

CDCR Officer Exam Cheat Sheet 2026

The night-before summary, built like the exam.

— Questions	— Time limit	Set by CDCR for each ad... Passing score
— Exam fee	California Department of... Governing body	

The Exam at a Glance

- Five tested subjects: grammar, spelling, punctuation, reading comprehension, basic mathematics.
- 79% of participants pass — fundamentals, prepared deliberately, get you through.
- Your invitation arrives by email within 2 business days of applying; check spam folders.
- Fail or no-show and you are ineligible to reapply for 30 days — do not test cold.

Grammar Quick Rules

- Each, neither, everyone, one of the officers — all take singular verbs.
- Keep verb tense consistent across a sentence: reviewed, weighed, and recommended.
- Pronoun after a preposition is objective: between you and me.
- No double negatives: "could hardly," never "couldn't hardly."
- Modifiers sit next to what they describe; the opening phrase must name its actor.

Punctuation Essentials

- Comma splice fixes: period, semicolon, or comma plus and/but/so — never a bare comma.
- Apostrophes show possession (the officer's log) or contraction (it's = it is) — never plurals.
- Its = possessive; it's = it is. If "it is" fits, use the apostrophe.
- Semicolon joins two complete, related sentences; a colon introduces a list or explanation.

Spelling Traps

- Drill: occurred, separate, judgment, received, immediately, sergeant, lieutenant, personnel.
- Homophones: their/there/they're, to/too/two, principal/principle, affect (verb)/effect (noun).

Reading Approach

- Answer only from the passage — wrong choices add facts the memo never states.
- Match each number to its own rule; two figures in one memo trigger two different conditions.
- Track sequence words: before, after, until, immediately. Order decides procedure questions.
- For word-in-context items, substitute each choice into the sentence and keep the one that preserves meaning.

Math Essentials

- 24-hour clock: split elapsed-time spans at the top of the hour, and at midnight (0000) when they cross it.
- Never treat 100 clock units as 100 minutes — 0915 to 1003 is 48 minutes, not 88.
- Count reconciliation: assigned = counted in cells + authorized out-counts + unaccounted.
- Supplies in fixed cases: divide, then always round up any remainder to the next whole case.
- Percent shortcut: find 10%, halve it for 5%, and build totals from those benchmarks.

- No calculator dependence — do tonight's last practice set by hand.

Beyond the Written Test

- PFT: 500-yard course, mini obstacle section, two 45-lb kettlebells carried 50 yards — maximum 5:35. 90% of candidates pass.
- Age: 20 at application, 21 at academy appointment. Full hiring process runs about 12 months after the written exam.
- Academy: 13 weeks in Galt, CA. Salary after academy: \$5,510–\$9,203/month.
- Applications expected to re-open October 1, 2026 — confirm details on CDCR's official page.

Night-Before Checklist

- Re-read your invitation email for the reporting time, location, and required identification.
- Plan the route and arrive early; a missed cycle counts the same as a failure — 30 days out.
- One light review pass, then stop. Sleep beats a midnight cram for a fundamentals exam.

Official sources

- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) — Step 2: Written Examination - Peace Officer Careers: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/por/application-steps/written-examination/>
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) — Step 3: Physical Fitness Test - Peace Officer Careers: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/por/application-steps/physical-fitness-test/>
- California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) — Hiring Process - Peace Officer Careers: <https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/por/application-process/>

Free practice questions for this exam: www.everyexamprep.com/exams/cdcr-correctional-officer/practice-test