

## Can a victim attend a hearing?

**Yes.** The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) permits victims and other observers to attend Parole Board of Canada (PBC) hearings in the spirit of openness and accountability, and to contribute to better public understanding of the decision-making process.

## How do I attend a hearing?

Complete a [Request to Observe a Parole Board of Canada Hearing - Application Form](#) and submit it to the PBC office in the region where the hearing will be held. Applications should be sent to the PBC as far in advance of the date of the hearing as possible (ideally at least 30 days before the hearing).

In cases where a PBC hearing is being held in person, victims may request to attend the hearing in person or remotely by videoconference or teleconference. Every effort will be made to respect the preferred method of observing a hearing, however the approved method of observing a hearing may differ from that requested due to space limitations, safety/security requirements or operational considerations.

If you would like to attend a hearing as a victim and present a victim statement, you must register as a victim with the PBC, if you have not already done so. To register, complete the [Request for Victim Registration](#) form or create a Victims Portal account. You do not need to register as a victim to observe a hearing.

Victims who do not want, or who are not able, to attend a PBC hearing can submit a written statement, as well as a video or audio recording of their statement, to be presented to Board members during the hearing. For more information, please refer to: [Victims – Providing Information](#).

## Where does the hearing take place?

The hearing may take place in person, usually at the institution where the offender is incarcerated, or remotely by video or teleconference.

## How do I find out the scheduled date for a hearing?

Registered victims will automatically be notified by the PBC of an offender's upcoming review dates for conditional release.

## Can I receive financial help to attend a hearing?

Victims who are registered with the PBC may be eligible for financial assistance from the [Department of Justice Victims Fund](#) program to attend PBC hearings. For more information about this fund, call 1-866-544-1007 (toll-free) or visit the Justice Canada website at [Attending Parole Board of Canada Hearings](#).

[Canada.ca/victims-and-parole](https://Canada.ca/victims-and-parole)  
Victims Info-Line: 1-866-789-4636

## Will a PBC employee attend the hearing with me?

**Yes.** A PBC Regional Communications Officer (RCO) will contact you before the hearing. They will attend the hearing with you to explain the process and the decision, and to answer any questions you may have.

## What happens at a PBC hearing?

A hearing is a meeting between Board members and the offender. Its purpose is to help Board members assess the risk that the offender may present to the community should they be granted conditional release.

PBC hearings typically proceed like this:

- The offender, parole officer, RCO, victim(s) and observers are brought into the physical or virtual hearing room; Victims and other observers are always the last to enter the hearing room. Other participants, including the offender and Board members, will already be seated;
- The Hearing Officer reads the procedural safeguards and asks the offender if their rights in the process have been followed;
- If a victim has chosen to read a victim statement at the hearing, Board members will invite them to read their statement at some point before coming to a decision;
- Board members ask the parole officer questions about the offender;
- If the offender has an assistant, the assistant may make a statement to the Board members;
- Board members ask the offender questions. Observers may be asked to leave the hearing temporarily while highly sensitive information is discussed;
- At the end of the hearing, the offender, parole officer, observer, RCO and victims leave the hearing while the Board members consider their decision. If the hearing is in person, the RCO, victim and observers wait in a separate area;
- When the Board members have finished their deliberations, people are returned to the hearing room to hear the Board members state their decision and their reasons;
- If the offender is granted release, Board members state any special conditions the offender must follow and the reasons for those conditions;
- If the hearing is in person, victims are escorted from the hearing room by the RCO;
- The RCO will explain the decision and reasons for the decision reached by the Board members.

For more information on attending a hearing, watch the [Parole Board of Canada: Victims and the Parole Process](#) video.

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## What should I do when I arrive at an institution to observe a hearing?

When you arrive at the institution, go to the main entrance. An RCO will meet you there. You will need to sign in and out of the institution and provide photo identification. For more information on attending a hearing read the [Attending a Hearing in a Federal Institution](#) fact sheet.

## How long does a hearing last?

The length of a hearing varies, but some can last several hours.

## Will there be other observers at the hearing?

As part of the PBC's commitment to transparency and openness in its decision-making, and in accordance with the law, members of the public, including media, may apply to observe a PBC hearing. Observers are not permitted to make audio, video or photographic recordings of any part of the hearing. Media observing a hearing will generally report on the Board's decision after the hearing ends. When a hearing is held remotely via videoconference or teleconference, media will sometimes report on the proceedings during the hearing itself (e.g. through Twitter). Media may also contact victims directly following the hearing to request a statement or interview.

## Can a hearing be postponed?

**Yes.** The law authorizes offenders to postpone their hearing for a variety of reasons. The hearing may be postponed on short notice. When a postponement is granted, the PBC makes every effort to tell victims, who were scheduled to attend the hearing, as soon as possible. Victims will be advised of the new scheduled date.

If an offender withdraws their parole application 14 days or less before the hearing date — unless it is for reasons beyond the offender's control — the Board members may decide to go ahead with the review and make a decision on the case.

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