



Certified Jail Officer Handbook



The Jail Manager Certification Commission (JMCC) and the American Jail Association (AJA) promote the concept of voluntary certification for all jail personnel. Certification is one part of a process called credentialing. It focuses specifically on the individual and provides evidence of that individual's competency in a specialized field. Certification signifies and documents the mastery of a strong level of knowledge. It plays a significant role in the elevation of the professionalism and provides an opportunity for professional growth by encouraging continued education, which, in turn, fosters effective management practices.

The *Certified Jail Officer (CJO)* Program was developed to assist jail officers in preparing themselves for advancement in jail management. The CJO Program provides jail officers with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities as well as their commitment to the corrections profession. Jail officers who become CJOs embark on building a national professional portfolio of their career.

For the purposes of the Certified Jail Officer Program:

DEFINITION OF A JAIL OFFICER

A person (sworn or civilian) who supervises incarcerated individuals in jails or detention centers; and/or a person (sworn or civilian) who is in charge of those who supervise individuals incarcerated in jails or detention centers.

DEFINITION OF A JAIL

1. A county, municipal, tribal or regional facility that houses pretrial and sentenced inmates; and/or an institution that houses pretrial and sentenced inmates where the state is responsible for jail operations (Alaska, Hawaii, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Delaware); and/or a private facility that houses pretrial and sentenced inmates and exists to serve the local jail needs of the community where it operates.

and/or

2. A facility that houses ONLY pretrial detainees, regardless of what entity operates it. This includes, but is not limited to facilities that house persons for less than 72 hours (lock-ups), facilities that house federal or military custody inmates awaiting trial (e.g. ICE, Marshals, Armed Forces), institutions where the state is responsible for the operations of jails, and private facilities.

and/or

3. A local government or private facility that houses convicted persons who, without this facility's existence, would serve their sentence in the local jurisdiction's jail. With regard to private facilities: the local government responsible for jail operations has contracted with a separate entity to replace that jurisdiction's jail operations.

What Are The Requirements for the CJO Certification?

Candidate must be employed full-time for a minimum of **one year** as a paid jail officer and adheres to the AJA's *Code of Ethics*.

PLEASE NOTE: If your agency is an AJA Member, you may use the AJA Member rate to apply.

How Long Am I Certified?

Certification is good for a period of four (4) years. You will receive emails when your CJO is up for renewal so please be sure that AJA has your most recent email address. Please see below, "**How Do I Recertify Once My Four Years Is Up?**"

Passing candidates will be listed in the **CJO Professional List** found on the AJA website, as well as AJA publications. To celebrate your achievement, AJA requests that candidates submit a photo showing the CJO holding their certificate for use in our publications and social media. Please email photos to American Jail's Certification Department, at certification@aja.org.

What's on the Examination?

1. The exam is an online computer based examination composed of approximately **175** multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of three (**3**) hours. Candidates will need **140** correct answers in order to pass (**80%**)
2. The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in jail operations and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the JMCC.
3. **The examination is comprehensive therefore there is no study guide. Please download the CJO Resource List for helpful study material.**
4. Questions are based on the Content Outline and weighted in approximately the following manner:

I. Jail Operations	25%
II. Safety and Security	30%
III. Professional and Legal Concepts	20%
IV. Special Population Issues	15%
V. Support Services	10%

Content Outline

I. Jail Operations (25%)

- A. Inmate Supervision
- B. Inmate Discipline
- C. Inmate Grievances
- D. Intake/Release
- E. Housing
- F. Investigation of Crimes
- G. Inmate Workers
- H. Inmate Hygiene
- I. Facility Sanitation
- J. Visitation
- K. Other

II. Safety and Security (30%)

- A. Use of Force
- B. Legal Issues
- C. Emergency Procedures
- D. Inmate Classification
- E. Contraband
- F. Inmate Transportation
- G. Suicide/Suicide Prevention
- H. Searches
- I. Key/Tool Control
- J. Restraints
- K. Facility
- L. Other

III. Professional and Legal Concepts (20%)

- A. Professionalism/Ethics
- B. Leadership Tools
- C. Physical Fitness/Stress Management
- D. Confidentiality
- E. Inmate Rights
- F. Communications
 - 1. Documentation
 - 2. Interpersonal
 - 3. Conflict Resolution
- G. Sexual Harassment/Sexual Misconduct
- H. Administrative Investigations
- I. Administrative Legal Issues
- J. PREA

V. Support Services (10%)

- A. Medical
- B. Food
- C. Commissary
- D. Inmate Programs
- E. Volunteers

IV. Special Population Issues (15%)

- A. Gangs
- B. Juveniles
- C. LGBT
- D. Substance Abusers
- E. Mental Illness
- F. Communicable Diseases and other Health-Related Issues
- G. Disabilities and Special Needs
- H. Foreign Nationals
- I. Elderly
- J. Special Housing
- K. Cultural Diversity
- L. Other

Pass/Fail Standard

The passing standard is a pre-determined standard of knowledge set by a criterion-referenced methodology and the JMCC. Using this methodology, there is no curve and candidates do not compete against each other. You may retake the examination as needed within 8 months of your initial application approval. The retake fee is \$120.00. After 8 months, you will need to submit a new application.

Report of Results

The testing platform will produce exam results immediately after completion of the exam. **A welcome letter, certificate and certification pin will be mailed within 1 week after exam to the home address provided on your application.**

Sample Questions

1. Which of the following is a major aspect of linear supervision?
 - A. Indirect contact
 - B. Unrestricted accessibility
 - C. Structured chain-of-command
 - D. Continuous officer-inmate interaction
2. Which of the following is most appropriate when an inmate is injured?
 - A. Secure inmate in cell
 - B. Ignore injury if it is not serious
 - C. Contact the medical department
 - D. Leave the inmate alone until the external investigator arrives
3. What is the first step in problem solving?
 - A. Gather facts
 - B. Find a solution
 - C. Define problem

D. Consider limitations

4. Which of the following techniques is effective for combating the effects of stress?

- A. Alcohol
- B. Drugs
- C. Exercise
- D. Working Overtime

5. Which of the following best describes schizophrenia, mood disorders, and Alzheimer's disease?

- A. Imagines diseases
- B. Signs that an inmate is considering suicide
- C. Conditions that can be cured with medication
- D. Mental illnesses sometimes present in inmates

6. Which of the following is the most appropriate action when speaking with an inmate who does not speak English?

- A. Place the inmate with the special needs inmates
- B. Use body language and attempt to find a translator
- C. Have an English-speaking family member translate
- D. Place the inmate with non-English speaking inmates

Answers: 1. A 2. C 3. C 4. C 5. D 6. B

How Do I Recertify Once My Four Years Is Up?

Option 1: Training Requirements

- Mark the **Training Requirements** box at the top of the *CJO Recertification Application Form*.
- Attach a copy of your current job/position description.
- Accumulate at least **80 hours** of correctional training between your last certification date and the date you apply for recertification.
- Submit a minimum of three original potential CJO examination questions along with supporting documentation.
- If paying via credit card, you may scan entire application and supporting documentation into one pdf document and email to certification@aja.org 4 weeks **before** your certification anniversary date expires.
- If paying with check or PO, you must mail your completed CJO Recertification Application with fees to AJA Headquarters 4 weeks **before** your certification anniversary date expires.

Fees: AJA Member: \$45 AJA Nonmember: \$95

Option 2: Re-Examination

- Mark the **Re-Examination** box at the top of the *CJO Recertification Application Form*.
- Submit a minimum of three original potential CJO examination questions along with supporting documentation.
- If paying via credit card, you may scan entire application and supporting documentation into one pdf document and email to certification@aja.org **before** your certification anniversary date expires.
- If paying with check or PO, you must mail your completed CJO Recertification Application with fees to AJA Headquarters **before** your certification anniversary date expires.
- Once the application is received you will be emailed the examination instructions.

Fee: \$120

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible for recertification, the CJO must be currently employed as a jail officer, or have had no more than a two-year departure from such employment at the time of CJO's certification expiration date AND must state an intention to re-enter the field of jail operations.

It is the CJO's responsibility to meet the recertification criteria and to mail in or upload a recertification application **BEFORE** his/her certification anniversary date expires. Applications must be received FOUR (4) weeks before the certification anniversary date expires or an additional \$35 late fee will be assessed. If the certification lapses, the individual will have to re-apply and take the CJO examination. Fees are subject to change.

Certified Jail Officers who do not recertify or who fail to meet the criteria required for recertification will no longer be able to use the CJO designation. If certification is suspended, and at some point in the future, the former CJO decides to become certified again, he/she will be required to proceed through the entire certification process, including taking the certification examination.

REVOCAION OF CERTIFICATION

Certification may be revoked or denied for: Falsification of an application and/or CJO Application, misrepresentation of certification, or breach of existing ethical standards of professional practice as stated in the AJA Code of Ethics. An appeals mechanism for challenging revocation or denial of certification is available.