CHAPTER 303

PRISON LABOR

303.01 Prison industries. (1) CREATION. (a) In this subsection “manufacturing” includes reprocessing, repairing, salvaging, servicing and storing.

(b) The department, with the approval of the prison industries board and after a hearing is held under par. (c), may establish industries for the employment of inmates in the state prisons or residents in any correctional institution operated by the department for holding in secure custody persons adjudged delinquent. Except as provided in par. (d), prison industries may engage in manufacturing articles for and providing services to the state and its political subdivisions and any tax-supported institution or nonprofit agency and for sale of such articles and services to other states or political divisions thereof or to the United States. The department shall fix the price of all products and services as near the market price as possible. Supplies, materials and equipment may be reconditioned by prison industries for sale under s. 16.72.

(c) Prior to establishing any prison industry, the department shall provide written notification of its proposed action to the cochairpersons of the joint committee on finance. The cochairpersons shall hold a public hearing before the committee concerning the proposal.

(d) Prison industries may sell wood and metal office furniture and laundry services only to state agencies, as defined in s. 20.001 (1).

(2) POWERS OF DEPARTMENT. In the administration of the prison industries program, the department may:

(a) Submit bids for any state contract;

(b) Submit bids for any contract or subcontract with a nonprofit organization as defined in s. 108.02 (19);

(c) Purchase machinery and raw materials;

(d) Operate a central warehouse and central generating station with the employment of prisoners to supply its institutions;

(e) Maintain auto shops in connection with auto schools and may receive from licensed automobile dealers and regularly established automobile repair shops vehicles to be repaired, painted or otherwise processed by inmates or residents of the school;

(f) Lease space, with or without equipment, within the precincts of state prisons, as specified in s. 302.02, or within the confines of correctional institutions operated by the department for holding in secure custody persons adjudged delinquent, to not more than 2 private businesses to employ prison inmates and institution residents to manufacture products or components or to provide services for sale on the open market. The department shall comply with s. 16.75 in selecting businesses under this paragraph. The department may enter into a contract under this paragraph only with the approval of the joint committee on finance. The department may not enter into or amend a contract under this paragraph unless the contract or amendment specifies each state prison or juvenile correctional institution at which the private business will employ inmates or institution residents. The department shall consult with appropriate trade organizations and labor unions prior to issuing requests for proposals and prior to selecting proposals under this paragraph. Each such private business may conduct its operations as a private business, subject to the wage standards under sub. (4), the disposition of earnings under sub. (8), the provisions regarding displacement in sub. (11), the requirements for notification and hearing under sub. (1) (c), the requirement for prison industries board approval under s. 303.015 (1) (b) and the authority of the department to maintain security and control in its institutions. The private business and its operations are not a prison industry. Inmates employed by the private business are not subject to the requirements of inmates participating in prison industries, except as provided in this paragraph;

(f) Lease or purchase land within the state for the employment of prisoners or residents; and

(g) Construct barracks for the safekeeping of prisoners or residents employed in the prison industries outside the prison or institution premises.

(4) WAGE STANDARDS. All inmates and residents shall be paid a wage that is based on the productivity of the work the inmates and residents perform. Wages may be established at an hourly rate plus an incentive wage based on productivity and piecework formulas may be created. However, wages shall not be set at a rate such as to cause a deficit on operations. Changes in inmate and resident wage rate schedules may not be made without approval of the prison industries board.

(6) GOAL. To the extent possible, prison industries shall be operated in a manner that is similar to private business and industry. The primary goal of prison industries shall be to operate in a profitable manner. Within this goal, inmates or residents employed in prison industries shall be provided with training and work experience that allows them to develop skills necessary to retain employment in outside business and industry. Consistent with available resources, inmates or residents employed in prison industries may be required to take education courses related to their work to enhance their capacity for employment upon release from prison or an institution specified under sub. (1) (b).

(8) DISPOSITION OF EARNINGS. (a) The department has the authority to determine how much, if any, of the earnings of an inmate or resident may be spent and for what purposes they may be spent within the confines of the prison or institution.

(b) The department shall distribute earnings of an inmate or resident, other than an inmate or resident employed under sub. (2) (em), for the crime victim and witness assistance surcharge under s. 973.045 (4), for the delinquency victim and witness assistance...
303.01 PRISON LABOR

surcharge under s. 938.34 (8d) (c), for the deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge under s. 973.046 (4) and for compliance with s. 303.06 (2) and may distribute earnings for the support of the inmate’s or resident’s dependents and for other obligations either acknowledged by the inmate or resident in writing or which have been reduced to judgment that may be satisfied according to law. The department may also distribute earnings for the child pornography surcharge under s. 973.042 or the drug offender diversion surcharge under s. 973.043, but only if the inmate or resident has first provided for the reasonable support of his or her dependents.

(c) The department shall disburse the earnings of inmates and residents employed under sub. (2) (em) in the order stated:

1. Payment of applicable federal, state and local taxes.
2. Payment in compliance with s. 303.06 (3).
3. Payment of support ordered by a court under ch. 767.
4. The board of the inmate or resident and a reasonable room charge, as determined by the department.
5. Payment of the crime victim and witness assistance surcharge under s. 973.045 (4).
6. Payment of the delinquency victim and witness assistance surcharge under s. 938.34 (8d) (c).
7. Payment of the deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge under s. 973.046 (4).
8. Payment of the child pornography surcharge under s. 973.042.

(d) The department may disburse the earnings of inmates and residents employed under sub. (2) (em) for the support of the inmate’s or resident’s dependents and for the payment of an obligation other than one specified under par. (c) if the obligation is acknowledged by the inmate or resident in writing or has been reduced to judgment that may be satisfied according to law.

(e) The department shall credit all moneys that it collects from earnings of inmates and residents employed under sub. (2) (em) to the appropriation account under s. 20.410 (1) (g).

9. STAFF SERVICES. The secretary shall appoint the director of prison industries outside the classified service. The department shall provide other staff services to the prison industries board within the classified service.

10. SALES PERSONNEL. Three sales representative positions and one sales manager position to sell and manage the sale of goods and services produced by prison industries shall be in the unclassified civil service.

11. DISPLACEMENT. (a) In this subsection:

1. “Displace an employee” means to lay off an employee in this state as a direct result of work being performed in a state prison or juvenile correctional institution under a prison contract or to permanently transfer an employee in this state to another job that reduces the employee’s base pay, excluding overtime, differentials and bonuses, by more than 25 percent as a direct result of work being performed in a state prison or juvenile correctional institution under a prison contract.

2. “Prison contract” means a contract entered into by the department under sub. (2) (em).

3. “Private employer” means a private business that is a party to a prison contract.

(b) A private employer may not displace an employee or cause another private business to discharge an employee.

(c) A private employer may not employ inmates or institution residents under a prison contract if any of the following applies:

1. The inmates or institution residents are to be employed in a skill, craft or trade in which there is a surplus of available labor in the locality of the private employer.

2. The employment of the inmates or institution residents will impair the performance of other contracts to which the private employer is a party.

3. The inmates or institution residents will replace employees who are on strike against the private employer or locked out of work.

(d) A private employer shall post in all of its workplaces a notice provided by the department containing a description of the nature of the prison contract and an explanation of what it means for an employee of a private employer to be displaced under this subsection and identifying a person at the department whom an employee of a private employer may contact if the employee believes that he or she may have been displaced by a prison contract.

History: 1975 c. 41 s. 52; 1975 c. 224, 396; 1977 c. 26 ss. 42, 75; 1983 a. 27; 1983 a. 189 s. 329 (28); 1983 a. 524; 1987 a. 27; 1989 a. 31 s. 1673c; Stats. 1989 s. 303.01; 1989 a. 283; 1991 a. 269; 1993 a. 16; 1995 a. 27; 1997 a. 27; 1999 a. 9, 32; 2001 a. 260 s. 25, 453.

Cross-reference: See also ch. DOC 309, Wis. adm. code.

Sub. (8) (b) gives a trial court authority to order restitution distributed from prison wages. A judgment of conviction including an order for restitution is an “other obligation reduced to judgment that may be satisfied according to law.” State v. Baker, 2001 WI App 100, 243 Wis. 2d 77, 626 N.W.2d 662, 99–3347.

The Department of Corrections was not authorized under sub. (8) (b) to take the defendant’s earnings to satisfy unpaid restitution ordered in a judgment that imposed a sentence that the defendant had completed because: 1) the restitution ordered was a condition of parole; and 2) conditions of parole do not survive the completion of a sentence. Therefore, the restitution ordered was not an obligation that may be satisfied according to law within the meaning of sub. (8) (b) after the defendant completed the sentence. Markovic v. Litscher, 2018 WI App 44, 383 Wis. 2d 576, 916 N.W.2d 202, 17–2206.


303.015 Prison industries board. (1) The prison industries board has the following powers and duties:

(a) The department shall submit each department biennial budget request for prison industries and every substantial department—proposed modification of the prison industries budget to the board for review before it is submitted to the department of administration, governor, joint committee on finance or legislature. If the board does not approve the budget request or modification, the board may develop an alternative proposal or a statement that shall be appended to the budget request or modification and submitted with it.

(b) The board shall develop a plan containing recommendations for the manufacture and marketing of prison industries products, the provision of prison industries services and the provision of research and development activities. Whenever feasible, the plan shall include research activities with a facility involved in the cocomposting of solid waste and sludge from wastewater treatment facilities. The plan may include, but is not limited to, recommended market research, product modifications, manufacturing techniques, pricing policies, advertising and elimination or establishment of specific industries or products. No prison industry may be established or permanently closed without approval of the board.

(c) Prior to submission to the legislative council staff for review under s. 227.15, departmental rules relating to hiring, termination, evaluation and compensation of, or other conditions of employment for, inmates or residents in prison industries shall be submitted to the board for approval. Board authority over rules shall not extend to determination of which inmates or residents are eligible for employment in prison industries or to security matters.

(d) No purchase of more than $250,000 may be made for prison industries without prior approval of the board.

(e) The board shall review and either approve or deny a proposal under s. 303.06 (5) to offer for sale in the open market a product or type of product manufactured in whole or in part by inmates as part of a hobby—craft program or vocational training.

Once the board has approved the sale of a particular product or type of product under this paragraph, the product or type of product may be offered for sale by any tax—supported or nonprofit agency under s. 303.06 (5) without further approval by the board under this paragraph.

(2) When exercising its powers, the board shall consider the effect of its actions on private business, industry and labor.
303.015 (1) (b) The department shall provide written notification to those trade organizations and labor unions for the purpose of facilitating and receiving related input from those organizations and labor unions before it acts under s. 303.015 (1) (b). The board of commissioners of the department shall order the publication of the proposal, the proposal's impact on private business, and for printing, and the portion of that amount for furniture and receiving related approval under s. 303.015 (1) (b) and prior to entering into a contract under par. (b), the department shall provide written notification of the intent to provide those by-products or to enter into a contract to provide those by-products. The department shall provide the notification to those trade organizations and labor unions that the department determines would be interested in receiving the information. The notification shall include specific information on the proposal, the proposal's impact on private business, industry and labor and, if applicable, the method for the trade organization or labor union to communicate with the joint committee on finance before its hearing under s. 303.01 (1) (c) and with the board before it acts under s. 303.015 (1) (b).

(5) A tax−supported institution or a nonprofit agency may agree for sale in the open market products manufactured in whole or in part by inmates in a state penal institution as part of a hobby−craft program or vocational training if the purpose of the sale is to support the institution's or agency's mission or is for some other charitable purpose and if the sale of that product or type of product has been approved by the prison industries board under s. 303.015 (1) (c).


Cross-reference: See also s. DOC 313.18, Wis. adm. code.

303.063 Secure work program. (1) The department may establish a secure work program for inmates in which the inmates are assigned to work away from the grounds of the institution while appropriately restrained for security purposes.

(2) If the department establishes a secure work program under sub. (1), the department shall, before implementing the program, promulgate rules specifying the procedures and regulations relating to the program. The rules shall require inmates who are on work assignments under the program to wear distinctively colored outer garments.

History: 1995 a. 416.

303.065 Work release plan for prison inmates. (1) (a) Except as provided in par. (b), the department may grant work release privileges to any person incarcerated within the state prisons. (b) 1. A person serving a life sentence, other than a life sentence specified in subd. 2., may be considered for work release only after he or she has reached parole eligibility under s. 304.06.
303.065 PRISON LABOR

(1) (b) or 973.014 (1) (a) or (b), whichever is applicable, or he or she has reached his or her extended supervision eligibility date under s. 302.114 (9) (am) or 973.014 (1g) (a) 1. or 2., whichever is applicable.

2. A person serving a life sentence under s. 939.62 (2m) (c) or 973.014 (1) (c) or (1g) (a) 3. may not be considered for work release.

(2) The department shall promulgate rules for the administration of the work release program and shall determine those inmates who may participate in the plan. If any inmate violates the conditions prescribed by the institution, his or her work release privileges may be withdrawn. Failure to report to or return from the planned employment shall be considered an escape under s. 946.42 (3) (a). The department may approve as work release privileges placement in universities, colleges, technical, vocational or trade schools or in sheltered workshops or training programs designed to improve the skills and ability of the inmate.

(2m) The department may not grant work release privileges to a prisoner who is imprisoned for a violation of s. 346.63 (1), (2), (5) or (6) and who fails to obtain the assessment or to comply with the driver safety plan ordered under s. 343.30 (1q) (c) related to the violation for which he or she was imprisoned. This subsection does not apply if the prisoner does not have sufficient funds to make any payments necessary to obtain the assessment or to comply with the driver safety plan.

(3) The department shall designate and adapt facilities of the state prisons for the purpose of quartering inmates with work release privileges or it may arrange and contract for other facilities, including portions of county jails for inmates employed in the area. An inmate with work release privileges placed in facilities outside a state prison shall be liable for the cost of the inmate’s room, board, clothing and other necessary expenses incident to the inmate’s employment or placement unless other means of payment are approved by the department. No inmate shall be granted work release privileges until such suitable quarters have been provided in the area of accepted or proffered employment, or educational or training placement.

(4) (a) Every inmate gainfully employed under a work release program shall be liable for the cost of the inmate’s board and clothing; a reasonable room charge as determined by the department, and for any expenses incident to such employment or additional living expenses as circumstances permit, in the judgment of the department, except as provided in sub. (3). When quartered in a prison facility, such costs and expenses shall be fixed by the department.

(b) The wages of inmates gainfully employed shall be collected by the prison responsible for his or her care. The wages are not subject to garnishment either in the hands of the employer or the prison during the inmate’s term and shall be disbursed only as provided in this section, but for tax purposes they are income of the prisoner. This paragraph does not apply to wages of inmates participating in the intensive sanctions program.

(5) The salaries or wages of any employed inmates shall be disbursed by the department in the order stated:

(a) The board of the prisoner including food and clothing and any fees charged under s. 301.135;

(b) Necessary travel expense to and from work and other incidental expenses of the prisoner;

(bn) Payment of the crime victim and witness assistance surcharge under s. 973.045 (4);

(bp) Payment of the deoxyribonucleic acid analysis surcharge under s. 973.046 (4);

(c) Support of the prisoner’s dependents, if any;

(cg) Payment of the child pornography surcharge under s. 973.042;

(cm) Payment of the drug offender diversion surcharge under s. 973.043.

(d) A reasonable room charge as determined by the department;

(dm) Payment for legal representation under s. 977.075 or 977.076;

(e) Payment, either in full or ratably, of the prisoner’s obligations acknowledged by the prisoner in writing or which have been reduced to judgment;

(f) The balance, if any, to the prisoner upon the prisoner’s discharge.

(6) The department shall credit all moneys that it collects under sub. (5) (a) and (d) to the appropriation account under s. 20.410 (1) (gi).

(7) The department may receive payments for its costs under this section or the department or the attorney general may collect under s. 301.325, but the state may not collect for the same expense twice.


Cross-reference: See also chs. DOC 309 and 324, Wis. adm. code.

There is no need to specifically spell out in s. 56.065 (2) [now sub. (2)] the consequences of an escape when other statutes provide for that situation. Brown v. State, 73 Wis. 2d 705, 245 N.W.2d 870 (1976).

Section 56.065 (2) [now sub. (2)] entitles a participating prisoner to a hearing prior to transfer to a maximum security prison. Petreto v. Percy, 444 F. Supp. 1288 (1978).


303.068 LEAVE FOR QUALIFIED INMATES

(1) An inmate eligible for confinement in a minimum security institution as established by the department may be allowed by the department to leave confinement for one of the following purposes:

(a) To visit a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, brother or sister who is seriously ill.

(b) To attend the funeral of a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, brother or sister.

(c) To contact a prospective employer.

(d) To screen for or diagnose or treat an injury, illness or disease.

(e) To visit a parent, child, spouse, grandparent, brother or sister to facilitate family reintegration and stability.

(1m) In sub. (1), “parent” includes a person who was previously a person acting as a parent, as defined in s. 822.02 (13), for the inmate.

(2) The validity of an inmate’s request for leave shall be investigated by an employee or designee of the department, and the proposed conditions of the leave, including date of departure, duration, and date of return, shall be evaluated by the employee or designee. Before an inmate is released on leave, the department shall notify the police chief of any community and the sheriff and district attorney of any county involved.

(3) No inmate may be granted more than 3 leaves per calendar year in total under sub. (1) (a), (b) and (e). No leave may exceed 3 days, exclusive of travel time, unless an extension not to exceed 3 days is granted for cause by the department.

(4) An inmate granted a leave under this section shall be restricted to the confines of this state.

(4m) (a) In this subsection:

1. “Member of the family” means spouse, child, sibling, parent or legal guardian.

2. “Victim” means a person against whom a crime has been committed.

(b) Before an inmate who is imprisoned for a violation of s. 940.01, 940.03, 940.05, 940.225 (1) or (2), 948.02 (1) or (2), 948.025, 948.06, 948.07, or 948.085 is released on leave under this section, the department shall make a reasonable attempt to notify all of the following persons, if they can be found, in accord-
ance with par. (c) and after receiving a completed card under par. (d):

1. The victim of the crime committed by the inmate or, if the victim died as a result of the crime, an adult member of the victim’s family or, if the victim is younger than 18 years old, the victim’s parent or legal guardian.

2. Any witness who testifies against the inmate in any court proceeding involving the offense.

(c) The department shall make a reasonable effort to send the notice, postmarked at least 7 days before an inmate is released on leave, to the last-known address of the persons under par. (b).

(d) The department shall design and prepare cards for any person specified in par. (b) to send to the department. The cards shall have space for any such person to provide his or her name and address, the name of the applicable inmate and any other information the department determines is necessary. The department shall provide the cards, without charge, to district attorneys. District attorneys shall provide the cards, without charge, to persons specified in par. (b). These persons may send completed cards to the department. All department records or portions of records that relate to mailing addresses of these persons are not subject to inspection or copying under s. 19.35 (1).

(5) The department shall promulgate rules to implement this section.

History: 1977 c. 312; 1979 c. 154; 1983 a. 27; 1989 a. 31 s. 1687; Stats. 1989 s. 303.06; 1993 a. 479; 1997 a. 181; 2003 s. 130, 277.

Cross-reference: See also s. DOC 326.01, Wis. adm. code.

303.069 Correctional institution enterprises; activities of inmates. The department shall record the source of all monies received under s. 20.410 (1) (k), crediting each amount received to the institution where the inmate activity occurred or to the department. The department shall allocate moneys under s. 20.410 (1) (kk) so that the allocation of each institution or the department does not exceed its credit.


303.07 County reforestation camps. (1) Any county may by ordinance designate any county forest project under s. 28.11 to be a county reforestation camp and provide facilities therein for keeping and maintaining prisoners and giving them employment not exceeding 8 hours each day, without compensation unless otherwise determined by the county board, in charge of a superintendent who shall have the powers and duties of a jailer.

(2) When convicted persons are subject to commitment to the county jail, or to the Wisconsin state prisons under s. 939.62 (1) (a) or 939.623 (2) (a) for a term not exceeding 2 years, the court may instead commit them for equivalent terms to a reforestation camp authorized under sub. (1).

(3) Each prisoner serving a sentence under this section who could have been sentenced to a state prison is subject to s. 302.11 (1), (1g), (1q) and (2). Each prisoner serving such a sentence may be transferred to a state prison upon recommendation of the superintendent and approval of the department. The county board may, pursuant to its regulations approved by the department, extend to all other prisoners similar pecuniary earnings and rewards, subject to similar conditions and limitations as those prescribed by s. 302.12 for prisoners in the Wisconsin state prisons.

(5) Any county may contract with an adjoining county having a county reforestation camp, upon such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon, for keeping, maintaining and employing without compensation unless otherwise provided by the contract, convicted persons subject to county jail sentence, and in that event such persons may be committed to such county reforestation camp in the adjoining county.

(6) Any officer who shall receive the commitment of any person to the county reforestation camp shall convey such person thereto as soon as practicable; and shall be entitled to compensation at the rate of 10 cents per mile for each mile actually traveled in such service, going and returning, and in addition 5 cents per mile for the transportation of each prisoner.

(7) If any inmate of a reforestation camp, in the performance of work in connection with the maintenance of the camp, is injured so as to be permanently incapacitated, or to have materially reduced earning power, the inmate may upon discharge be allowed and paid such compensation as the department of workforce development finds the inmate entitled to. The inmate shall be compensated on the same basis as if the injury had been covered by ch. 102, except that the total paid to any such inmate shall not exceed $1,000 and may be paid in installments. If the inmate is from an adjoining county such county shall pay such compensation. In case of dispute the procedure for hearing, award and appeal shall be as set forth in ss. 102.16 to 102.26.

Cross-reference: See also s. DOC 326.01, Wis. adm. code.

303.08 “Huber Law”; employment of county jail prisoners. (1) Any person sentenced to a county jail for crime, non-payment of a fine or forfeiture, or contempt of court or subject to a confinement sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114 (8m) or a probationer detained in a county jail, tribal jail, or other county facility for a probation violation who meets the criteria under s. 302.335 (2) may be granted the privilege of leaving the jail during necessary and reasonable hours for any of the following purposes:

(a) Seeking employment or engaging in employment training.

(b) Working at employment.

(bn) Performing community service work under s. 973.03.

(c) Conducting any self-employed occupation including housekeeping and attending the needs of the person’s family.

(cn) Attending court proceedings to which the person is a party or for which the person has been subpoenaed as a witness.

(d) Attendance at an educational institution.

(e) Medical treatment.

(f) Obtaining counseling or therapy from an approved public treatment facility, as defined in s. 51.45 (2) (c), an approved private treatment facility, as defined in s. 51.45 (2) (b), a psychiatrist, a psychologist, a licensed clinical social worker, a professional counselor licensed under ch. 457. or a certified independent or advanced practice social worker who is authorized to practice psychotherapy under ch. 457.

(g) Attending an assessment for the purpose of determining the person’s need for counseling or therapy under par. (f).

(h) Attending a parenting education program.

(i) Meeting with the person’s probation, extended supervision, or parole officer.

(1m) If the sheriff of the county certifies that facilities are not available, the sentencing court may not order that persons committed for nonpayment of a forfeiture imposed for violation of a municipal or county ordinance be permitted to serve the commitment under this section.

(2) Unless such privilege is expressly granted by the court or, in the case of a person subject to a confinement sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114 (8m), the department, the person is sentenced to ordinary confinement. A prisoner, other than a person subject to a confinement sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114 (8m), may petition the court for such privilege at the time of sentence or thereafter, and in the discretion of the court may

2019–20 Wisconsin Statutes updated through 2021 Wis. Act 267 and through all Supreme Court and Controlled Substances Board Orders filed before and in effect on October 5, 2022. Published and certified under s. 35.18. Changes effective after October 5, 2022, are designated by NOTES. (Published 10–5–22)
renew the prisoner’s petition. The court may withdraw the privi-
lege at any time by order entered with or without notice.  

(2m) In those counties with a Huber facility under s. 303.09,
the sheriff shall determine whether a person granted leave privi-
leges under this section is to be confined in that facility or in
the county jail. The sheriff may transfer persons granted leave privi-
leges under this section between a Huber facility and the county
jail.  

(3) The sheriff shall endeavor to secure employment or
employment training for unemployed prisoners under this sec-
tion. If a prisoner is employed for wages or salary or receives
unemployment insurance or employment training benefits while
in custody in the jail, the sheriff shall collect the wages or salary
or require the prisoner to turn over the wages, salary or benefits
in full when received. The sheriff shall deposit the wages, salary
or benefits in a trust checking account and shall keep a ledger
showing the status of the account of each prisoner. Such wages
or salary are not subject to garnishment in the hands of either
the employer or the sheriff during the prisoner’s term, and shall be dis-
bursed only as provided in this section; but for tax purposes they
are income of the prisoner.  

(4) Every prisoner who is gainfully employed or who receives
unemployment insurance or employment training benefits while
in custody in the jail, shall be liable for charges not to exceed the
full per person maintenance and cost of the prisoner’s board in the
jail as fixed by the county board after passage of an appropriate
county ordinance. If necessarily absent from jail at a meal time
the prisoner shall at the prisoner’s request be furnished with an
adequate nourishing lunch to carry. The sheriff shall charge the
prisoner’s account for such board. If the prisoner is gainfully self−
employed the prisoner shall pay the sheriff for such board, in
default of which the prisoner’s privilege under this section is auto-
atically forfeited. If the jail food is furnished directly by the
county, provide that the county furnish or pay for the transportation
and from the place of employment or training.

default of which the prisoner’s privilege under this section is auto-

(5) By order of the court or, for a person subject to a confine-
ment sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114 (8m), by order of
the department, the wages, salary and unemployment insurance
and employment training benefits received by prisoners shall be
disbursed by the sheriff for the following purposes, in the order
stated:  

(b) Necessary travel expense to and from work;  

c) Court−ordered support of the prisoner’s dependents, if any;  

g) The board of the prisoner;  

(cr) Other incidental expenses of the prisoner;  

(d) Payment, either in full or ratably, of the prisoner’s obliga-
tions acknowledged by the prisoner in writing or which have been
reduced to judgment;  

(e) The balance, if any, to the prisoner upon the prisoner’s dis-
charge.  

(5m) A county may receive payments under sub. (5) (b), (c)g)
and (cr) or seek reimbursement under s. 302.372, but may not col-
clect for the same payments expenses twice.  

(6) The department, for a person subject to a confinement
sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114 (8m), or the sentencing
court, by order, may authorize the sheriff to whom the prisoner
is committed to arrange with another sheriff for the employment or
employment training of the prisoner in the other’s county, and
while so employed or trained to be in the other’s custody but in
other respects to be and continue subject to the commitment.  

(7) (a) If the prisoner was convicted in a municipal court, the
circuit court for the county has authority and jurisdiction to make
determination and orders under this section and s. 302.43 as
might otherwise be made by the sentencing court after the prisoner
is received at the jail.  

(b) If the prisoner was convicted in a court in another county,
the circuit court referred to in par. (a) may, at the request or with
the concurrence of the committing court, make all determinations
and orders under this section and s. 302.43 as might otherwise be
made by the sentencing court after the prisoner is received at the
jail.  

(8) The county board of supervisors in a county with a single−
county department or the county boards of supervisors in counties
with a multicounty department may by resolution direct that func-
tions of the sheriff under sub. (3) or (5), or both, be performed by
the county department under s. 46.215 or 46.22; or, if the county
board of supervisors in a county with a single−county department
or the county boards of supervisors in counties with a multicounty
department has not so directed, a court of record may order that
the prisoner’s earnings be collected and disbursed by the clerk of
court. The order shall remain in force until rescinded by the
county board of supervisors in a county with a single−county
department or the county boards of supervisors in counties with
a multicounty department or the court, whichever made it.  

(9) The county board under s. 46.215 or 46.22 shall at the
request of the court investigate and report to the court the
amount necessary for the support of the prisoner’s dependents.  

(10) The sheriff may refuse to permit the prisoner to exercise
the prisoner’s privilege to leave the jail as provided in sub. (1) for
not to exceed 5 days for any breach of discipline or other violation
of jail regulations.  

(10m) The sheriff may not permit a prisoner who is impris-
oned for a violation of s. 346.63 (1), (2), (5) or (6) to leave the jail
under sub. (1) if the prisoner fails to obtain the assessment or to
comply with the driver safety plan ordered under s. 343.30 (1q)
(c). This subsection does not apply if the prisoner does not have
sufficient funds to make any payments necessary to obtain the
assessment or to comply with the driver safety plan.  

(10r) The sheriff may not permit a prisoner whose operating
privilege for the operation of “Class D” vehicles is restricted to
operating vehicles that are equipped with an ignition interlock
device under s. 343.301 (1g) to leave the jail under sub. (1) unless,
within 2 weeks after the court issues an order under s. 343.301 (1g)
(1m) 1. or the person’s operating privilege is restricted under s.
343.301 (1g) (am) 2., the person submits proof to the sheriff that
an ignition interlock device has been installed in each motor
vehicle to which the order applies.  

(11) In this section:  

(a) “Jail” includes a house of correction and, except for pur-
poses of sub. (13), a Huber facility under s. 303.09.  

(b) “Sheriff” includes the superintendent of a house of correc-
tion.  

(12) In counties having a house of correction, any person
violating the privilege granted under sub. (1) may be transferred
by the county jailer to the house of correction for the remainder
of the term of the person’s sentence or, if applicable, the remainder
of the person’s confinement sanction under s. 302.113 (8m) or 302.114
(8m).  

(13) Any county board may contract with the department for
the quartering in the county jail of inmates under s. 303.065.  

(14) In counties having a population of 750,000 or more, a
prisoner granted the privilege authorized under sub. (1) (a) to (d)
or (f) to (i) shall be committed to the county jail or any other facil-
it for the housing of prisoners as determined by ordinance by the
county board.


Pursuant to sub. (1), a court may permit release from probation confinement for child protection if the probationer establishes that he or she provides services qualify-
ing as “housekeeping and attending the needs of the person’s family.” State v. Tim-
merman, 198 Wis. 2d 309, 542 N.W.2d 221 (Ct. App. 1995), rev’d.

The decision of whether to grant leaves to prisoners with the court even
after sentencing and does not shift to the sheriff. Sheriffs have authority only to tem-
porarily suspend the privilege under circumstances defined by the legislature. State
303.09 Huber facilities. (1) The county board of any county may establish, relocate and maintain an unlocked facility for use exclusively by persons granted leave privileges under s. 303.08 (1) and persons confined under s. 973.09 (4) or 973.11 (1) (b). The facility need not be located at the county seat.

(2) The county boards of 2 or more counties may jointly establish, relocate and maintain a facility described in sub. (1). The operation and expenses of the facility shall be governed by an agreement between those counties. In a jointly established facility, authority under ss. 303.08 (2m), 973.09 (4) and 973.11 (1) (b) may be exercised by a sheriff of any of the counties which jointly establish the facility. The agreement shall specify who has authority to act under ss. 303.08 (2m), 973.09 and 973.11 (1) (b).


303.10 County work camp. (1) Subject to par. (b), the county board of any county may provide a work camp for the reformation and employment of persons sentenced to the county jail. Any 2 or more counties may jointly provide one work camp.

(b) Before establishing a work camp under par. (a), the county board or, if 2 or more counties want jointly to provide one work camp, the county boards of all of the counties providing the work camp shall agree with the sheriff who will administer the work camp concerning the staffing level of the work camp. If the county board or, if applicable, county boards and the sheriff do not reach an agreement concerning the staffing level of a work camp, the county board or, if applicable, county boards may not establish the work camp.

(1g) If a county board establishes a work camp under sub. (1), the sheriff of the county or a person designated by that sheriff shall administer the work camp unless the county board provides otherwise. If 2 or more counties jointly provide for one work camp under sub. (1), the sheriff of the county in which the work camp is located, or a person designated by that sheriff, shall administer the work camp unless the county boards of the counties that jointly established the work camp provide otherwise by unanimous agreement.

(1r) A work camp established under sub. (1) may be located within the house of correction of the county in which the work camp is located, if the county has a house of correction and if the work camp is operated as a separate unit from the house of correction.

(2) The sheriff may transfer persons between a county jail and a work camp.

(3) The sheriff may provide prisoners assigned to a work camp the opportunity, on a volunteer basis, to do any of the following:

(a) Perform supervised work at paid employment in the community.

(c) Perform supervised work on a project that serves the public interest or a charitable purpose and is operated by an organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under section 501 (c) (3) of the internal revenue code, but only if the work performed does not result in a competitive disadvantage to a for-profit enterprise.

(4) The sheriff shall not assign prisoners to work under sub. (3) on projects in a manner that results in the displacement of employed persons from their jobs or the replacement of workers on strike or locked out of work. Before persons assigned to work under sub. (3) begin work, the employer or other person in charge of a place of employment that is the site of the proposed work project shall post, at the locations where notices to employees are usually posted, a written notice informing employees that prisoners have been assigned under this section to work at the place of employment. If a collective bargaining agreement is in effect at a place of employment that is the site of a proposed work project under sub. (3) (c), that bargaining unit must agree to the assign-
303.17 PRISON LABOR

303.18 Commitments; municipal prisoners; contract with other county. (1) Every court of record authorized to commit any person to the county jail upon conviction of any offense, or authorized to sentence any person to imprisonment in the Wisconsin state prisons for any term not exceeding one year, may, in lieu of the sentence, commit or sentence the person to the house of correction for an equivalent term, at hard labor. All mittimuses and warrants of commitment in those cases shall be directed to the superintendent of the house of correction and shall be the authority of the superintendent for the detention of the person sentenced or committed.

(2) Each city, village or town in the county shall, at a time designated by the county board, pay to the county the actual and reasonable costs of maintenance, as determined by ordinance of the county board, of all persons confined in the house of correction for the violation of any of the ordinances of the city, village or town during the preceding year, except that no costs are due for any period in which the person was also confined for reasons other than the violation of a city, village, or town ordinance.

(3) The county may contract with any other county, upon such terms as may be agreed upon by their respective county boards, to receive into the house any person who may be sentenced to confinement in the house of correction on the first Monday of August in each year, and report in writing to the county board of supervisors at its annual meeting, or to the county department under s. 46.21 or 46.23, if the county department is in charge of the institution, setting forth its condition and suggesting such alterations, improvements or other matters respecting the management, discipline and government of the institution as may promote the purposes thereof and the interests of the county.


303.19 Employment of prisoners; time credits, earnings and rewards. (1) The superintendent of the house of correction shall place all inmates at such employments, and shall cause all inmates who are minors to be instructed in such branches of useful knowledge, as shall be prescribed by the county board, but no goods manufactured therein shall be offered for sale or sold in the open market, except creative art, literary, musical, handcraft or hobby craft products produced by a prisoner at leisure.

(2) The superintendent may employ such prisoners outside of the institution, for the purpose of cultivating the farm of the institution or in doing any other work necessary to be done in the regular business thereof, or doing work for other county departments or institutions, or in the construction of public highways within the county. In all such cases, the superintendent shall detail a force from the house of correction on the first Monday of August in each year, and report in writing to the county board of supervisors at its annual meeting.


303.20 United States convicts. A county may contract with the United States for the keeping and support, within its house of correction, of all prisoners who are sentenced to imprisonment by the courts of the United States within this state, upon such terms as may be agreed upon by the county board and the officers of the United States having authority for that purpose.

History: 1989 a. 31 s. 1695; Stats. 1989 s. 303.20; 1993 a. 89.

303.21 Compensation to injured prisoners. (1) (a) If an inmate of a state institution, in the performance of assigned work is injured so as to be permanently incapacitated or to have materially reduced earning power, the inmate may, upon being released from such institution, either upon release on parole or extended supervision or upon final discharge, be allowed and paid such compensation as the department of workforce development finds the inmate entitled to. The inmate shall be compensated on the same basis as if the injury had been covered by ch. 102, except that the total paid to any inmate may not exceed $10,000 and may be paid in installments. If the injury results from employment in a prison industry, the payment shall be made from the revolving appropriation for its operation. If there is no revolving appropriation, payment shall be made from the general fund.

(b) In case of dispute, the procedure for hearing, award and appeal shall be as set forth in ss. 102.16 to 102.26.

Updated 2019–20 Wis. Stats.  Published and certified under s. 35.18. October 5, 2022.
(b) Inmates are included under par. (a) if they are participating in a structured work program away from the institution grounds under s. 302.15 or a secure work program under s. 303.063. Inmates are not included under par. (a) if they are employed in a prison industry under s. 303.06 (2), participating in a work release program under s. 303.065 (2), participating in employment with a private business under s. 303.01 (2) (em) or participating in the transitional employment program, but they are eligible for worker’s compensation benefits under ch. 102. Residents subject to s. 303.01 (1) (b) are not included under par. (a) but they are eligible for worker’s compensation benefits under ch. 102.

(2) Section 102.29 applies to compensation paid under this section.

(3) This section does not apply if the inmate has made a recovery against an officer, employee or agent of the state, arising out of the same incident under s. 895.46. If recovery has already been made under this section at the time that a recovery is made under s. 895.46, the state is entitled to a credit in the amount of the recovery against any obligation it has under s. 895.46 arising out of the same incident.

History: 1975 c. 147 s. 54; 1975 c. 199; 1977 c. 29, 195; 1981 c. 20; 1985 a. 29; 1989 a. 31 s. 1696; Stats. 1989 s. 303.21; 1993 a. 81; 1995 a. 27 ss. 6400, 6401, 9130 (4); 1995 a. 416; 1997 a. 3, 283.

Cross-reference: See also LIRC, Wis. adm. code.

Compensation of prisoners for injuries under this section is not determined in the same manner as worker’s compensation under s. 102.03. The rules followed under s. 102.03 do not apply. Kopacka v. DILHR, 49 Wis. 2d 255, 181 N.W.2d 487 (1970).

303.215 Compensation to prisoners or residents injured in prison industries employment. In accordance with s. 102.03 (2), for an inmate of a state institution or a resident subject to s. 303.01 (1) (b) employed under s. 303.06 (2), compensation under ch. 102 on being released from the applicable institution, on parole, on extended supervision, on final discharge or in accordance with ch. 938, whichever is applicable, is the exclusive remedy against the department and any employee of the department for any injury sustained by the inmate or resident while performing service growing out of and incidental to that employment. The department shall make any payments required under this section from the revolving appropriation for the operation of prison industries or, if there is no revolving appropriation for the operation of prison industries, from the general fund.


303.22 Work on Sundays and holidays. No prisoner, or resident subject to s. 303.01 (1) (b), may be compelled to work on Sunday or a legal holiday, except if the work is necessary household work or when the work is necessary to maintain the management or discipline of the institution.

History: 1989 a. 31 s. 1697; Stats. 1989 s. 303.22; 1995 a. 27.