



"Safe Communities, Fewer Victims, Successful Reentry"



From the Division of Victim Services





TENNESSEE BOARD OF PAROLE

Our mission is to minimize public risk
and maximize lawful behavior
by the prudent, orderly release of
adult offenders.



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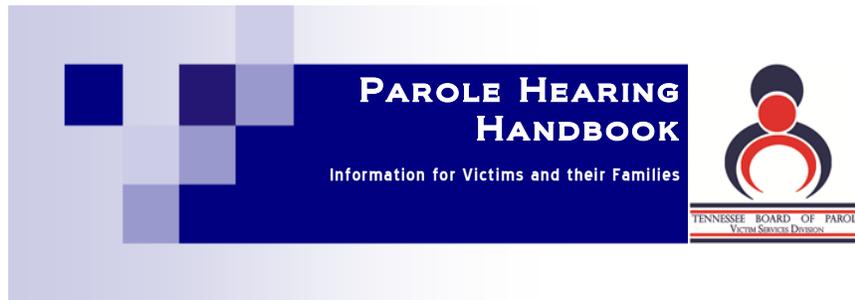


Parole Board's Requirements

By statute, the Tennessee Board of Parole has the authority to parole offenders who have been certified as eligible for parole consideration by the Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC). The Board also has the authority to revoke parole privileges if offenders do not comply with supervision rules and standards set forth for them upon their release. Additionally, the Board considers requests for executive clemency and makes non-binding recommendations on those requests to the Governor. The Board of Parole is committed to a partnership with the citizens of Tennessee in promoting public safety. The Board does not determine who is eligible for parole, nor does it calculate sentence expiration dates. These are functions of the TDOC, which also records statutory good time and other sentence reduction credits earned by inmates. Inquiries regarding credits earned, parole eligibility and expiration of prison and parole terms shall be directed to the TDOC Sentence Management office, which is responsible for maintaining accurate timekeeping records.

Parole Hearing Process

Parole Hearings are conducted by hearing official(s) for the Board of Parole who review facts of the offense and other relevant information, listen to information provided by the offender and others supporting or opposing release from prison. If parole is declined, subsequent parole hearings may be scheduled within guidelines set at the discretion of the board and/or special program conditions may be imposed. Parole hearings are generally held at the institution where the offender is housed.



At the parole hearing, the offender is given an opportunity to recount what led up to his or her incarceration. Parole officials ask questions to get more information or to clarify information shared. Visitors (support/opposition) who attend are given an opportunity to voice their opinions as to whether the offender should or should not be released on parole supervision. The number of Board Members who review a case is dependent upon the offender's convictions. Final decisions are usually not made on the day of the parole hearing. Board members strive to have each decision finalized as soon as possible.

Notification of Parole Hearings

By law, written notice of a parole hearing is mailed 30 days prior to the scheduled date to any person registered to receive notification of hearings through the Tennessee Board of Parole or the Department of Correction. The letter includes:

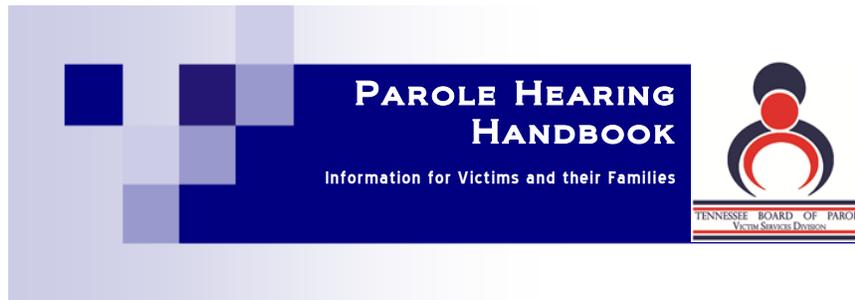
- The offender name and prison (TOMIS ID) number
- The hearing location, date and time
- The name and contact information for the Institutional Probation/Parole Officer (IPPO)
- The Board of Parole's Victim Services' Division contact information



Attending a Parole Hearing

All parole hearings are open to the public. Those persons who are registered with the Board of Parole to receive notifications of hearings will be sent a notification at least thirty (30) days prior to the hearing date. Once received, those who want to attend the hearing can make arrangements through the Board's Victim Services Division (VSD) or through the assigned Institutional Probation/Parole Officer (IPPO). Those who plan to attend or speak at the hearing should inform the VSD or IPPO. Arrangements will be made for those individuals to attend either via video conferencing in a field office or at the institution. You will need to be at the assigned location 30 minutes prior to hearing start time.

In Person, Through Videoconference: Videoconferencing gives you the opportunity to attend the hearing without actually being at the prison, or being in the same room with the offender. The videoconference locations are in Nashville (BOP's Central Office), and TDOC offices in Memphis, Jackson, Chattanooga, Cookeville, Knoxville and Johnson City. Utilizing videoconferencing may also allow you to travel a lesser distance to attend a hearing. Currently, video conferencing is not available in county jails; only at TDOC or CCA prisons. To learn more and to find out whether this option is available at the hearing



concerning your case, contact the BOP Videoconference Coordinator at: 615.532.8112 or toll free 866.795.7467.

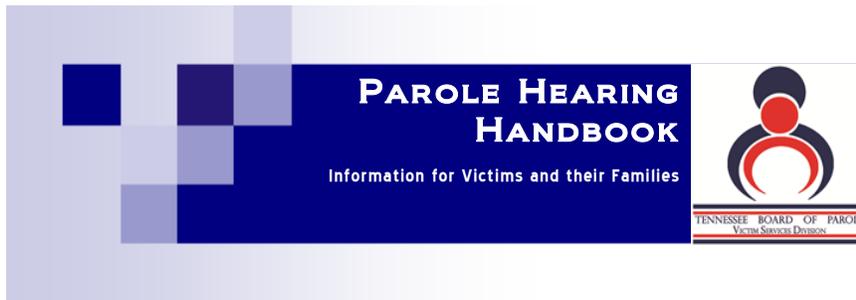
In Person, at the Institution: If you plan to attend and/or speak at the parole hearing, it is important that you let the Institutional Probation/Parole Officer (IPPO) know that you will be there. The IPPO needs to know:

- The name(s) of each person who will attend.
- Whether each person is in opposition or support of the inmate being released.

You may also receive information regarding preparation and accommodations through the IPPO. It is very important to ask these questions in advance, so the IPPO has adequate time to assist you.

General Prison Procedures

If you decide to attend the hearing at an institution, park in the visitor/employee lot. Upon arrival, go to the Administration Building, unless you have been directed to another location by the IPPO. You will be accompanied to a security checkpoint before entering the prison. Checkpoints are operated by TDOC officers who are responsible for determining whether an individual will be admitted into the prison. Officers will ask whether you are attending in support or opposition of



the inmate's parole. Passing through the checkpoint is similar to airport security:

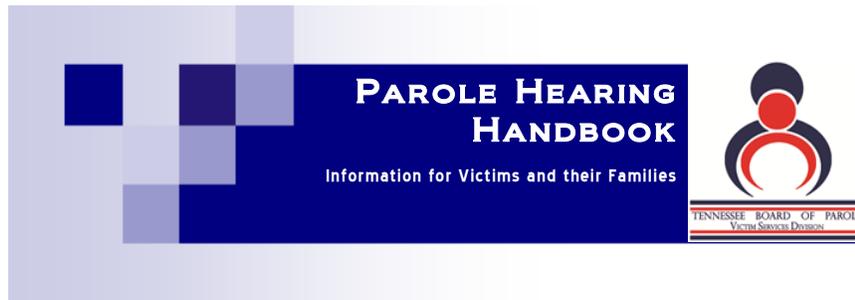
- You will have to walk through a metal detector
- You may be subject to a personal search
- You will be hand-stamped to show at other checkpoints that you passed through security
- All persons attending hearings are subject to any searches, approvals or restrictions the facility imposes.
- Persons who are disruptive or a threat to the safety of any other person may be excluded from the hearing.

If there are any questions about whether someone will be allowed into a prison, it will be at the warden's discretion.

General Prison Rules

The Board defers to the institution's security and space constraints at all hearings. General rules affecting visitor admittance into Tennessee prisons include:

- Bring in only one key
- Current photo ID
- Notes to speak from (optional)
- All minor children under sixteen (16) years of age shall have a parent or legal guardian's continuous supervision while attending a



hearing. A person who is an inmate (in custody, confinement) of a facility cannot meet this requirement as a parent or legal guardian. Minor children under 16 will be excused from a hearing if, in the hearing official's opinion, they are disruptive.

Do not bring on the prison grounds:

- Knives, scissors or other possible weapons
- Any alcoholic beverages or drugs

Leave (at home or in your vehicle):

- Your purse or wallet
- Gum, medicine, bottled water, soft drinks, food and related items
- Cell phones
- Pagers
- Cameras

Wear modest clothing (business casual attire)

- No open-toed shoes or sandals
- No sleeveless tops, midriffs, halter or tank tops or sundresses
- Do wear undergarments



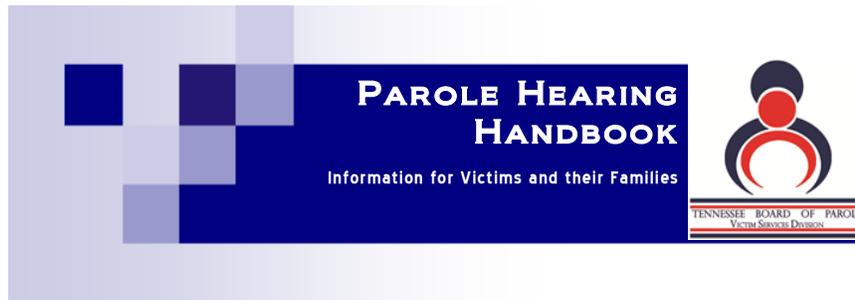
Inside the Prison Compound

When you attend a parole hearing inside an institution, you can expect to see other inmates. Prison personnel will accompany you to a waiting area near the room where hearings will be held. The waiting area is in a separate room away from other visitors, and only other victims and victim families will be in the room with you. If you have any needs while you wait, please alert the prison personnel who accompanied you.

Speaking at Parole Hearing

When it is time to hear the case, you will be accompanied into the parole hearing room. Supporters may already be seated. You will be seated in a different section. The inmate may already be seated, or will be escorted into the room and seated in a chair a few feet away from you, facing the parole hearing official. Correctional staff will be in the hearing room at all times. Parole hearings are public hearings. Attendees may include the media, attorneys, persons in support, opposition, and public observers.

The parole official at the hearing may be a Board Member or Hearings Officer. The parole hearing official will make opening comments. A parole hearing will consist of:



- Review of the inmate’s rights
- Review of crime and sentencing
- Review of pre-crime life factors
- Review of parole plans
- Closing/impact statements
- Deliberation/decision

The inmate will tell his or her side of the story, sometimes in graphic detail, and it may be different than what you heard in court. Remember, parole officials have reviewed the case file and facts, and rely on the conviction(s) and documents in the file. *Please, DO NOT address the inmate directly or with outbursts.*

Additional information that the inmate wants the parole official to consider may include his or her social history, programs or classes attended, work history and documented good behavior. Persons in support who speak are often family members. Sometimes prison employees, community volunteers or employers who have worked with the inmate may speak in favor of his or her release on parole.

Up to four (4) persons per party (opposition/support) will be allowed to speak during the hearing for three (3) to five (5) minutes each.



Those supporting the offender's parole will speak first, followed by those in opposition.

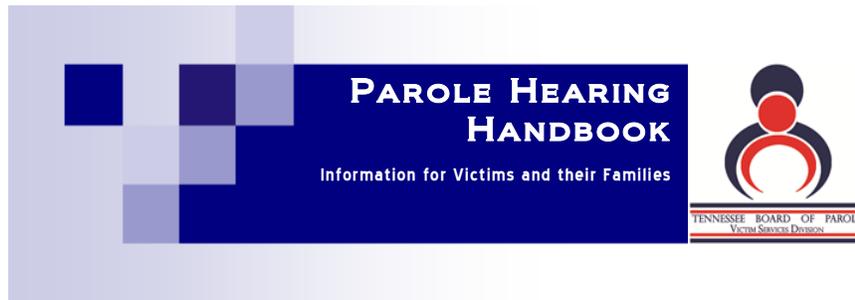
When the parole hearing official asks you to speak, you may read from your Victim Impact Statement, or speak generally about the continued impact of the crime on your life. **Again, please DO NOT directly address the inmate with your comments.** Any questions or clarification sought should be addressed to the parole hearing official.

The inmate will then be given the opportunity to make brief final comments. These comments may include why he or she believes parole is appropriate in this case, or statements of regret or sorrow for the crime committed.

If the case is heard by a Hearings Officer, his or her recommendation is non-binding. Board Members review each case file, including the recommendations of hearing officers, before casting their votes.

What are my options if I am unable to attend a Parole Hearing?

If you are unable to attend a hearing, you may submit a victim impact statement/letter of opposition or submit a video/audio recording. Impact statements, correspondence or recordings should be received at



the Board's address at least twenty (20) days before the hearing, if possible, to assure their availability at the hearing. The Board makes every attempt to process all documentation in advance of the Hearing. However, please be aware that letters of opposition and victim impact statements that are not received by the twenty (20) day requirement above, may not be available for review or consideration by Hearings Officials.

Can I receive a recording of the Parole Hearing?

Yes, all hearings are audio recorded and can be requested after the decision has finalized. There is a \$10 fee (cashier's check/money order) payable to The State of TN/BOP and mailed to BOP for each recording. All requests must include the offender's name, TOMIS #, and date of hearing.

Victim Impact Statement (VIS)/Letter of Opposition (LOP)

A VIS/LOP is a written statement that describes the continued impact of the crime. It can be sent directly to BOP's VSD. The address and fax number are included in this brochure. The VIS/LOP is kept in the inmate's permanent file at BOP for review by parole officials prior to making parole recommendations. The statement is considered confidential. All statements and letters must include the offender's



name, TOMIS #, have a signature affixed and include a date when signed.

Preparing Letters of Opposition /Victim Impact Statements

Impact statements are a way to effectively present the victim's opinion when they contain the following information:

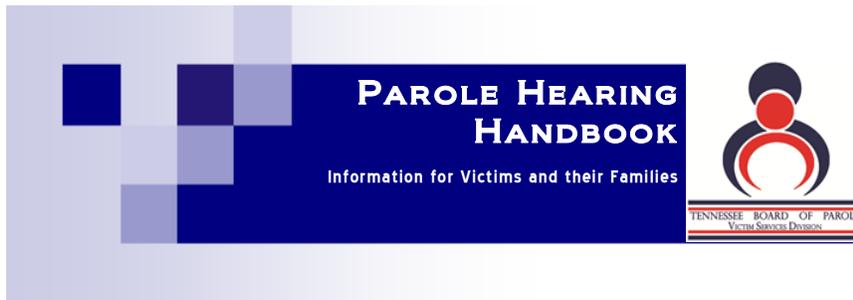
- A brief statement of how the crime impacted you at the time it was committed.
- A brief description about the continuing impact of the crime on your life today.
- You may want to consider addressing the following impacts as they apply: physical, financial, emotional, social or spiritual.

In general, follow these guidelines for preparing effective victim impact statements:

- Plan to read your statement. Parole hearings can be emotional times. Those who try to speak "off the cuff" may be disappointed because they forgot to make an important point.
- Keep oral statements to three (3) to five (5) minutes.

Record an Audio of Victim Impact Statement

A cassette tape or CD can be submitted. Please use regular-sized cassette tapes only. NO mini tapes can be accommodated. Please include the



offender name, TOMIS ID number, hearing location, hearing date, your name and your relationship to the victim. The tape must arrive at the BOP office twenty (20) days before the scheduled hearing. BOP staff will transcribe the tape and include the transcription in the offender's permanent file for review by parole officials prior to making parole recommendations. BOP staff can also answer additional questions regarding a cassette tape or CD. Recordings are not returned to sender, but become part of BOP files.

Record a Video Victim Impact Statement

This option can be used if you are located at least 200 miles from the hearing location, or if illness, financial burdens, or work obligations prevent you from attending the hearing. Please include the offender's name, TOMIS ID number, location, hearing date, your name and your relationship to the victim. The tape must arrive at the BOP office twenty (20) days before the scheduled hearing. BOP staff will transcribe the tape, and include the transcription in the offender's permanent file for review by parole officials prior to making parole recommendations. Recordings are not returned to sender, but become part of BOP files.



Signed Petition(s)

A petition includes a brief, written summary giving reasons the offender should not be released. Others in agreement may also sign the form. No addresses or telephone numbers are required.

Recommendations

Each parole hearing official present at the hearing will verbalize a recommendation or vote with conditions in favor or against releasing the offender on parole. However, the final decision is rarely made at the hearing. The information is reviewed administratively by Board Members not present at the hearing. They can independently adopt, modify or reject the recommendation. A final decision is made when the required number of Board Member votes is reached. The number of Board Members who review the case is dependent on the offender's current conviction offense(s). The maximum time an offender can be declined for a parole review hearing is six years. If an offender is denied parole, he or she has 45 days to file an appeal seeking a review of the decision.

After the Parole Hearing is Over

If you opted to attend the hearing at the institution, when the parole hearing has concluded, the parole hearing official will ask prison



personnel to accompany you and your party from the hearing room. For security reasons, you will be escorted to your vehicle and will be required to leave immediately.

When will I know the final decision of the Parole Hearing?

If you requested notice, you will be notified within thirty (30) days after the Board has reached a final decision.

If the offender is declined parole, the voting Board Members will decide when that offender's case will be heard again. If the offender is recommended for release on parole, the offender's release plan (his/her proposed residence and employment) will be investigated, then either approved or denied by a TDOC Probation/Parole Officer. Once the plan is approved, those who have requested notification of release on parole will be contacted.

Parole is a privilege and not a right, and the release of an inmate from confinement after serving a portion of the sentence is discretionary. While on parole, the offender remains subject to the jurisdiction of the Board, under the supervision of the Tennessee Department of Correction. Jurisdiction remains with the Board until expiration of sentence or revocation of parole status.



**DISTRICT VICTIM SERVICES'
CONTACTS**

Chattanooga 423.634.6333

(Serves Bradley, Bledsoe, Hamilton, Marion, McMinn, Meigs, Monroe, Polk, Rhea and Sequatchie Counties)

Clarksville 931.648.5550

(Serves Cheatham, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Sumner and Wilson Counties)

Cookeville 931.526.7165

(Serves Clay, Cumberland, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Trousdale and White Counties)

Jackson 731.984.9801

(Serves Benton, Carroll, Chester, Crockett, Decatur, Dyer, Fayette, Gibson, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, Henry, Lake, Lauderdale, Madison, McNairy, Obion, Tipton and Weakley Counties)

Johnson City 423.434.6800

(Serves Carter, Greene, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington Counties)

Knoxville 865.582.2000

(Serves Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Fentress, Grainger, Hamblen, Hancock, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier and Union Counties)



DISTRICT VICTIM SERVICES' CONTACTS [CONTINUED]

Memphis 901.543.7841
(Serves Shelby County)

Murfreesboro 615.898.8030
(Serves Bedford, Cannon, Coffee, Dekalb, Franklin, Giles, Grundy, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Rutherford, Van Buren, Warren, Wayne and Williamson Counties)

Nashville Central Office 615.532.8112 Toll Free: 866.795.7467
(Serves the entire state)

The TDOC website (www.tn.gov/correction) includes written directions to each prison. Go to **State Prisons** on the left menu. When you click on the name of the prison, directions and other facility information will be available.





ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

**Tennessee Board of Parole
Victim Services Division**
404 James Robertson Parkway, Suite 1300
Nashville, TN 37243
615.532.8112
Toll Free: 866.795.7467
Email: victim.witness@tn.gov

Additional Victim Assistance Services

**Tennessee Department of Correction
Victim Services Division**
615.253.8184
Email: victim.notification@tn.gov

Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund
615.741.2734

Mothers Against Drunk Driving
800.323.6233

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
800.843.5678

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800.799.7233

National Human Trafficking Hotline
888.373.7888

Tennessee Coalition to end Domestic & Sexual Violence
615.386.9406



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