

Where does the Division of Probation and Parole (P & P) fit in?

Officers of the Division's 21 district offices supervise offenders released on parole and diminution of sentence and those placed on felony probation. Officers supervise payment of restitution and prepare reports for the Courts and the Parole and Pardon Boards. Those reports include victims' attitudes about the possibility of release and information about their financial losses resulting from the crime.

Officers notify victims about up-coming parole hearings.

Officers have the authority to arrest probationers and parolees with or without a warrant. They can recommend revocation (return to prison).

- Offenders released from incarceration to supervision have 48 hours to report to a P & P district office.
- Persons on supervision must have permission to leave the boundaries of the supervising district.

One way for victims to ensure that Probation and Parole officers can contact them about hearings and other important matters is to register and maintain a current mailing address and telephone number with the Crime Victims Services Bureau.

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Please direct inquiries to Gayle Cothell at 225-342-1056.
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Crime Victims Services Bureau

Crime Victims Seeking Balance



Louisiana Department
of
Public Safety & Corrections

James M. Le Blanc
Secretary

P. O. Box 94304
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

Crime Victims Services Bureau

888-342-6110

225-342-1056

www.doc.la.gov

John Bel Edwards, Governor

The Crime Victims Services Bureau of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections encourages crime victims and others directly affected by a crime to register for notice about the offender who harmed them.

How do I register?

Persons wishing to register for notification may contact the Crime Victims Services Bureau toll free at 888-342-6110 or download a registration form at www.doc.la.gov or contact their District Attorney's office. Registering with the Louisiana Automated Victim Notification System (LAVNS) is NOT sufficient to ensure notice from the Department.

What will I be notified about?

If a criminal offender is sentenced "at hard labor," he or she is under the Department's authority, and the Department will notify the registered person in writing about the following:

- Initial housing location and projected release dates
- Release from incarceration by any means, including death
- Sentence change due to court action
- Assignment to work transition program
- Escape from institutional custody and apprehension

The Department works with the Committee on Parole and the Board of Pardons to provide registered victims notice of parole and pardon hearings.

The Crime Victims Services Bureau can also provide information about Victim-Offender Dialogue, the Department's policies and practices, the accountability letter project, and other agencies and organizations that assist crime victims.

Registered victims may request a current photo three months before an offender's possible release.

What will I NOT be notified about?

- Transfer between institutions
- Return to prison for violation of release conditions
- Information about pending appeals
- Change in diminution of sentence date

Most offenders are released by parole or diminution of sentence and continue to serve their sentences under supervision until their “full term date,” the date on which the full term imposed by the court is served.

What is Parole?

Parole is release from prison by action of the Committee on Parole. Offenders cannot be released on parole without a parole hearing.

Law and policy require that notice be mailed to victims and certain other persons at least 30 days before a hearing date.

Parole Hearings are usually held about 6 months before an inmate’s parole eligibility date.

What is Diminution of Sentence?

Diminution of sentence release is release from prison based on laws that allow offenders to earn credit for positive actions while in prison. The more familiar term is “good time.”

There is no hearing for diminution of sentence release.

Parole and diminution of sentence are conditional releases. Before being released, offenders must agree to follow a list of conditions. Failure to follow those conditions will result in sanctions, including possible return to prison.

Offenders can also be released by court order or at full term or on good time without supervision. Also, non-violent offenders who have served 10 years of their imposed sentence and reached age 65 can be released.

Almost every year new laws affecting release options are passed. Some of the laws that apply most broadly are outlined below.

- Most offenders sentenced to life in prison cannot be paroled or released on good time unless their sentences are commuted. A few exceptions to this rule have been enacted. (See section re: Board of Pardons—next page.)
- Offenders sentenced to any number of years for a “crime of violence” (COV) committed on or after January 1, 1997, must serve proportionally more of their time in institutional custody before being released to supervision. If they are eligible to earn “good time,” successful participation in approved rehabilitation/treatment programs can reduce custody time by an additional 8 months.
- Armed robbers sentenced after 2008 generally cannot be paroled; they can, however, earn diminution of sentence.
- Many sex offenders cannot earn diminution of sentence but have the possibility of parole. Parole eligibility is governed by LA RS. 15:574.4

What is an Accountability Letter?

An accountability is a letter written by an offender to the victim(s) of the crime(s) for which the offender has been sentenced accepting responsibility for the crime, acknowledging the harm caused to the victim and expressing regret for that harm.

What is Victim-Offender Dialogue (VOD)?

Victim-Offender Dialogue (VOD) is a series of facilitated communication between victims and offenders, conducted in safe and secure conditions, where parties can express their feelings and needs, talk about issues related to the harm caused by crime, and possibly have a face-to-face meeting with the person who committed the crime.

La. RS. 14:2(B) lists the following as crimes of violence:

Aggravated arson
Aggravated assault
Aggravated assault upon a peace officer with a firearm
Aggravated assault with a firearm
Aggravated battery
Aggravated burglary
Aggravated crime against nature
Aggravated criminal damage to property
Aggravated flight from an officer
Aggravated incest
Aggravated kidnapping
Aggravated rape
Aggravated second degree battery
Armed robbery
Armed robbery; use of firearm: additional penalty
Assault by drive-by shooting
Battery of a police officer
Carjacking
Disarming of a peace officer
Extortion
First degree murder
First degree robbery

Forcible rape
Home invasion
Human trafficking
Illegal use of weapons or dangerous instrumentalities
Intentional exposure to AIDS virus
Manslaughter
Mingling harmful substances
Purse snatching
Second degree battery
Second degree cruelty to juveniles
Second degree kidnapping
Second degree murder
Second degree robbery
Second degree sexual battery
Sexual battery
Simple kidnapping
Simple rape
Simple robbery
Solicitation for murder
Stalking
Terrorism
Trafficking of children for sexual purposes

The attempt to commit one of these crimes qualifies as a crime of violence.

Law allows a court to designate other crimes of violence.

Can the Board of Pardons influence an offender’s release?

The Board of Pardons handles offender requests for clemency—that is, for pardon, commutation, and restoration of rights lost as a result of a criminal conviction. The board holds public hearings to consider offender requests for clemency.

The State’s Constitution creates access to the Board of Pardons. A court cannot make an offender ineligible for consideration. State statutes do impose restrictions on how soon after sentencing offenders with life sentences may apply for commutation.

Law requires that notice to victims and other persons and agencies be mailed 30 days before an offender’s hearing.

Clemency requests approved by the board are sent to the Governor, who makes the final decision to grant or deny the board’s recommendations.

Tell me about commutation and life sentences.

Commutation is the only non-judicial means by which a life sentence can be changed to a specified number of years.

After regular business hours, callers can leave a message on the toll free CVSB telephone line
(888) 342-6110

Someone will return the call on the next business day.