

Why Should I Consider Enrolling in the Department of Corrections' Victim Notification Program?

Now that the offender in your case has been sentenced to the Department of Corrections, we encourage you to consider enrolling in the Department of Corrections (DOC) Victim Notification Program. As a victim of a case that falls under the Victim Rights Act, you have been proactively notified about events that were occurring in your case throughout the sentencing phase. However, following the sentencing of the offender, you must initiate enrollment in the Victim Notification Program to continue to be notified about the status of the offender. The reason that victims/survivors are not automatically notified after an offender has been sentenced is because not all victims/survivors want to continue to be notified after the sentencing. By having an opt-in system, the decision is yours as to what is best for you and your family. If you choose to opt-in for DOC notifications, you will remain enrolled throughout the offender's incarceration in an adult prison facility or the Youthful Offender System; the offender's transition through community corrections (halfway house programs); the duration of the offender's parole period; and until the offender is discharged from DOC supervision.

The choice is yours as to whether you enroll or not. If you do not enroll in the Victim Notification Program at DOC, you will not receive any further information about the status of the offender.

How do I sign up for the DOC Notification Program?

If you would like to be notified by the DOC Victim Notification Program, you should complete a Victim Notification Program Enrollment Form or provide a written request and send it to the Department of Corrections/Victim Notification Program at the address provided on the enrollment form or you can sign up on-line at the DOC Victim Services Unit webpage. The forms are available from the Victim/Witness Unit at the District Attorney's Office, the DOC Victim Services Unit or the DOC Web Site. (www.doc.state.co.us/contact/victim-notification-program-enrollment).

What Happens if You Enroll in the DOC Victim Notification Program?

After you enroll in the Victim Notification Program, you will receive the *Colorado Department of Corrections: A Walk Through the System – A Guide for Victims and Survivors* which provides more detailed information about the Department of Corrections and the services provided by the Victim Services Unit. You will be notified of the various events regarding the offender in your case. Specifically, the Victim Services Unit (VSU) will notify you of the offender's:

- Initial facility placement and permanent transfers to other prison facilities
- Referrals to community corrections; acceptance/denial and placement location; Intensive Supervision Program consideration
- Parole eligibility dates; upcoming Parole Hearings; if the offender waives their right to a hearing ; outcomes of parole hearings; release to mandatory and discretionary parole; the supervising parole office location; Interstate parole plan request; Special Needs Parole application; parole revocation hearings and early discharge from parole consideration
- Escape from a prison facility or halfway house & apprehension
- Abscond from parole supervision & apprehension
- Sentence discharge
- Death
- Clemency Application – request for commutation of sentence

Other Services You will be Provided

- When an offender is referred for placement in a community corrections facility, you will have the option to provide a written victim impact statement. Your statement will be included in the offender's referral packet for review by the Community Correction Boards that are considering the offender for a community placement. Victim Impact Statements are considered confidential and are not shared with the offenders at any time.
- You may also attend a community corrections board meeting and make an oral statement regarding the impact the crime had on you. The VSU will assist you by contacting the Community Corrections Board to make arrangements. The Victim Advocate from the DOC or a volunteer advocate will attend with you for guidance.
- When an offender is reviewed for placement in an Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) at a community corrections facility, you will again have the option of providing a written victim impact statement. This written information will be provided to the Division of Adult Parole and Community Corrections for consideration. You will be notified if an offender is placed on ISP status in Community Corrections.
- You will be notified in advance of the month and year of an offender's scheduled Parole Board Hearing. You will have the option to provide a confidential, written impact statement for the Parole Board's consideration in granting early release to parole. For Parole Hearings held by video conference, you may attend at the location of the Parole Board member who is conducting the hearing; the offender will not be present. A Victim Advocate from the DOC or a volunteer advocate will attend with you for guidance. The offender will be interviewed by video from the prison facility. Even if there is a protection order in place, you may still attend the offender's Parole Board hearing and remain throughout the proceeding. If you prefer, you may also meet with the Parole Board member outside the view, and knowledge, of the offender.
- In some cases, the Parole Board conducts a file review rather than a hearing. In those instances, victims may make their oral statement to the Parole Board by phone in addition to the written statement.
- Parole hearings are conducted by phone for some offenders in Community Corrections. Victims may participate by providing confidential written impact statements and oral statements by phone.
- You will be notified if an offender is being considered for early discharge from parole. The early discharge request will be held for 30 days to allow time for you to provide a Victim Impact Statement, which will be forwarded to the DOC Division of Parole and the Parole Board for consideration.
- When informed of a threat made against you by the offender, the VSU will notify you immediately.
- The VSU retains an Offender Apology Letter Bank. Letters are not automatically sent to victims and are only made available upon request.

The Victim Services Unit is available to you during the time the offender is under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Corrections to provide information, referrals and guidance through the complex system of prison and community supervision.

Questions: Contact the DOC Victim Services unit at (719) 226-4709, 1 -800-886-7688, or by email at doc_vsu@state.co.us.