



Corrections **FAST FACTS**

Victims of crime need to have a voice and meaningful role in the federal corrections and justice system.

Types of Victim Input and Involvement

Some of the ways in which victims have become involved with the National Parole Board (NPB) and the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) include:

- sitting on a Victim Advisory Committee (available in some parts of Canada)
- sitting on a Citizens' Advisory Committee for the CSC
- speaking and/or observing at NPB hearings
- accessing the NPB registry of decisions
- assisting with victim sensitivity training for CSC and NPB staff
- assisting with victim awareness programs for offenders
- providing input into policy development

Victims of Crime in Federal Corrections and Conditional Release

The Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA) recognizes victims of crime as an important part of the criminal justice system. It gives victims the opportunity to participate in the federal corrections and conditional release process. It also entitles registered victims¹ to request certain information about the offender who has harmed them, and to be informed about parole and correctional decisions concerning that offender.

Legal Definition of Victims of Crime

The CCRA defines a victim as someone to whom harm was done or who suffered physical or emotional damage as the result of an offence. When a victim has died, or is unable to act for him/herself (i.e., the person is a child, is ill or is otherwise incapacitated), the victim's spouse, relative, common-law partner, or anyone who is responsible for the care or support of that person, may request and receive information on behalf of the victim.

Disclosure of Information to Victims

Anyone, including a victim or a victim's family, can ask for basic, publicly available information such as:

- the offence for which the offender was convicted and the court that convicted him/her
- the date that the sentence began and the length of the sentence
- the offender's eligibility and review dates for unescorted temporary absences, day parole and full parole

¹ This applies to victims who are registered with the National Parole Board and/or the Correctional Service of Canada.

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Registered victims may receive additional information that is not usually disclosed to the public, such as:

- the location of the penitentiary in which the offender is serving his/her sentence
- any of the conditions attached to the offender's conditional release
- the destination of the offender when released
- whether the offender is in custody and, if not, why not
- whether or not the offender has appealed a decision of the National Parole Board (NPB), and the outcome of that appeal

Information Provided by Victims

Registered victims may provide Victim Impact Statements to the NPB and the Correctional Service of Canada. These are statements which contain information regarding the physical, emotional or financial impact of the offence and other relevant information. Victims can provide relevant information to the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or the NPB for their consideration at any time. The law requires that the CSC and the NPB disclose to offenders any information that will be considered during the release decision-making process. A victim's personal information (e.g., address and telephone number) are not made available to the offender.

Victim-offender Mediation

Victim-offender mediation is a process that provides victims of crime with an opportunity to communicate with the offender who harmed them. It offers victims the chance to directly express the full impact of the crime on their lives, to get answers to questions they have about the offence and the offender and to achieve a greater sense of closure on some issues. Interventions can include:

- Indirect victim-offender communication by means of letter exchange, video exchange, or shuffle mediation whereby an appointed mediator can act as a go-between to relay messages between victims and offenders
- Direct victim-offender communication through one or more face-to-face meetings facilitated by an experienced mediator/facilitator
- Follow-up support, as desired and appropriate, for all parties

Other Services for Victims of Crime

A number of other services for victims of crime exist in Canada, including, for example, the Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, the National Office for Victims of Crime (within Public Safety Canada) and the Policy Centre for Victims Issues (within Justice Canada). More information on these and other resources, including contact information on how to register as a victim, can be found online at www.safecanada.ca/effectivecorrections_e.asp.

Would you Like More Information?
www.ps.gc.ca