

## **No More Training: That Should Cure The Problem**

In the Florida Department of Corrections (FDOC) before a potential prison guard can actually become a guard they have to go through a 90-day training course at FDOC training “academy”. The new recruit, after completing his training, is then posted at a prison as a trainee. As a trainee, the new recruit wears a unique uniform that identifies him or her as being in training. During that training period the guards give guidance to the new recruit in how to put into action his or her academy training. They learn the routines of the prison and are tested on what they learned in academy.

Not anymore.

Recently while speaking with a long time FDOC guard I mentioned how I had seen an unusual amount of trainee’s. Every shift had two or three, and it seemed a lot of older staff were gone. The officer then started speaking in disgust, told me about how the “trainee’s” were not even trainees, rather, they were new hires that had not yet even been to the academy for any training. He explained that they, that being the prison, were so understaffed the FDOC was putting new hires straight into the prison not only with no training but also without ever having been to the training academy.

With the extensive problems in the FDOC over the last few decades one has to wonder who decided the way to remedy the FDOC problems was to put untrained people in positions of guards. Imagine for a moment you want to be a fire fighter. Without any training you are hired, they give you the keys to a fire truck and then tell you to go put out fires. A fire fighter requires rigorous and intensive training because a fire fighters job is not easy and takes knowledge of how fires act, how to work equipment, what equipment works in what situation, what fire laws are, and much more. Its not a job you should just give someone along with a pretty red had, an axe and a pat on the back.

The FDOC’s practice of throwing untrained civilians into prisons as guards, especially solitary confinement units, is a recipe for disaster. If the FDOC thought it had problems before, it can only get worse now. In a few years I hope someone will look back on this article and realize why it got worse and learn from it. But then again it could be hoping for too much.