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BUILDING A **SAFE AND RESILIENT CANADA**



Victims of Crime Staying Informed

National Office for Victims
1-866-525-0554 | publicsafety.gc.ca/nov

Canada 

The information in this booklet is presented in English.
This publication is also available in other languages through
the National Office for Victims at 1-866-525-0554 or email
NationalOfficeforVictims@ps-sp.gc.ca.

Les renseignements contenus dans le présent livret sont
présentés en anglais. Il est également possible d'obtenir la
publications dans une autre langue auprès du Bureau national
pour les victimes d'actes criminels au 1-866-525-0554 ou par
courriel à Bureaunationalpourlesvictimes@sp-ps.gc.ca.

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Victims of Crime

Staying Informed

Under Canadian law, victims of federal offenders (offenders who have received a sentence of incarceration of two years or more or who are under the jurisdiction of Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or Parole Board of Canada (PBC)) are entitled to receive certain information about the person who harmed them. This information is not provided automatically – a written request must be made to either CSC or PBC via a process commonly referred to as registering.

This booklet is a guide that provides victims with information on what they are entitled to know, how to obtain that information, the role victims can play in CSC's and PBC's decision-making process, and other services offered at the federal level.

Are You Entitled to Receive Information?

You are entitled to receive information if:

- you have been harmed (suffered loss or have been physically or emotionally hurt) as a result of someone committing a criminal offence, even if the person who harmed you has not been prosecuted or convicted for the offence against you, but you have made a complaint to the police or Crown Attorney; or
- you are a victim's spouse, relative, common-law partner or dependant, or responsible for the care or support of a victim, by law or custody, where the victim is unable to act for him/herself (e.g., the victim is ill, incapacitated or is a child); or
- you are responsible for the care or support of a victim's dependant(s) in the case where the victim is deceased or otherwise unable to act for him/herself.

How Can You Receive Information?

Information about an offender is not provided automatically. You or someone you have authorized in writing to act on your behalf, as your representative, are required to submit a written request for information, commonly referred to as “registering”. Should the offender be serving a sentence of two years or more, individuals may contact either CSC or PBC to request information. Once you register with one or the other organization, you will be entitled to receive information from both.

Should the offender be under provincial jurisdiction (i.e. the offender is serving a sentence of less than two years), you may contact either the provincial victim service office or PBC, with the exception of Ontario and Quebec, who have their own provincial parole boards.

How Can You Register?

To find out how to register for the federal victim notification service and to obtain other general information, please call either CSC at **1-866-806-2275** or PBC at **1-866-789-INFO (4636)**. You can call these toll-free information lines from anywhere in Canada and the United States. You may also visit their websites at: **csc-scc.gc.ca/victims-victimes** or **pbc-clcc.gc.ca**.

To ensure that you continuously receive timely notifications from CSC or PBC, it is important that you inform these agencies if your contact information changes.

To find out how to register for provincial victim notification services, you may contact your regional victim services, PBC, or for the province of Ontario, the Ontario Parole Board at **1-888-579-2888**, or for the province of Quebec, the Quebec Parole Board at **1-866-909-8913**. For contact information for the provincial or regional victim services in your area, you can search the national online Victim Services Directory (VSD), administered by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues (PCVI) at the Department of Justice Canada. You can access the VSD at: **justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/pcvi-cpcv/vsd-rsv/index.html**.

What Information are You Entitled to Receive?

By registering with CSC or PBC, you **will** be provided with the following:

- the offender's name;
- the offence and the court which convicted the offender;
- the date the sentence starts and length of sentence; and
- the offender's eligibility and review dates for temporary absences, day parole and full parole.

In addition, as a registered victim, you **may** also be provided the following information, upon request, at the discretion of the Commissioner of CSC or the Chairperson of PBC, when your interest in the information clearly outweighs any invasion of the offender's privacy that could result from the release of this information:

- the offender's age;
- the name and location of the penitentiary where the sentence is being served;

- if the offender is transferred, a summary of the reasons for the transfer and the name and location of the penitentiary in which the sentence is being served, including advance notice, whenever possible, of transfers to minimum-security institutions;
- a summary of the programs in which the offender is participating or has participated;
- a summary of any serious disciplinary offences that the offender has been found guilty of;
- the date, if any, on which the offender is to be released on unescorted or escorted temporary absences, work release, parole or statutory release;
- the date of any PBC hearing;
- any conditions attached to the offender's temporary absence, work release, parole or statutory release;
- the reasons for and the destination of the offender when released on any temporary absence, work release, parole or statutory release, and whether the offender will be in your vicinity while travelling to that destination; and
- whether the offender is in custody and, if not, why.

If the offender is transferred to a provincial correctional facility, you may receive the name of the province in which that facility is located. You may also request PBC decisions from their Decision Registry. This may include the reasons for decisions related to conditional release, return to prison, detention, and the decisions and reasons of the Appeal Division of PBC. PBC may exempt information in these written decisions that could reveal a confidential source of information, jeopardize a person's safety or hinder an offender's return to society as a law-abiding citizen.

You Have a Voice in the Corrections and Parole Processes

CSC and PBC welcome any information you may have about safety concerns and the effect that the offence has had on you, your family or the community. Victims may, at any time, provide this information or any other information they think is relevant to either CSC or PBC. You may also request to attend the offender's parole hearing as an observer and may read a written statement to PBC members, detailing the physical, emotional and/or financial impact the offence has had on you. Should you be unable to, or not wish to attend a parole hearing,

you may submit either a written statement or a video or audio recording of your statement, to be presented to PBC members during the parole hearing. A written copy of your statement must accompany any oral presentation. PBC will require a written copy of your statement 30 days prior to the hearing if it does not require translation and 45 days prior if it does.

You may also apply to the Victims Fund, administered by the Department of Justice Canada, for financial assistance to attend PBC hearings of the offender who harmed you. You must register with CSC or PBC in order to obtain this assistance. The Victims Fund also provides financial assistance for a support person to accompany a registered victim at PBC hearings.

For information regarding the Victims Fund, you may visit the Department of Justice Canada's website at:
justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/pcvi-cpcv/fun-fin2.html.

Will the Information You Provide be Shared with the Offender?

Personal information about you, such as your address, telephone number and other contact information, is not shared with the offender. However, the law requires CSC and PBC to disclose to the offender any information that will be considered during the decision-making process, including information provided by a victim, or a summary of that information.

How does CSC use the Information You Provide?

If you have filed a Victim Impact Statement with the court at sentencing, CSC will receive it along with other court documents on the offender's file. At any point during the sentence, a written statement can be submitted providing information to assist CSC in their decision-making process. Victim information provided to CSC is shared with PBC and used:

- in making decisions on the institutional security level required to protect society;
- in making a recommendation to PBC as to whether the offender should be granted a conditional

- release, such as parole, and what additional special conditions to impose on the release;
- in making decisions as to whether the offender should be released on a temporary absence or a work release; and
 - in evaluating the offender's overall risk of re-offending and need for programs.

How does PBC use the Information You Provide?

The information you provide to PBC is a valued aid in understanding the seriousness of the offence committed and assessing whether the offender recognizes the harm he or she has done. This information will help PBC assess whether:

- the offender is likely to re-offend if released on conditional release;
- additional conditions might be necessary to manage a particular risk to society that the offender might present, especially if the offender will be living near you or is a member of your family. PBC may, for example, impose a special condition for the offender not to contact you.

Preparing for the Release of a Federal Offender?

If you have safety concerns regarding the conditional release of the offender who has harmed you, there are a number of things you may wish to consider doing in advance of that offender's return to the community.

For example:

- stay informed - register with CSC or PBC;
- advise CSC or PBC of your concerns;
- advise your local police agency about the upcoming release of the offender;
- seek community support;
- develop safety plans based on specific needs and circumstances including personal security measures at home and in public;
- maintain all documentation about the offender from police, courts and corrections/parole and record any unwanted contact(s);
- report any new offences or violations committed by the offender; and
- apply for a peace bond.

For information on preparing for the release of a federal offender, you may contact the National Office for Victims, toll-free, at **1-866-525-0554** or visit their website at: publicsafety.gc.ca/nov.

FEDERAL SERVICES FOR VICTIMS

Public Safety Canada: National Office for Victims

The National Office for Victims, Public Safety Canada, acts as a central resource offering information and support on federal corrections issues. As part of its mandate, the office:

- ensures that a victim's perspective is included in national policy development;
- develops information products for dissemination to victims, victim service providers and the general public;
- operates a toll-free line, **1-866-525-0554**, which victims may call to obtain information about victim services available in Canada from anywhere in Canada or the United States; and

- provides referrals to CSC and PBC for specific enquiries.

For more information, please visit the National Office for Victims website at: publicsafety.gc.ca/nov.

Correctional Service of Canada: Victim Service Unit

In addition to registering victims, CSC's Victim Services Unit has dedicated Regional Victim Services Managers and Victim Services Officers who provide information described earlier as set out in section 26 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. The Unit provides victim notification as well as receives victim statements, answers victims' questions about federal corrections and parole supervision, and provides general information and referrals to local, provincial, federal and territorial victim service agencies. For more information, call CSC toll-free at **1-866-806-2275** or visit their website at: csc-scc.gc.ca/victims-victimnes.

Correctional Service of Canada: Restorative Justice Division

CSC also coordinates and provides victim-offender mediation services through the Restorative Opportunities Program for interested individuals. Participation is entirely voluntary. To find out more, contact CSC's Restorative Justice Unit at **613-947-7309**, or you can visit their website at: csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rj/index-eng.shtml.

Parole Board of Canada: Regional Communications Officers

PBC has a team of Regional Communications Officers in each region to provide information and services to registered victims. These officers register victims, provide information to victims described earlier and set out in section 142 of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*. In addition, they answer questions relating to the parole decision-making process and proceedings; share release decisions with registered victims, when requested, and connect victims to other services and resources. Regional Communications Officers also provide guidance and information on the preparation of victim statements to be presented at PBC hearings and are available to

attend PBC hearings with victims to answer questions regarding the process.

For more information, contact PBC by calling, toll-free, **1-866-789-INFO (4636)** or visit the website at: **pbc-clcc.gc.ca**.

Department of Justice Canada: Policy Centre for Victim Issues

PCVI at the Department of Justice Canada leads federal policy development relating to victims of crime. The main functions of the PCVI include:

- law reform and policy development;
- leadership among federal/provincial/territorial governments;
- providing public education and outreach to victim serving organizations;
- leading international activities that will benefit victims of crime;
- building knowledge within the criminal justice system on issues that face victims of crime; and

- providing financial assistance and project funding through the Victims Fund, including:
 - project funding to support initiatives that address the impacts of victimization, raise awareness or enhance/develop victim services;
 - financial assistance for registered victims and their support people to attend PBC hearings;
 - financial assistance to Canadians who have been seriously victimized abroad (specified serious offences);
 - funding for provinces and territories to implement victim-related legislation, provide services to victims and set up financial assistance programs within their jurisdictions;
 - funding for the development or the expansion of Child Advocacy Centres; and
 - funding for the development of culturally relevant victim services for families of missing or murdered Aboriginal women.

For more information, contact the PCVI by calling, toll-free, **1-866-544-1007** or visit the website at: **justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/pcvi-cpcv**.

Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime (OFOVC) is an arm's length federal government office that works to ensure that the federal government meets its responsibilities regarding victims of crime.

Reporting directly to the Minister of Justice, the OFOVC helps victims of crime and their families by:

- informing victims about the federal programs and services that exist to help them;
- addressing complaints made by victims about federal government departments, agencies, employees, laws or policies;
- referring victims to programs and services in their city or province that may be able to assist them;
- identifying issues that have a negative impact on victims; and
- making recommendations to the federal government on how to effect positive change for victims of crime.

For more information and/or to make a complaint, contact the OFOVC by calling, toll-free, **1-866-481-8429** or visit the website at: **victimfirst.gc.ca**.