



# Texas Department of Criminal Justice

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**Brad Livingston**  
Executive Director

October 13, 2005

Dear Volunteers,

The Religious Volunteer Program would like to thank you for your continued commitment as a volunteer for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of some do's and don'ts when volunteering.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS:**

- Prior to being an approved volunteer for TDCJ, training and orientation is held. During this training all volunteers are given rules, regulations, policies and procedures governing conduct. Violation of these rules could result in transfer to another assignment, temporary suspension, retraining, or future services being declined.
- While serving as a volunteer it is important to be on time, or notify the unit/department in advance if you are unable to come on a scheduled day. A volunteer shall conduct himself in a professional manner and dress in conservative attire.
- Due to the nature of the agency's mission there are inherent risks that a volunteer assumes while serving as a TDCJ volunteer. Always be aware of your surroundings. Awareness promotes safety.
- All volunteers should notify the volunteer staff of a change of address, telephone number, or any arrest (excluding minor traffic violations)
- Volunteers must refrain from forming any non-professional, personal/emotional involvement with offenders. Over involvement and over identification with an offender are the most prevalent downfalls of a volunteer. Volunteers are responsible for notifying the volunteer staff if an offender relative or friend is transferred to the same unit that the volunteer is assigned, or of the development of a personal relationship with an offender/releasee.
- Each volunteer shall make an immediate report to the Volunteer Services Staff or appropriate staff member of any violation of the law or the rules and regulations of the TDCJ. Such volunteer reports may be requested in writing.
- No volunteers shall contact the victim of any offender, including a family member who may be the victim. The offender may state that he wants to reconcile with or "make it up" to the victim. Notify your volunteer staff member that the offender has made the request, but DO NOT act upon it.
- Volunteer will not solicit, trade, barter, or accept a gift or any compensation from, or present a gift to, an offender, an offender's family, or any other person on behalf of an offender, except as authorized by the Volunteer Services Staff.
- Volunteers shall not recommend or furnish any advice concerning the retention of legal assistance, bonding firm, a specific lawyer or bondsman for an offender, or to anyone on an offender's behalf.
- Volunteers shall not reveal confidential information in TDCJ records to unauthorized persons. An offender should never be asked why they are incarcerated or for how long.
- Volunteers shall not solicit funds or services, sell tickets, and distribute petitions or literature for any purpose other than official business on TDCJ property.
- Volunteers are prohibited from selling to, buying from, or delivering to ANY offender ANY article of ANY description except through authorized channels!

- Volunteers shall not introduce into, or upon the grounds of a TDCJ institution, any alcohol, tobacco, narcotic drug, ammunition, weapon (including pocketknife), or munitions. Do not keep a firearm in your locked vehicle.
- Volunteers shall not take out or bring into an institution a letter, message, any article or thing for an offender.
- Volunteers can not perform any activity involving the actual receipt or handling of money (either cash, checks, money orders, state warrants and the like) for an offender while performing volunteer services for TDCJ. Volunteers shall not place money into an offender's trust fund account.
- An offender is not permitted to handle money; at that point it is considered contraband.
- DO NOT BRING ANYTHING INTO OR OUT OF THE FACILITY THAT HAS NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED (Especially not copyrighted material).
- Volunteers may not visit an offender in regular unit visitation.
- Volunteers shall not allow a releasee to reside at their personal place of residence. Volunteers shall not have releasees in their homes. (Exception: group meeting programs / activities (i.e., AA/NA meetings).
- An approved volunteer (excluding approved employee volunteers) may correspond with an offender at a ministry level. The volunteer shall include as part of his return address, the word "Chaplaincy Volunteer".
- In the event that a volunteer has not provided services during the last 12 months they will be designated as inactive. Volunteers who have resigned or have an inactive status and wish to return shall re-apply by completing the Volunteer Application form and volunteer training.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Chaplaincy Department at 936-437-5050.

Sincerely,

*Bill Pierce*

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