

Community Corrections & Parole

GETTING STARTED

6

This is Booklet 6 in the Getting Started Series.

**Getting Started is a guide
for people leaving prison.**

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This Booklet was last updated in September 2010. If any information has changed or you notice an error please contact Corrections Victoria on (03) 8684 6600 or email: corrections@justice.vic.gov.au

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Post-release Orders

Many people leaving prison have some form of Order when they get out. This could be Parole, Home Detention, a Community Based Order or a Combined Custody and Treatment Order.

The Order will restrict what you can and can't do. Sometimes it makes life harder than you think it needs. It also provides a level of support.

The best way to get through this is to understand all the rules and try to stick to them.

Parole

Getting Parole is not the same as being free. You are doing time but you get to finish your sentence in the community. If you break any rules, you can be sent back to prison to serve the remainder of your sentence.

If you are sent back to prison, the time that you were out on Parole may not be counted as time served.

The rules on Parole are called 'conditions' and they are different for everyone.

The Adult Parole Board (Parole Board) decides if you will get Parole or not. They also set the conditions and decide what happens if you breach them (see Breaching Parole page 18).

Getting Parole


The earliest time you can be released on Parole is your Earliest Eligibility Date (EED).

6 to 8 weeks before your EED a Community Corrections Officer (CCO also known as a Parole Officer) will write a Parole Assessment Report about you. The CCO will interview you at the prison for this report.

The report is not just based on the interview. They will also get other information from other people and other relevant reports. They will also look at your behaviour in prison.

If you don't know much about Parole, ask the CCO about it at the interview.

The Interview for Parole will be at the prison or by video linkup. It will take about an hour. They will ask you about:

- Your background (family supports, education, employment)
 - Your plans and goals
 - The programs you've done in prison (if you have certificates it is a good idea to bring them to the interview)
 - Your record in prison
 - Drug or alcohol problems
 - Housing after prison
- 

The Decision

The Parole Board will look at the following information:

- The Parole Assessment Report
- Prison Behaviour
- Drug use in prison
- Any other information they have asked for
- Your housing plans

You may have to go and speak to the Parole Board before they decide.

Parole & Housing Plans

The Parole Board want people to have somewhere stable to live when they get out. This could be with family, good friends, a partner or independently.

The Parole Board generally won't approve a plan to live with co-offenders.

A CCO will check the address where you plan to live if parole is granted. The CCO may also talk with any of the residents.

If you have nowhere suitable to live when you get out, see the Prison Housing Worker. Finding housing will not be easy so start early.

See Getting Started 2: Housing

Released on Parole

Before release you will be told when and where to report. Prison staff will give you a map and directions if you need them. They will also give you a copy of your Parole Order.

If you don't understand all the Parole conditions you can easily mess it up. Ask the prison staff, the R&A Committee or CCO if you are unsure about anything.

Reporting to the Community Correctional Service (CCS)

You will need to report within two working days of your release. If you are unsure about the date, time or address of your first appointment, call or attend your nearest CCS location.

Make sure you go to your first appointment. Be there on time. The Parole Board may be notified if you don't. It is important to get off to a good start.

The CCO will explain the Order in detail. If you don't understand anything ask the CCO to explain.

Try to stay on good terms with your CCO. They are not there to be your friend or to make life hard for you.

The CCO's job is to assist you to meet all your Parole conditions.

Be respectful and always go to appointments. This helps to build up trust. If something comes up and you can't get there, tell your CCO as soon as you can. Missing an appointment could still be recorded as a breach unless you have a doctor's certificate or other documents to back up your reason.

Being late can also lead to a breach. Make sure you ring your CCO to tell them if you can't make an appointment and ask to book another time.

Balancing appointments with work and other commitments can be difficult. Some CCS Offices will have after-hours appointments available. Talk to the CCO about the best way to manage your appointment times before you make other commitments, including starting a new job.

You have the following rights to:

- Ask for a change of CCO
- Be supervised by someone of your own gender
- Make a complaint if you are being treated unfairly

Complaints

If you need to make a complaint about a CCO or CCS location, follow these steps until the matter is resolved:

- 1 Ask to speak to a senior officer
- 2 Write to the Regional General Manager
- 3 Write to the Parole Board
- 4 Contact the Ombudsman

Contract

Your CCO may ask you to sign a contract for some of your Parole conditions. This contract will state that you understand and agree to certain requirements.

Your CCO will also work with you to develop a plan to help you avoid re-offending. To develop this plan, you and your CCO will talk about your past offences and current situation.

Parole Conditions

All Parole Orders have basic conditions including:

- Not committing a further offence
- Reporting to CCS within 2 working days
- Not leaving the state without permission
- Notifying changes in address and employment within 48 hours

Other Parole Conditions may include

- Testing for drugs or alcohol
- Attending treatment programs

- Reporting to Parole Board after you are released
- Unpaid community work

There may be other conditions. Make sure you know what they are and ask if you are unsure.

Intensive Parole

Some people on Parole go through an Intensive Parole Period usually for the first 3 months.

This means you will have to:

- Report to CCS twice a week
- Complete unpaid community work for up to 8 hours a week – unless exempt (see below)
- Comply with other conditions of Parole

After the Intensive Parole Period you may not have to report to CCS as often.

Community Work

Most people on Intensive Parole will have to do community work.

You will have to sign an agreement at your first CCO appointment. The CCO can answer questions about what you will be doing.

You may be exempt from community work if you are:

- Doing more than 20 hours of paid work per week
- Studying full-time
- Physically incapable

Community work is often outdoors and involves physical labour. If you have a medical condition you may be able to do light duties. You will need to provide evidence from a doctor about your condition. You can also use your health discharge summary from the prison Health Centre.

The CCO will not accept a letter from Centrelink as evidence of a medical condition.

Urine Tests

If you need to do urine tests you will be told when and where to go to do them. They could be regular or random. Urine tests will also be supervised – this means a nurse will watch you (you can request that the nurse be the same gender).

Programs

The CCO will discuss what programs you need to attend. The programs you need to do will depend on your offences, the conditions of your order and the programs you did in prison.

Reporting to the Adult Parole Board

You may have to report to the Parole Board at some stage during your sentence. They may want to see you to:

- Explain changes to your conditions
- Monitor your progress
- Give you a warning
- Cancel or vary your Parole

You normally report in person but may be able to report by video link-up from a CCS office.

Family and friends are not allowed in to the Parole Board. If you have a support worker they may be able to go with you, but check this with your CCO first.

You will need to go through a metal detector when you visit the Parole Board.

It is important to respond to any request by the Parole Board. If you do not report when asked your Parole may be cancelled and you will be returned to prison.

If you breach your Parole Order, a warrant will be issued and the police can arrest you.

Breaching Parole

If you break any of the rules of your Parole Order your CCO may give you a warning or notify the Parole Board. What happens next will depend on how many times you have broken the condition and how serious it is.

The Parole Board can change your conditions or cancel your Parole. If your Parole is cancelled you will be arrested and sent back to prison.

The Parole Board decides if the time that you spent out on Parole counts as time served.

If you go back to prison you can write to the Parole Board and ask to have another chance at Parole.

In this application you should:

- Give the reasons why you think you will do better the next time
- Take responsibility for your past behaviour
- Tell them what supports you will have this time around

Do not make excuses for a previous breach.

After you have written the Parole Board will talk to you about it. They may come to the prison or arrange a video linkup.

Adult Parole Board of Victoria

Tel: **(03) 9094 2111**

Fax: **(03) 9094 2125**

Interpreter Service: **131 450** and ask for the Adult Parole Board

Staying Out on Parole

Parole can be tough. You will be expected to remember all your appointment times. The CCO will give you an appointment card but nobody will call you to remind you.

Use a diary and write down where you need to be on each day. Ring to check with your CCO if you are not sure of anything.

Ask your CCO to write into your diary the addresses of where you need to be and the contact telephone numbers.

Your CCO may put you in contact with other services. If you feel you need extra support to get through Parole, ask them about support services.

Combined Custody and Treatment Orders (CCTOs)

If you are on a CCTO you will need to undertake treatment after you get out.

You will be assessed in prison for your treatment needs. You will also meet with a CCO to discuss your release plan.

The CCO will tell you which Community Correctional Service office you will need to report to.

After prison you will usually have to:

- Report once a week to your CCO for supervision
- Complete drug or alcohol treatment in the community

Community Based Orders

Some people are serving a combined sentence of prison and a Community Based Order (CBO).

In this case you will go straight onto your CBO conditions when you leave prison. This is different to normal Parole but the conditions are similar. Your CCO can explain it to you in detail at your first appointment.

Home Detention

The Parole Board may consider your release on Home Detention. This means serving part of your sentence at home. It is not the same as Parole and it is more restrictive.

People on home detention orders will have:

- Electronic monitoring
- Curfews

- Random drug and alcohol testing
- Compulsory activities

How does home detention work?

An order for home detention can be made either by:

- The Adult Parole Board for current prisoners as a pre-Parole option for up to 6 months
- The court at the time of sentencing for up to 12 months

If you are on home detention you will have to wear an electronic bracelet. The bracelet sends a signal to a small unit attached to the telephone at the home.

The device will send alerts if you leave your home, damage the equipment or break the curfew.

You can get leave for approved activities like:

- Employment and training
- Programs to address offending
- Counselling and community work

More Information

Adult Parole Board of Victoria (03) 9094 2111

4/444 Swanston St

Carlton VIC 3053

Fax: **(03) 9094 2125**

Interpreter Service: 131 450

and ask for the Adult Parole Board

Email: apb.enquiries@justice.vic.gov.au



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