



# Doing time in open prison

In general sentences under 5 years are carried out in an open prison. The conditions in open prisons are very different from what you've experienced, if you've been in custody. Usually there will be little to no actual physical confinement on the grounds. A typical day might look like this:

07.00: Doors are unlocked

08.00: Work or school begins

11.30: Lunch

12.00: Back to work

16.00: Free/spare time

22.00: Doors are locked

When you aren't working or at school you can move around freely on the prison grounds. Often there's access to workout facilities, common areas where for example you can watch movies or play games and to visit other prisoners in their cells (or "pinden" as it's commonly referred to) You are responsible for your own cleaning, laundry etc.

After 30 days in the prison (sentences of more than 2 ½ years: after 1/6 of the sentence) it is possible to leave the prison for the weekend every third week to a specific address that has to be approved. If you move to another prison, you have to wait another 30 days. To get the leave, you have to file an application with the specific address of one particular person you wish to visit. The visit request is then sent to the given address along with a consent form. The prison will check the individual in the criminal records and the approval will hopefully be given. Normally you can pile your leave days up and take one long leave or leave for separate days in stead.

## Visits

Requesting for visits is pretty much the same as it is when you're in custody. You have to send out a visit permission slip to your friends/family and they fill it out and send it back. There might be a limit on the number of visits you can get, but it's often high.

When your friends/family have been approved, you have to book the visit and communicate about it yourselves. The conditions for visitation are better in open prisons than in custody. You have the right to at least one visit of an hour a week, but it's often possible to get longer visits, especially if

your friends/family come from far away. You can get visits from more than one person at a time and often you don't have to sit in the visitors room. Some prisons let you have visits in your cell and others have a common area and outdoor areas, you can be at. The visiting rooms are often obviously meant for conjugal visits and therefore not very nice to be in with family.

### **Using the phone**

In most open prison you can get a cellphone. Normally you bring your own sim-card and either put it in a phone that is mounted in your "pind" or you buy a phone from the prison that is then mounted. Some prisons might still only have payphones in the hallways.

### **Work**

The work in the open prisons varies depending on where you are sitting. Some of them have farming and forestry, workshops of different kinds, and otherwise the work will often consist of taking care of the prison grounds with gardening or cleaning. You get paid a very modest salary, starting at approx. 8-9 kr an hour. The salary is beyond the amount of money you are entitled to if you are in a prison where you cook yourself. You may know that you have "right and duty" to work. It means in effect that if you refuse to work or are not working enough, you may be fined, excluded from community or put into a cell for punishment, depending on how reluctant you are. You can apply to get a job outside prison. You should be aware that if you have a regular employment income, you may be required to pay for food and lodging to the prison authorities.



### **●Education**

Most open prisons only have education on a primary school level. In some prison you might be able to take the first part of a secondary vocational education (e.g. carpenter). If you want to study at a high school or college level you can apply for permission to study outside the prison, or to attend online courses.

Even if you have no interest in education it can still make sense to apply. If you get permission to study outside the prison you are allowed to leave the prison all school days, and online courses might get you permission to have a computer and internet access.

To study outside you need to qualify for day release, so it might be a good idea to apply for online courses until you qualify.

### **●Day release**

Day release means that you are allowed to leave the prison to work or study. You have to return to the prison during your free time.

The prison doesn't allow day release if:

- Your sentence is less than five months
- You've served less than 1/3 of your sentence

- You need day release to study for more than a year
- You need day release to work for more than six months

### ● Rent

If you have trouble paying your rent while you're inside you can apply for help from the municipality. Normally you can get your rent covered the first 6 months. After that you might be expected to let your apartment. In that case you can apply for help with having your possessions stored. People from Copenhagen can apply at: <http://www.kk.dk/indhold/hjælp-til-indsatte>

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### ● Food

In most prisons you will be given an "allowance" to buy and make your own food. In the jails, Københavns Fængsler and Jyderup Statsfængsel you will either get food from the prison kitchen, or microwaved frozen food. In those cases you should be able to get a special diet if you need it for your health, because of your religion or because you're vegan/vegetarian. If you have to make your own you will usually be able to order groceries through the prison store, and you also get speciality products that way (e.g. soymilk).

### ● Parole and pensions

Parole is a conditional release before the end of your sentence. You'll normally get parole after 2/3 of your sentence. While you're on parole you might be under supervision by the Prison and Probation service ("Kriminalforsorgen").

To get parole you need to meet some demands:

- You must accept the conditions set, e.g. to stay clean or keep appointments with a parole officer
- You must have a place to stay
- You need to have a job, go to school or have some other income.

You will usually be on parole for two years. If you are convicted of another crime during this time you probably have to serve the rest of your sentence.

Towards the end of your sentence you might be eligible for transfer to a pension, especially if you are attending school or have a job outside the prison. The function of a pension is to integrate you back in to society, which means that most days you only have to be on the pension at night, and you might even get permission to have someone stay the night with you.

### NB:

If you notice that any of this information is wrong or out of date, please make a note of it and let us know when you get the chance, either by email at [kontakt@abc-kbh.dk](mailto:kontakt@abc-kbh.dk) or on facebook.