me of how correctional officers and staff in our prisons, jails and detention centers are too often unrecognized and unrewarded for the work they do. Their work makes us safer in our communities. Their work makes our families safer in our homes and on the streets. They have chosen a tough career, but these officers and staff are doing it for us, the public.

They are responsible for ensuring the safety and security of inmates, many of whom have demonstrated no regard for the feelings or lives of other people. They are responsible for responding to emergencies and performing life-saving efforts, often with people who are harming themselves or others. Corrections officers work with violent offenders, mentally ill offenders, sex offenders, chemically dependent offenders, victims and victimizers, young and old, all the while trying to maintain balance and accountability. They work in an environment surrounded by stress constantly, while trying to manage the stressful effects on themselves.

Corrections officers are willing to do things that others refuse to do. They run toward a problem instead of away from it. They prepare, study, and train in a corrections academy. They apply themselves and work to become the best at what they do. Most corrections staff find satisfaction and fulfillment in their work because they perform a vital service for the public. They have a sense of calling.

Every profession has its bad apples and in corrections work they become apparent and are held accountable. For some it requires courage to leave and seek another profession. Many are called, but few are chosen for this unique occupation.

Corrections professionals go beyond the job description, title or paycheck. They talk the talk and walk the walk. *Their job gives them authority, but their behavior earns them respect.*

**Reprinted excerpts with permission from author** Patrick Rigsby. The entire article was recently printed in the Oregon Statesman Journal. Mr. Rigsby retired after spending 35 years in various positions within the corrections field. Mr. Rigsby can be reached at [rigsby@msn.com](mailto:rigsby@msn.com).