

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Department of Public Welfare  
State Office Building  
Richmond, Virginia  
April 4, 1933

Chairman Board of Supervisors  
Prince William County  
Manassas, Virginia

My dear Sir:

Referring to my recent visit of inspection to the Prince William jail and my interview with several members of your board in the clerk's office, I wish to report more fully on the Prince William jail and to confirm the statements made by me.

The Commonwealth of Virginia pays for the board and keep of the prisoners and the county engages to keep them safe and in conformity to law, clean and in cleanly surroundings.

I find that the prisoners in Prince William are kept safely but neither the prisoners nor the jail are as clean as they should be.

It is no part of my purpose at this time to urge supervisors to spend more money than is necessary to keep a lawful prison. In no place, and I have visited every jail in the Commonwealth; has compliance with my recommendations for the jails necessitated the spending of more money than the average of what was already being spent at that place regularly for jail upkeep.

I stated to your board that by the purchase of mattresses and cotton slip-covers for same, blankets and other jail supplies through the State Purchasing Agent, sufficient money could in a short time be saved, to install a stove with a hot water boiler attachment at the jail (Sears-Roebuck \$20.00) for washing and bathing purposes, so that a higher degree of cleanliness could be possible.

The jail floor needs scrubbing with plenty of effort, hot water, and soap powder. The mattresses are dirty and must be renewed shortly. A heavy cotton slip-cover for each mattress which could be washed regularly by the prisoners will save the purchase of mattresses every few months.

The penitentiary tailor shop will make these covers to measure and furnish the materials at 50 cents each. The State Commission for the Blind will make mattress and cover to order at one-half what you have to pay for the same sort of mattress at retail. Stout iron cots as are used by the state road camps may be bought for less than half the money paid for cots now used in your jail.

Enclosed you will find a statement sent to the sheriff of Prince William some months ago along with rules for promoting cleanliness and health. I regret that the points checked as having been disregarded are still unchanged for the better.

Very respectfully yours,  
Roy K. Flannagan, M. D.  
Asst. State Health Commissioner  
Medical Advisor, State Dept. of Public Welfare

## **AN INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT TO RULES FOR HEALTH CARE OF VIRGINIA JAILS**

The law of Virginia, places on the Departments of Public Health and of Public Welfare certain responsibilities for the health and well being of prisoners. The following facts in regard to the health care of prisoners. The following facts in regard to the health care of prisoners and the proper conduct of jails are hereby brought to the attention of sheriffs and jailors responsible.

1. Every prisoner, whatever be his crime, his color or his circumstances, is entitled to humane and decent treatment. No humane official will mistreat a person helpless in his hands. No person who is not humane should have any duty in connection with the administration of justice.
2. It is not humane or lawful to keep a dirty jail with dirty equipment or one that is badly ventilated in summer or poorly lighted and insufficiently heated in winter. It is not the will of those in authority (Dept. of Public Welfare, supervisors, councilmen and judges) that things for decent living be withheld from people in jail.
3. It is not humane or respectable, and it is unlawful, to deny cleanliness of person and clothing to prisoners. This occurs always when the dirty and the clean are herded together, and when regular bathing is not provided for and insisted upon.
4. It is not humane to deny prisoners an ample amount of nourishing and varied food, decently served at proper intervals. The same kind of food day after day tends to sickness among prisoners, and messy food served in unsightly containers causes discontent among them and trouble for the jailor.
5. It is not humane and it is unlawful to keep well people in close contact with persons suffering from communicable disease, or to keep an insane person confined in the same room or cell with mentally sound people.
6. A sick prisoner must have medical attention, but every prisoner who calls for a doctor and for medicine is not sick. The jailor must call a doctor when necessary but if he is wise he will watch carefully to discover those who only wish to get medicine from the doctor in place of the drink or "dope" to which they are accustomed, or who simply wish to avoid work or to add to the expense and trouble of their care.
7. Prisoners complaining of illness should be brought to the doctor in a convenient place for examination, for, unless a close examination is made, the doctor himself may be fooled.
8. To clean a jail is not generally difficult but it requires constant watchfulness to maintain cleanliness, because of the low standards of living of many jail prisoners.
9. A dirty jail indicates to the visitor that a careless, slothful and perhaps dirty person is in charge of it.
10. Idle men whose labor costs nothing are plentiful in jail and should be put to work. If a jailor cannot keep his jail clean with the help of the prisoners, hot water and soap, surely he should yield his job to someone who can. The U. S. Army administration succeeded in keeping camps clean during the war and the State prison road camps maintain a high standard of cleanliness.

Attached hereto are rules which if observed and uniformly enforced will go a long way towards removing the reproach of neglect of duty towards prisoners that now rests upon a

number of jailors in Virginia. Many sheriffs and jailors are doing their full duty. We desire to help all come up to a reasonable standard of jail sanitation.

Roy K. Flannagan, M. D.

Asst. State Health Commissioner

Medical Advisor, State Dept. of Public Welfare

## **RULES FOR PROMOTING THE CLEANLINESS AND HEALTH OF JAIL PRISONERS IN VIRGINIA**

### **Segregation of Prisoners**

1. Prisoners suffering from infectious diseases like syphilis, gonorrhoea, tuberculosis, itch, pediculosis, etc., must be separated from other prisoners. Very dirty or feeble people should be suspected of being infected and be kept apart for special consideration and action.
2. Insane prisoners, women, and minors must also be separated.

### **Cleanliness of Quarters**

3. The jailor should regularly select and assign certain prisoners to general clean-up duty. These may be put on shifts in order that all may be treated alike and each learns how to properly clean the jail.
4. Each cell should be cleaned and tidied up by its occupants every day before the morning meal is served. Spitting on floor or walls is forbidden.
5. The toilet bowls, commodes, buckets or other slop receptacles must be scrubbed daily. Splashing them with disinfectants simply covers up filth and bad smells and is a bad practice.
6. There should be a daily inspection by someone who knows what a proper standard of cleanliness is, to see that the job is done right.

### **Cleanliness of Prisoners**

7. Each prisoner must be provided with a piece of soap and a towel for his individual use. The towel must be kept clean by frequent washings.
8. Each prisoner must be required to wash his hands and face each morning before eating.
9. Each prisoner must be required to take a thorough bath all over his body, at least once each week. A prisoner, plainly dirty on admission, must be required to take such a bath at once before mingling with others.

### **Cleanliness of Clothes**

10. Facilities for laundering washable cloth and garments must be provided at the jail, such as tubs, hot water and soap.
11. Each prisoner should at least once weekly be required to do necessary laundry work. (Should other satisfactory arrangements for all necessary laundry work outside the jail be made, the above requirement need not be enforced).

### **Cleanliness of Bedding**

12. Each prisoner must be furnished with clean bedding and ample cover (Code of Virginia Sec. 2587). In the interest of economy and cleanliness, heavy cotton or denim slip cover should be provided for mattresses. Where this has not been done the renewal of mattresses has been a constantly recurring expense of many jails.

13. Blankets should be used as cover instead of quilts. Quilts cannot be washed, are easily torn, and are harboring places for vermin.

**Plumbing, Painting and Whitewashing**

14. Water pipes must be kept in repair and whitewashing or painting must be done as required by law. (Code of Virginia Sec. 2587).

**Food for Prisoners**

15. Food should be served decently, in sufficient quantity and variety, and at regular intervals. Idle people need greater variety of food to maintain health than working people.

16. If two meals only are served daily at the jail, a larger portion at each meal must be served, than if three meals are furnished.

**The following goods at prices named, cash in 30 days, may be secured by application to Col. C. A. Osborne, State Purchasing Agent, Richmond, Virginia**

Iron Cots – double deck or triple deck (very strong) \$2.70 for each unit

Mattresses – standard thickness and size (3 feet wide by 6 feet 2 inches long) \$3.50 each

Blankets – food all wool 4 lb. blankets in 1 doz. Lots delivered \$1.57 each

Slip Covers for Mattresses – 2 doz. Lots for 50 cents each

Good Towelling – in rolls of 25 to 35 yards, 18 inches wide, 7 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cents a yard

Scrubbing Brushes – 8 inch palmetto \$1.07 a doz. delivered.

Laundry Soap – Colgates palm olive \$1.58 per box of 60, 16 inch bars

Cleansing powder – Swift & Co. \$1.24 per case 50, 14 oz. packages to case delivered

Lye – 2 cases to shipment, \$2.88 per case, 48, 13 oz. cans per case

Insecticide – American Oil Co., Amox, 58 cents, 4-5 gal. cans per shipment.

A cheaper and less serviceable mattress may be secured from Meads Corporation, Norfolk, or Dixie Mattress Company, Richmond, and from Commission for Blind.

Roy K. Flannagan, M. D.  
Asst. State Health Commissioner  
Medical Advisor, State Dept. of Public Welfare