

Correctional Officers and Bailiffs

SOC: 33-3010 • Career Profile Report

■ Key Facts

\$57,950

Median Salary

30,500

Employment

-7.0%

Growth Rate

■ Requirements & Salary Range

Education: High school diploma

■ Automation Risk Assessment

Low Risk - 20.0% probability of being automated in the next 10-20 years.

This job is relatively safe from automation due to its creative, social, or complex problem-solving requirements.

■■ Work-Life Balance

5.4/10 - Fair work-life balance

■ Personality Fit (RIASEC)

Higher scores indicate better personality fit for this career type.

Realistic	8.0/10	Investigative	6.4/10
Artistic	4.0/10	Social	7.8/10
Enterprising	6.6/10	Conventional	6.2/10

■ Top Skills Required

Decision-making skills, Detail oriented, Interpersonal skills, Negotiating skills, Physical strength, Self-discipline

✓ Strengths

- High Demand
- Flexible Work
- Continuous Learning

■ Challenges

- Burnout Risk
- Rapid Technological Change

■ What They Do

Correctional Officers and Bailiffs are public safety professionals responsible for maintaining **order, security, and safety within correctional and judicial settings**. Correctional officers supervise individuals who are incarcerated, ensuring facility rules are followed and preventing disturbances, while bailiffs maintain order in courtrooms, protect judges and juries, and enforce courtroom procedures. Together, these roles uphold the justice system by ensuring safe, controlled environments where legal processes can function properly.

This career is well suited for individuals who value public service, structure, and responsibility, and who can remain calm, fair, and professional in high-stress situations.

What Do Correctional Officers and Bailiffs Do?

These professionals enforce rules, monitor behavior, and respond to incidents within secure facilities or courtrooms. While their daily tasks differ by setting, both roles emphasize safety, authority, and procedural integrity.

Common responsibilities include:

- Supervising individuals in correctional or detention facilities
- Enforcing rules, regulations, and court orders
- Conducting counts, inspections, and security checks
- Monitoring behavior to prevent violence or escape
- Responding to emergencies, disturbances, or conflicts
- Escorting inmates or defendants between locations
- Maintaining order and decorum in courtrooms

Differences Between the Roles

Although closely related, these roles operate in different environments:

- Correctional Officers: Work in jails, prisons, or detention centers supervising incarcerated individuals.
- Bailiffs: Work in courtrooms ensuring safety, enforcing courtroom rules, and assisting judges.

Skills and Abilities Needed

Correctional officers and bailiffs rely on situational awareness, communication, and authority.

Core Professional Skills

Personal Qualities That Matter

Education and Training Pathway

Entry into these roles typically involves formal training and screening:

- High School Diploma or Equivalent: Minimum education requirement
- Academy or Agency Training: Instruction in security procedures, law, and defensive tactics
- Physical and Psychological Screening: Required to assess readiness for duty
- On-the-Job Training: Facility- or court-specific procedures
- Ongoing Training: Required to maintain certification and readiness

Some agencies prefer or require college coursework in criminal justice or related fields.

Where Do Correctional Officers and Bailiffs Work?

These professionals are employed in justice system environments:

- Local Jails and State or Federal Prisons
- Juvenile Detention Centers
- Courts and Judicial Facilities

- Federal, State, and County Government Agencies

- Specialized or High-Security Facilities

Work schedules often include rotating shifts, nights, weekends, and holidays.

How Much Do Correctional Officers and Bailiffs Earn?

Earnings vary by role, jurisdiction, and experience:

- Entry-Level Officers or Bailiffs: Typically earn stable public-sector wages
- Experienced Professionals: Often earn higher pay with seniority or specialization
- Supervisory Roles: May earn more with leadership responsibilities

Compensation often includes benefits such as pensions, healthcare, and paid leave.

Is This Career Difficult?

This career is mentally and emotionally demanding. Professionals must manage potentially volatile situations, enforce rules consistently, and maintain authority without escalating conflict. The challenge lies in balancing firmness, fairness, and personal safety in controlled but high-risk environments.

Who Should Consider This Career?

This career may be a strong fit if you:

- Want to work in public safety or the justice system
- Can remain calm and assertive under pressure
- Value structure, rules, and accountability
- Are comfortable enforcing authority fairly
- Want a stable government career with advancement opportunities

How to Prepare Early

- Maintain physical fitness and stress resilience
- Develop strong communication and conflict-management skills
- Take courses in criminal justice or law-related subjects
- Practice ethical decision-making and professionalism
- Research local agency requirements and hiring processes

Correctional officers and bailiffs uphold safety and order within the justice system, ensuring secure environments where rehabilitation, accountability, and the rule of law can be carried out effectively.