



Parole Board
of Canada

Commission des libérations
conditionnelles du Canada

Parole Board of Canada

Victim's Guide

to information services



Canada

Produced and published by:

Parole Board of Canada

For additional copies of this publication, contact:

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410 Laurier Avenue West

Ottawa, ON

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Electronic copies are available at:

Canada.ca/victims-and-parole

Aussi disponible en français.

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September 2022

Cat No.: PS94-6/2013E

ISBN: 978-1-100-22587-6

■ ARE YOU A VICTIM OF CRIME?

By law, victims of crime have a right to certain information about the person who harmed them while that person is under the jurisdiction of the Parole Board of Canada (PBC).

How is a victim of crime defined in law?

A person is considered a victim of crime if:

- they have been harmed as a result of a criminal offence;
- they are a spouse, conjugal partner, relative of, or person responsible for a victim who has died or is not able to act for themselves (e.g. the victim is ill or a child);
- they have custody for, or are responsible for, dependants of a victim who is deceased or is unable to act for themselves;
- the person who harmed them has not been prosecuted or convicted, but they have made a complaint to the police or Crown Attorney.



I INFORMATION TO VICTIMS

How does a victim receive information?

Information is not provided automatically to victims.

This is to respect the privacy rights of victims who do not wish to be contacted or receive information about the offender who harmed them.

Victims wishing to receive information must register

with the PBC or the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to receive information (known as victim notification). Because the PBC and CSC jointly coordinate their victim services, victims may submit an *Application to Receive Information as a Victim* form to one or the other organization. PBC contact information is located at the back of this booklet.

What types of information can a victim receive?

Once a victim has registered with either the PBC or CSC, they will receive:

- the offender's name;
- the offence and the court of conviction;
- the sentence start date and length;
- the offender's eligibility and review dates for unescorted temporary absences, parole, or statutory release.

Can a victim receive more information?

Upon request, a victim may be provided with the following **additional information** if the PBC determines that the victim's interest clearly outweighs any compromise of the offender's privacy that could result from the disclosure of:

- the offender's age;
- the location of the penitentiary;
- the date of any release on an unescorted temporary absence, an escorted temporary absence where the Board has approved the absence, parole or statutory release;
- the date of any Parole Board hearing;
- any conditions attached to an unescorted temporary absence, parole or statutory release;
- the reason for an unescorted temporary absence;
- the reason why an offender waived a hearing, if a reason was given;
- the destination of the offender when released on an unescorted temporary absence, parole or statutory release, and if the offender will be in the vicinity of the victim while travelling to that destination;
- whether the offender is in custody and, if not, the reason; and,
- whether the offender has appealed a Board decision and the outcome of the appeal.



I INFORMATION FROM VICTIMS

Do victims have a voice in the Parole Board hearing process?

Victims may provide information to the Parole Board of Canada at any time related to safety concerns, the offender's risk to re-offend and/or the effect the crime has had on them, their family, or the community.

Victims can choose to provide a victim statement detailing the physical, emotional or financial impact the offence has had on them, as well as any other information they think may be relevant. A victim can also request that special conditions be imposed on the offender's release for the Parole Board to consider.

Can victims participate in a parole hearing?

Victims may attend the offender's parole hearing as observers. They have the right to present a written statement to Board members that outlines the continuing impact the offence has had on them, as well as any risk or safety concerns the offender may pose. To attend a hearing, victims should complete a ***Request to Observe a Hearing*** form. To present a statement, victims should complete a ***Request to Present a Victim Statement*** form.

Victims who do not wish or who are not able to attend a parole hearing can also submit a written statement, or a video or audio recording of their statement, to be presented to Board members during the parole hearing. A written copy of the statement must accompany any recording.

For guidelines on what a victim statement should include, victims should consult the fact sheets: *Victims: Presenting a Statement* and *Victims: A Statement Checklist*. Victims may also contact the nearest PBC office and consult the on-line video: *The Parole Board of Canada: Victim Services*.

How does the Parole Board use information provided by victims?

Information provided by victims assists PBC Board members to understand the seriousness of the offence and to assess whether the offender recognizes the harm they have done.

More specifically, this information helps the Board assess:

- if the offender is likely to re-offend if released on conditional release;
- if additional conditions are necessary to manage the offender's risk in the community, especially if the offender will be living near the victim or is a member of the victim's family. The Parole Board may, for example, impose a special condition for no contact with the victim(s).

Will a victim's personal information be shared with the offender?

By law, the PBC must disclose any information to the offender that will be considered during the decision-making process, including information provided by the victim, or a summary of that information.

Personal information about a victim, such as their address and telephone number, is not shared with the offender.

I REGISTRY OF DECISIONS

Can a victim receive a copy of a PBC decision?

Yes. Victims may request PBC decisions from its Registry of Decisions, including reasons for decisions related to conditional release, return to prison, detention, and decisions and reasons of the Board's Appeal Division.

The PBC may exempt certain information in these decisions that could reveal confidential sources of information, put a person's safety at risk, or hinder an offender's return to society as a law-abiding citizen.

To request a decision, victims or members of the public should complete a *Request for Decision Registry* form. For help, call the toll-free victim information services line at 1-866-789-4636.

I FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Can a victim get funding to attend a PBC hearing?

Yes. Victims can apply for financial assistance to attend the hearing of the offender who harmed them. The Department of Justice Canada administers a fund that provides financial assistance to registered victims to cover travel, hotel and meal expenses. Financial assistance is also available for a support person to accompany registered victims to PBC hearings or to provide child or dependent care to enable victims to attend hearings.

For more information about this fund, 1-866-544-1007 (toll-free) or visit the Justice Canada website at www.justice.gc.ca.

To register as a victim of crime or request information, contact:

Parole Board of Canada

1-866-789-4636 (toll-free)

Canada.ca/victims-and-parole

Correctional Service of Canada

1-866-806-2275 (toll-free)

www.csc-scc.gc.ca

Other resources:

Victims Fund – Department of Justice Canada

www.justice.gc.ca

Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime

www.victimfirst.gc.ca

For a video on PBC Victim Information Services, visit:

Canada.ca/victims-and-parole



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