

The paramount duty of the staff of a prison is to see that every prisoner or under-trial placed under their charge is kept under safe custody for the period of his detention and that regulations for watch and ward are strictly carried out to prevent any possibility of an escape or an outbreak. It shall be taken as a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the prison staff if there is any breach of discipline or outbreak in the prison. The regulations for the custody of the prisoners and their watch and ward already exist in the Jail Manual, this office Circulars and Circulars from the Government of India.

CLASSIFIED:
Circular Memo No.
12/H-46-G.S.I.

The Architecture of Containment

An operational dissection of the
1942 prison security manual

CRIMINOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

BY

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Synthesised from the Instructions Regarding Prevention Against Escapes, United Provinces.

Paragraphs
749 and 750,
Jail Manual.

Paragraphs
1333 and
1244, Jail
Manual.

760

Paragraphs
761, and
Manual.

1942 PRISON SECURITY: Protocols for Preventing Escapes

SUPERVISION & DAILY VIGILANCE

CONTINUOUS COUNTING & VERIFICATION

Staff must count prisoners at every unlocking, mealtime, locking, and during night rounds.

STRICT NIGHT WATCH ROUTINES

Warders must patrol constantly, verifying prisoner counts at least once every two hours.

EXTRAMURAL WORK RESTRICTIONS

Convicts working outside must wear iron ankle rings and remain under constant view.

BELL SIGNALS FOR DAILY ROUTINE

BEFORE SUNRISE



MORNING UNLOCKING

Main gate bell rung 45 mins to 1 hour

11:00 AM (WINTER)

MIDDAY MEALS

Main gate bell sounded for return to work

4:30 PM (WINTER)

EVENING LOCKING

Main gate bell sounded to begin locking

PHYSICAL & STRUCTURAL SAFEGUARDS

INFRASTRUCTURE INTEGRITY CHECKS

Staff must daily inspect gratings, locks, and walls for signs of tampering.

MANAGEMENT OF "DANGEROUS" CONVICTS

High-risk prisoners are housed in separate, specifically labelled barracks under special watch.

SECURE LOCK & KEY MANAGEMENT

Cell locks must be unreachable from inside, with keys stored in secure chests.

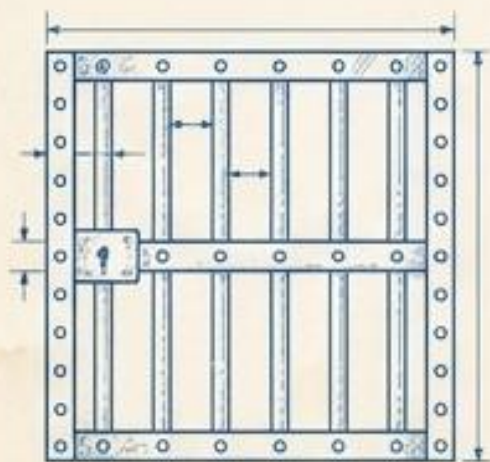
The Paramount Duty: Zero Escapes

"The paramount duty of the staff of a prison is to see that every prisoner or under-trial... is kept under safe custody... It shall be taken as a serious dereliction of duty on the part of prison staff if there is any escape."

The Triad of Containment

I. Physical Security

Walls, double gratings,
and iron ringlets.
The static barriers.



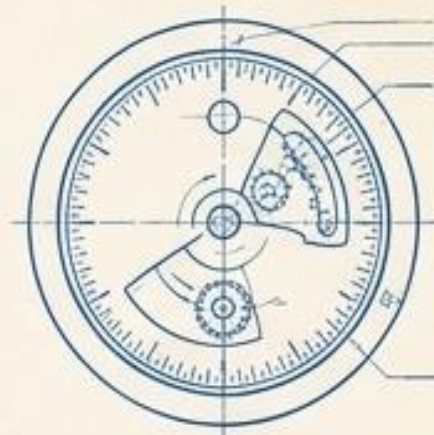
2. Human Surveillance

The strict hierarchy
of paid warders,
convict overseers,
and watchmen.



3. Mechanical Proof

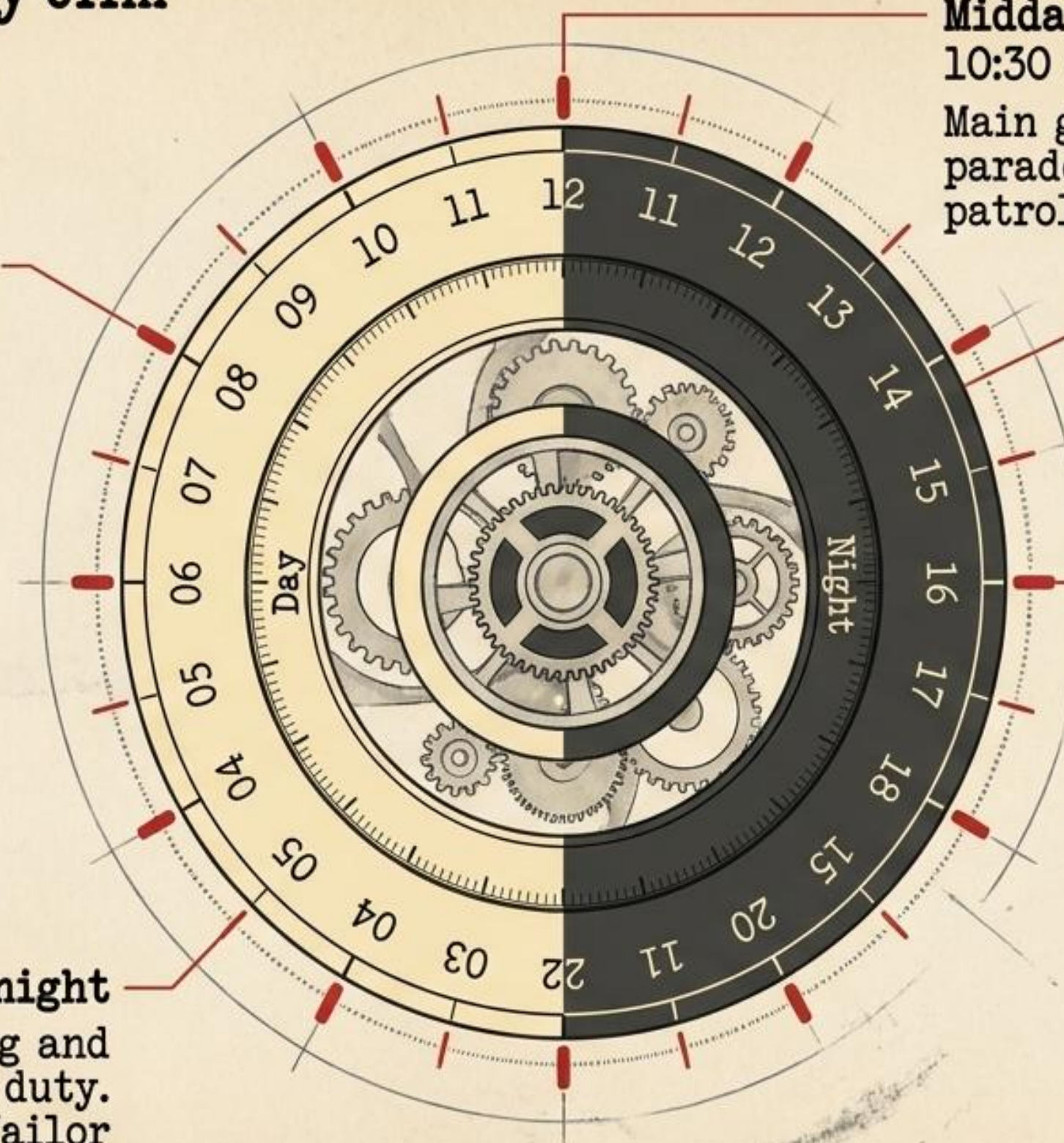
Control clocks and
brass relay discs that
physically proved
human vigilance.



The 24-Hour Rhythm of Containment

Pre-Dawn (45m-1hr before sunrise)
Main gate bell rings. Unlocking, counting by head warder, latrines.

Midnight
Midnight counting and meticulous handover of duty. Deputy Superintendent/Jailor conducts surprise checks.



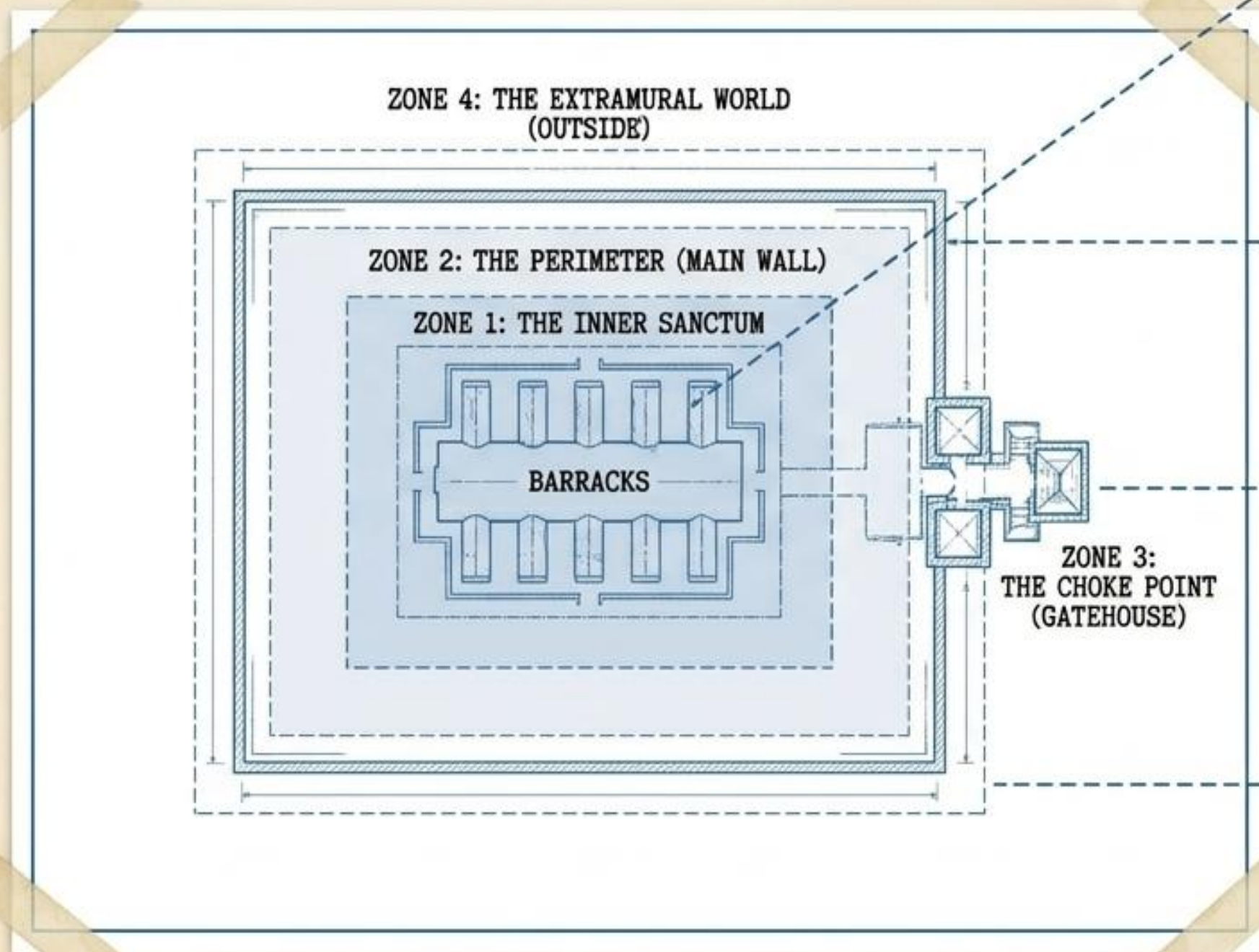
Midday (11:00 am Winter / 10:30 am Summer)
Main gate bell. Full guard parades under arms; reserve guard patrols main wall.

Afternoon (1:00 pm Winter / 2:30 pm Summer)
Return to work.

Evening (4:30 pm Winter / 5:30 pm Summer)
Locking. Complete kits collected, intense search of every prisoner, gratings examined.

Summer vs. Winter protocols adjusted by exact hours to maximise daylight labour while ensuring prisoners were locked down well before dusk.

The Four Zones of Spatial Security



Zone 1: The Inner Sanctum (Barracks)

The primary holding area.
Vulnerabilities: Night-time collusion and physical tampering.

Zone 2: The Perimeter (Main Wall)

The hard boundary.
Vulnerabilities: Scaling, tunnelling, and blind spots.

Zone 3: The Choke Point (Gatehouse)

The sole point of entry/exit.
Vulnerabilities: Rush attacks and miscounts.

Zone 4: The Extramural World (Outside)

Open labour outside the walls.
Vulnerability: Immediate flight risk.

Security protocols escalated in complexity as prisoners moved from the heavily fortified centre toward the unfortified extramural exterior.

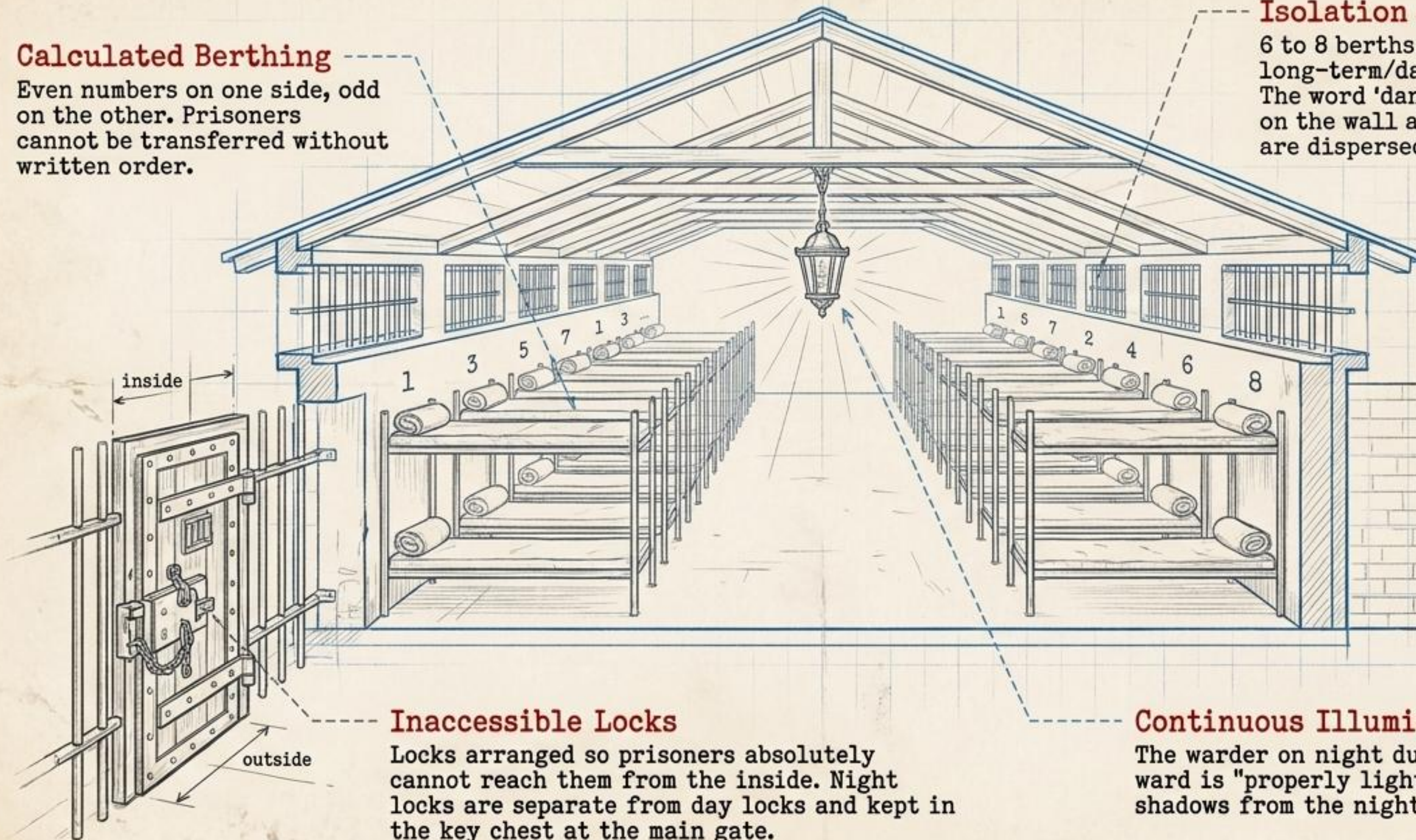
Zone 1: The Barracks & Night Containment

Calculated Berthing

Even numbers on one side, odd on the other. Prisoners cannot be transferred without written order.

Isolation of the Dangerous

6 to 8 berths reserved for long-term/dangerous convicts. The word 'dangerous' is painted on the wall above them. They are dispersed, not clustered.



Inaccessible Locks

Locks arranged so prisoners absolutely cannot reach them from the inside. Night locks are separate from day locks and kept in the key chest at the main gate.

Continuous Illumination

The warder on night duty ensures the ward is "properly lighted" to remove shadows from the night watch.

The Human Surveillance Hierarchy

A penal system relying heavily on trusted inmates to monitor the general population.

Warders (Paid Staff)

Role:

External perimeter, armed reserve, overall command.

Constraints:

Must patrol constantly, check gratings/roofs, blow whistle for alarm.

Convict Overseers (C.O.s)

Role:

Trusted inmate supervisors.

Duties:

Dispersed evenly throughout barracks; responsible for night discipline inside the barrack.

Convict Night Watchmen (C.N.W.s)

Role:

The lowest tier of surveillance.

Duties:

Perform 2-hour inside patrols. Must count prisoners every hour. Strictly forbidden from sitting down or letting prisoners approach the gratings.

Zone 2: The Physical Perimeter

The Dead Zone

A mandated "clear space of 12 feet" between the enclosure wall and any building or tree. No projection or roughness permitted on the outer wall.

The Bats Wing (Pankha)

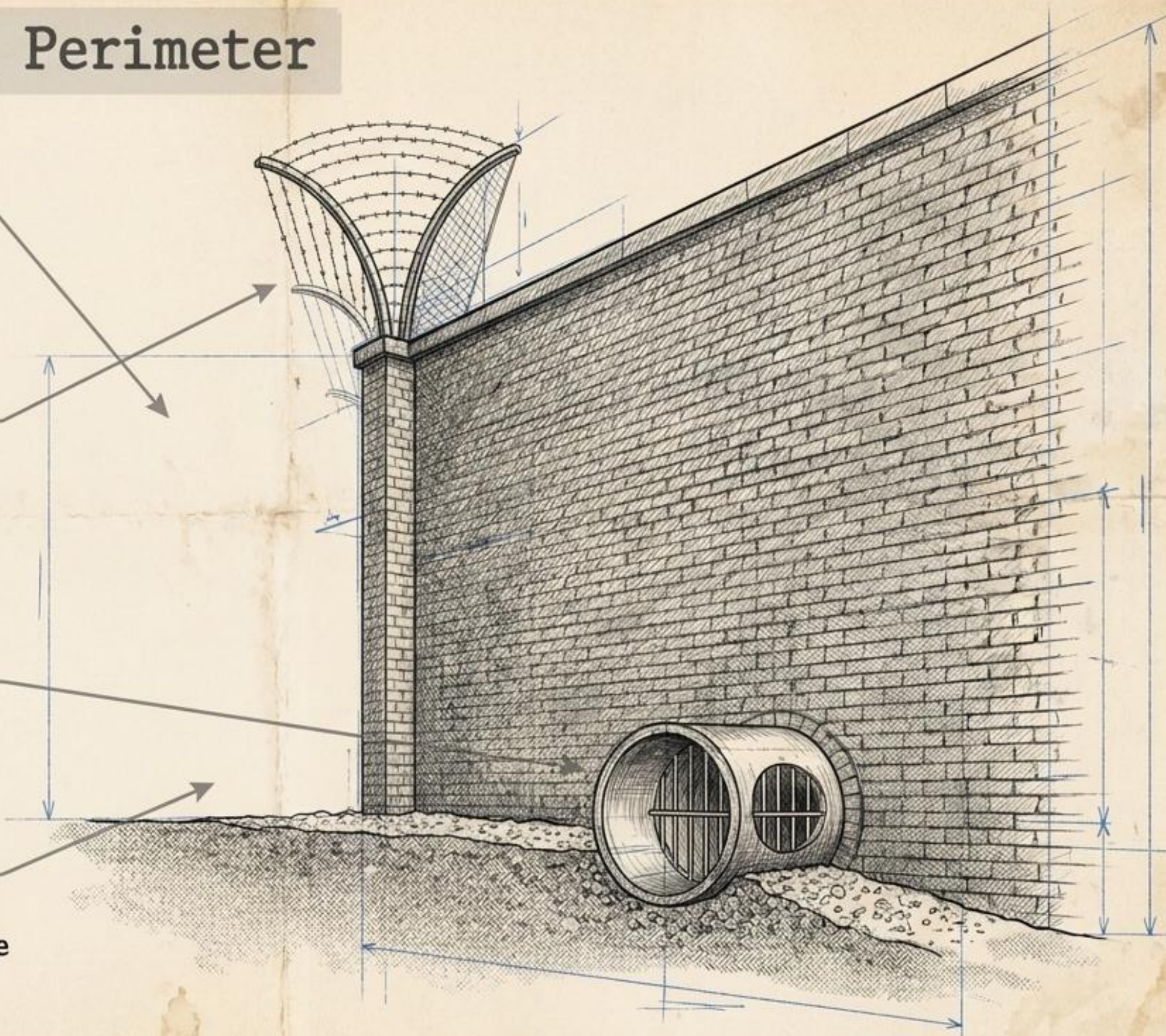
At every junction where a partition wall meets the main wall, a sufficient height barrier is installed to prevent a prisoner from scaling the main wall after climbing the partition.

Double Gratings

Drains breaching the perimeter must be protected by double iron gratings, tested daily by a head warder.

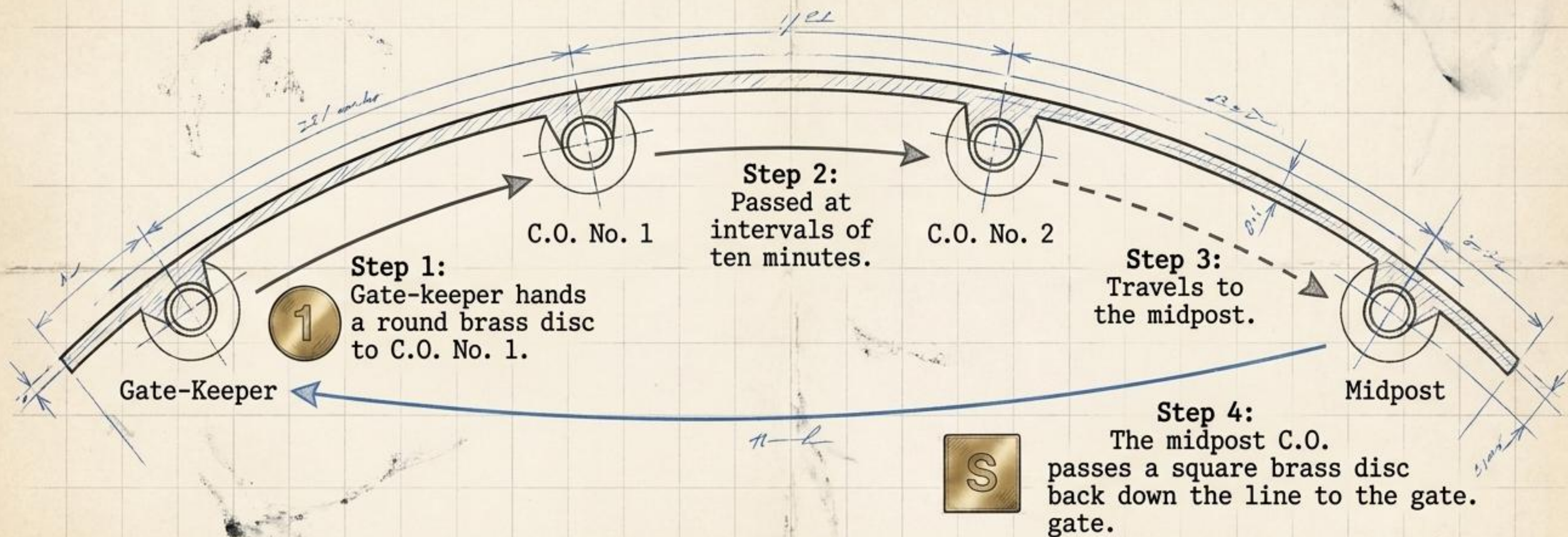
Material Control

Jailors must ensure all plank ladders, ropes, and materials likely to facilitate escape are kept strictly out of reach.



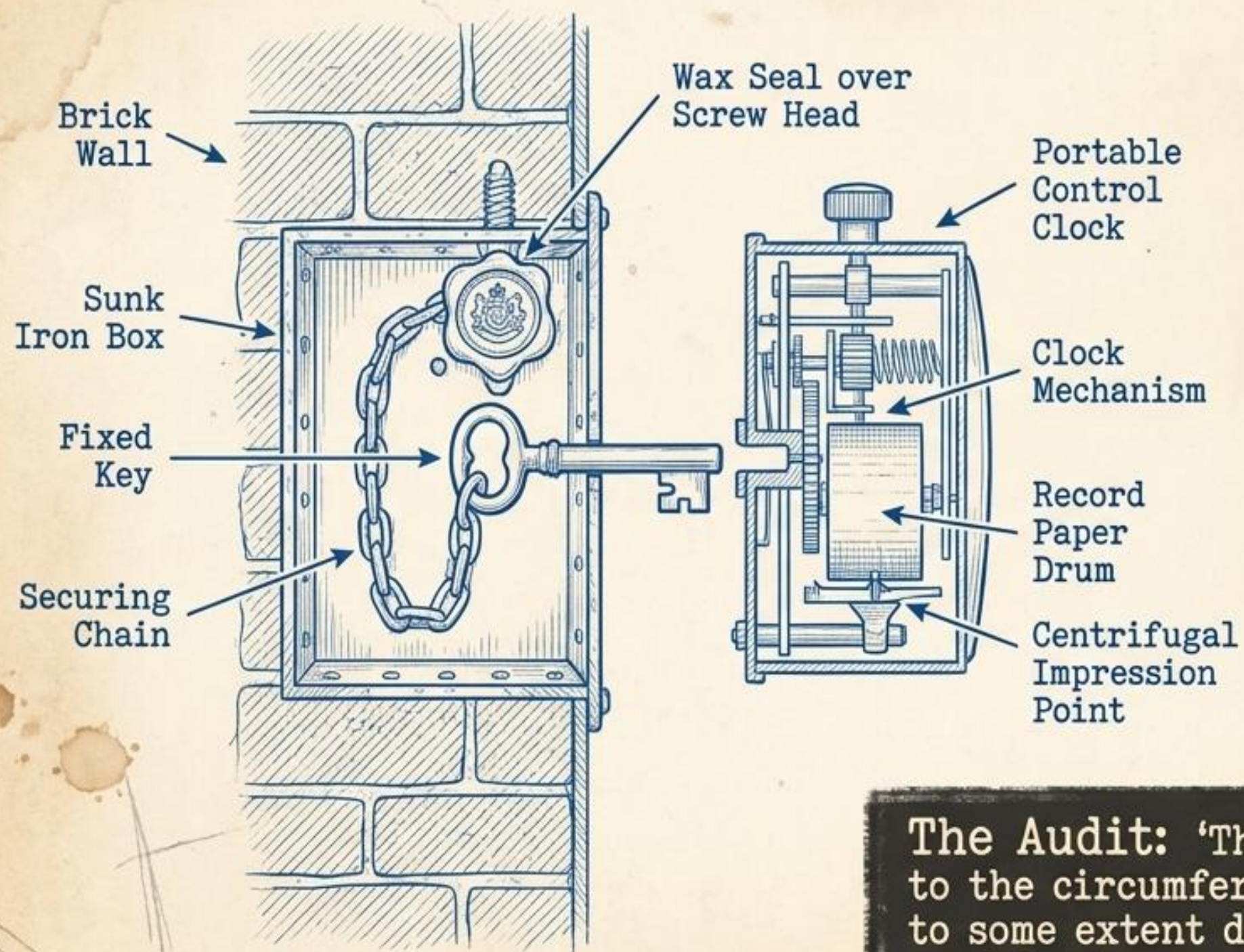
The Continuous Motion Engine: The Brass Disc Relay

The Challenge: How to ensure Convict Overseers (C.O.s) on the main wall remain alert and constantly moving in the dark.



The Proof: The arrival of the discs at the gate is recorded in Register No. 71, providing a continuous, physical log of unbroken human movement.

Mechanical Proof of Vigilance: The Control Clock



The Hardware

Small iron boxes sunk into the walls at vulnerable positions, each containing one fixed key.

The Anti-Tamper Protocol

The key's chain is screwed to the box, and a seal is placed over the screw head. A tape is wound around the clock and sealed every evening to prevent the warder from opening it.

The Centrifugal Impression

The warder inserts the fixed key into his portable clock and turns it half round. The key makes an impression on record paper inside.

The Audit: 'The impressions should run from the centre to the circumference as the good working of the clock to some extent depends on centrifugal force.' Impressions must land on exact 5-minute lines with zero gaps.

Administrative Scale: Central Prisons vs. District Jails

Central Prisons

(High Capacity / High Risk)

- **Leadership:** Deputy Superintendent manages executive charge.
- **Night Rounds:** Three officers detailed (one executive, one office staff, one head warden).
- **Total Immersion:** One Executive Officer is selected in rotation to actually sleep inside the jail before and after his rounds.

District Jails

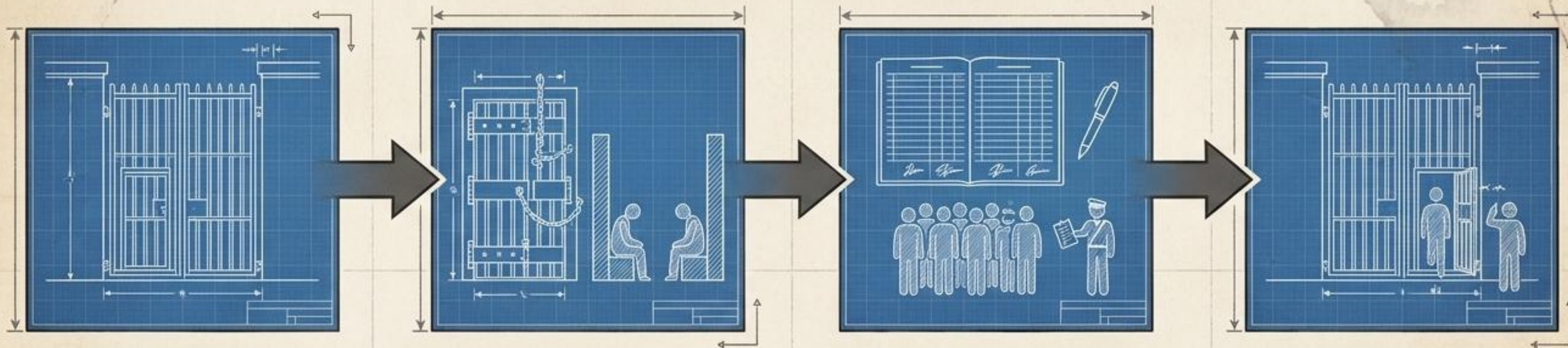
(Standard Capacity)

- **Leadership:** Jailer manages executive charge.
- **Night Rounds:** Two officers detailed (one superior staff, one warder staff).

Universal Rule: One round must be made before 12 o'clock midnight; all other rounds happen after midnight at uncertain hours to maintain the element of surprise.

Zone 3: The Gatehouse Airlock

The strict, sequential verification required to exit the physical perimeter.



Step 1: Inner Wicket

Gate-keeper admits convicts through the inner wicket into the passage between gates.

Step 2: Containment

The inner gate is heavily locked behind them. Prisoners sit down.

Step 3: Roll Call & Audit

Jail officer calls roll from the outgoing register. Totals signed by officer. Gate-keeper enters numbers/names in the gate-book. Warder signs.

Step 4: Outer Verification

Gate-keeper opens the outer wicket and counts the convicts one by one as they pass out to verify the total.

The inward journey reverses this exact process, ensuring the 'airlock' is never open to the outside and inside simultaneously.

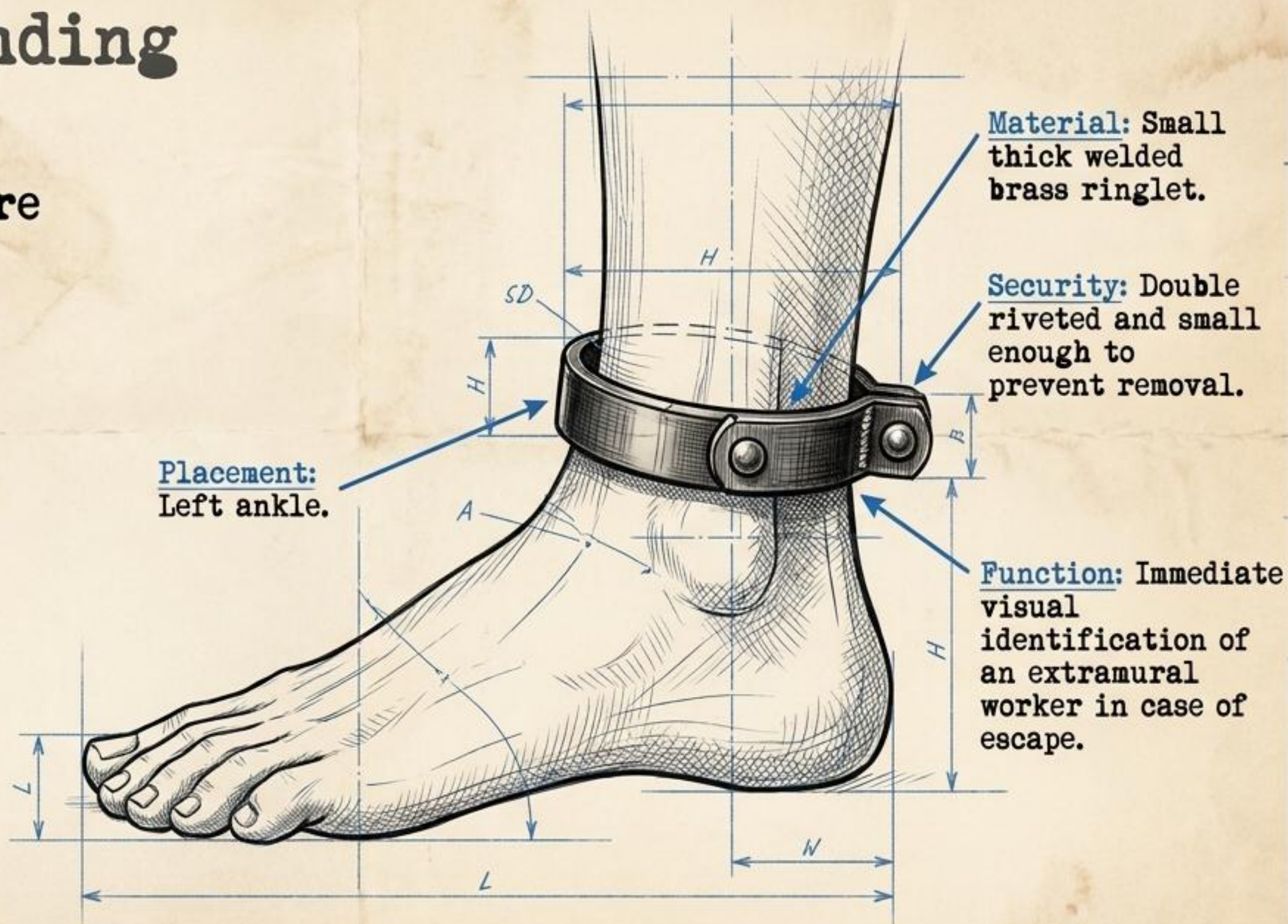
Zone 4: Extramural Labour & Physical Branding

The Loss of Architecture

Without walls, visual identification and strict ratios replace physical barriers.

A warder may supervise a maximum of 12 extramural convicts.

If a gang exceeds 7, two trustworthy C.O.s must be added.



Extramural Exclusion Matrix

Who is permanently confined to the interior zones?

The Sentence Threshold: Any convict with a sentence exceeding seven years.

The Criminal Profile Checklist

- Dacoits (armed robbers)
- Poisoners
- Specially dangerous criminals / Organised crime
- Residents of foreign territory or an Indian state
- Previous escapees
- Military deserters
- Those awaiting a whipping sentence

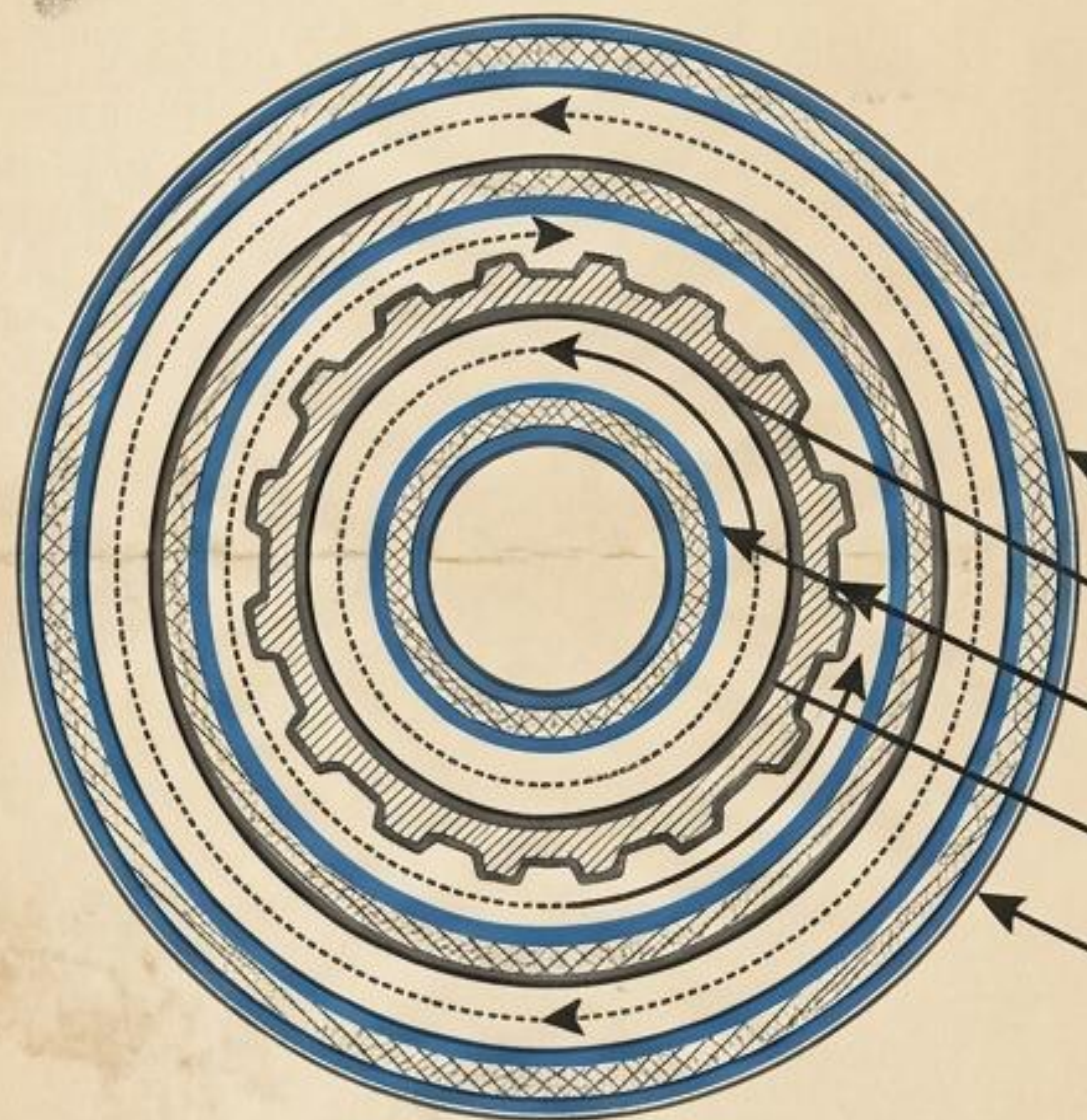
SIGNATURE: _____

The Verification Loop: Even if eligible, the Superintendent must personally examine the conviction warrant and certify on the history ticket that the individual is fit for outdoor trust.

Synthesis: The Philosophy of Continuous Verification

The Core Insight

The 1942 prison manual reveals that walls alone were considered insufficient. True security was a zero-trust environment where every element was continuously audited by another.



Convict Night Watchmen guard the prisoners.

Convict Overseers monitor the Watchmen.

Paid Warders monitor the Overseers.

Control Clocks monitor the Warders.

The Jailer audits the Control Clocks daily.

"The brilliance of the 1942 system was not just in its heavy iron doors, but in its unbroken, overlapping chain of human reporting and mechanical proof. It was a perfectly balanced equation where machines guarded the guards, and prisoners guarded themselves."