

# Jails and prisons

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



Many people use the term “ Jail” and “ Prison” as is they were one in the same, however while they both provide a form of supervised detention, there is a distinguishably and significant difference between them. There are three different types of prisons; jails, states prisons, and federal prisons. A jail is a regional, county, or city confinement facility that has custodial authority over adults being detained (University of Phoenix, 2012). Individuals housed in a jail have been sentenced for less than a year and receive minimal service and programs due to the transient nature of the facility.

A Jail also houses a wide variety of individuals; not all there for punishment. Some are detained for protective custody, contempt of court, and individuals awaiting arraignment. This ever changing variety creates great challenges; they include juveniles, men, women, hardened criminals, uncooperative journalist, sick people, and first time offenders. Jails may also have community-based programs such as home detention or work release. Prison, on the other hand is a state or federal confinement facility that has custodial authority over adults sentenced to confinement (University of Phoenix, 2012).

It houses individuals sentenced to a minimum of one year for crimes committed. They may be specializes by security level, gender, and criminal type. Community programs are not normally available however they do have educational, mental health care and drug abuse treatment programs. Early release of prisons do occur, however after time served. There are some major differences between jails and prisons, the county jail I selected for comparison is Kern County in Bakersfield, California and the state prison is Folsom.

Kern County is a detentions bureau that operates numerous small jails in the local area. They are responsible for the main reception center at the Central Receiving Facility, housing a daily average of 2, 500 inmates. Also, they run two other smaller receiving centers. Inmates in custody past their first Court appearance are generally transferred to one of the Facilities at the Lerdo Complex. The Lerdo complex has three facilities; Maximum-Medium Facility, Minimum, and Pre-Trial. The Maximum-Medium Facility, has a capacity of 374 and is normally for pre-sentenced and sentenced inmates.

The Pre-Trial Facility houses both male and females with a capacity of 1232 inmates. The Kern County Sherrif's Office also provides contracts services with other government agencies to house their inmates. This facility provides a 24 hrs, 7 days a week medical staff along with daily psychiatric services. Folsom State prison houses approximately 5, 000 level 1 and 2 security inmates. It consists of 5 housing units within a secure perimeter, with unit one being the most populated cellblock in the United States, housing 1200 inmates.

This institution has two eating facilities, and three exercise yards. Folsom State Prison offers an array of educational programs; both academic and vocational, in hopes of providing inmates with skills that will set them up for success upon release. Additionally, college programs through Coastline Community College are readily available. Just as in society, jails and prison has its culture and numerous subcultures brought in by inmates. Violence is a dominant subculture in jails and prisons.

These subcultures are driven by the behaviors, beliefs, and characteristics of individuals belonging to a particular social, ethnic, religious, or age group. “

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Prison subcultures are very influential, and both inmates and staff must reckon with them. Given the large and often densely packed inmate populations that characterize many of today's prisons, prison subcultures are not easily subject to the control of prison authorities. Complicating life behind bars are numerous conflicts of interest between inmates and staff.

Lawsuits, riots, violence, and frequent formal grievances are symptoms of such differences" (Schmallegger 2005). Jails play an important role in the criminal justice system, besides being the first location that an individual that has been arrested is introduced to the criminal justice system; they also provide an alternative location to house individuals in protective custody. They help relieve the burden of overcrowding from the prison system by housing individuals serving less than one year, and are the focal point for community-based programs such as home detention and work release.

Community-based programs associated with jails and prison plays a huge role in transitioning ex convicts and individuals that have had near brushes with the law back into society. These programs are connected to both the jails and prison system. Parole and probation, use to be the two main methods of accomplishing this transition, however in today's society with major advancement in technology and in the spirit of providing true psychological assistance, those avenues have expanded.

These avenues include work release, half way houses, home confinement, electronic monitoring, community service, and boot camp prisons. As stated earlier, violence is the norm in jails and prisons. The most violent behaviors that occur are due to riots; stemming from dissatisfaction caused by living conditions, gang related activity, and assaults on staff members. Our jails

and prison system throughout the United States are filled with gangs; they control most of the inmates and what goes on within the facility and are responsible for the majority of the violence that occurs.

This violent behavior includes bullying individuals to doing what they want, beatings, stabbings, sexual assault, rape, and murder. Gang violence is a vicious circle and even though there are significant consequences for committing violent act, such as solitary confinement, loss of privileges, isolation, additional criminal charges resulting in more time served, violence still occurs. Probation is a “ sentence of imprisonment that is suspended” (Schmallegger 2005).

Parole is “ the status of a convicted offender who has been conditionally released from prison from a paroling authority before the expiration of his or her sentence, is placed under supervision of a parole agency and it required to observe the conditions of parole” (Schmallegger 2005). Both these innovations in the correctional field, provides an opportunity for the smooth transition and incorporate offenders back into the community and society utilizing avenues not available while incarcerated.