

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1) **What is the function of the Pardon and Parole Board?**

The Parole Board is a constitutionally created Board charged with making clemency recommendations to the Governor for adult felons. Clemency can take the form of a parole, a pardon or a commutation.

2) **What is Parole?**

Parole is the conditional release from prison during which certain [rules and conditions](#) must be followed or the offender can be returned to prison to serve the remaining portion of the sentence. Parole is not the same thing as discharging a prison sentence where an offender leaves prison with no supervision. ([See question 11](#))

3) **Who serves on the Board?**

The Board is made up of [five members](#) who serve a four-year term along with that of the Governor. Three members are appointed by the Governor, one by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and one by the Presiding Judge of the Court of Criminal Appeals

4) **How often does the Board meet?**

The Board meets once per month. The meeting usually lasts for three days. If there are any questions please call our office at 405-602-5863.

5) **How can a person contact the Board Members?**

The Board members can only be contacted by mail. Their post office boxes are listed [Board](#)

6) **Where are the Parole Board meetings held?**

The Board meetings are held at the [Hillside Community Corrections Center](#). This is where the Board Members are located. The offenders are seen by video conferencing. The seven remote video sites from which the offenders will appear are: [Dick Conner Correctional Center](#), [James Crabtree Correctional Center](#), [Joseph Harp Correctional Center](#), [Mack Alford Correctional Center](#), [Mabel Bassett Correctional Center](#), [Oklahoma State Penitentiary](#) and [Oklahoma State Reformatory](#).

7) **What is the process for a supporter of an offender to attend a Parole Board meeting?**

A supporter of an offender who is to be a jacket review (See question 16) should go to the Hillside Community Corrections Center. Supporters for offenders who will be seen in person should go to the remote video site where that offender will be seen. To find out this information please contact the Parole Board Office at 405-602-5863. All supporters must obtain a confirmation number by calling the Parole Board Office. (See question 8)

8) **What is a confirmation number?**

A confirmation number is given to victims, victim's representatives and delegations to ensure that they go to the correct facility. These numbers can be obtained by calling the Parole Board office at 405-602-5863 beginning the Friday, eleven days prior to the meeting.

9) **When is an offender eligible for parole consideration?**

Although there is no formal application that must be completed for parole consideration, the Parole Board has the authority to consider offenders outside of the regular docketing process; however, this is rare. Under current law an offender is eligible for parole after one-third of sentence has been served if the offense was for a non-violent crime. Offenders convicted of certain violent offenses, which occurred after March 2000 or later must serve 85% of their sentence prior to becoming eligible for parole consideration. Those offenses are such things as Murder I, Robbery I, Rape I, Burglary I, Arson I, Child Abuse, Child Beating and Child Pornography. See Title 21 O. S. §13.1 All other violent offenses are eligible for parole consideration at one-third of the sentence. The procedures of the Parole Board docket offenders for their initial parole consideration two months before their actual eligibility date to allow for processing to the Governor's Office.

10) **What is a Department of Corrections (DOC) number?**

A Department of Corrections number is a five or six-digit number assigned to each offender for identification.

11) **What is the difference between parole and discharging a sentence?**

When someone is released on parole they serve the remaining portion of their sentence in the community under the supervision of a DOC Probation and Parole Officer. The time that they owe on parole is served as calendar time or day for day. If someone discharges their sentence, this means they have completed the time owed on their sentence and are released to the community with no supervision. While someone is incarcerated they receive earned credits, which reduces the length of the sentence they have to serve. For example someone who receives a ten-year sentence may only serve six years before they finish their sentence and are discharged.

- 12) **What can a victim or family member of a victim do to insure they will be notified when someone comes up for parole consideration?**

The Parole Board does not automatically know who the victims or the victim's representatives are or where they are located. However, a victim or the victim's representative can request to be placed in our victim notification program. To do this they need to contact the Parole Board office and request the victim notification program form or download it [here](#), then fill it out and return it to our office. Once a name is on file, approximately 20 days prior to the time that the offender is to be considered for parole that person will receive a letter from our office telling them the date, time, and place of the parole hearing. See [Title 57 O.S. §332.2](#). The Department of Corrections also has a victim notification program that notifies people when someone moves to a different facility or discharges their sentence and leaves prison. A victim or a victim's representative can enroll in both programs by completing one form. The Parole Board sends out approximately 150 notification letters per month.

- 13) **What is the process for a victim or victim's representative to attend a Parole Board meeting?**

Victims or victim's representatives who are protesting an offender regardless of whether they will be a jacket review or a personal appearance ([See question 16](#)) should go to the Hillside Community Corrections Center. Victims or victim's representatives must obtain a confirmation number by calling the Parole Board office at 405-602-5863. ([See question 8](#)) Victims or victim's representatives are allowed five minutes to make their presentation to the Board.

- 14) **If a victim protests a parole, is that kept confidential?**

Yes, their name, address, the fact that they are protesting someone's parole and any letters that are sent to the Board Members or the administrative office are kept confidential. However, if they choose to come to the Parole Board meeting itself, because of the open meeting laws, the protest at the meeting is public record.

15) **What is the two stage hearing process?**

Offenders that have been convicted of a violent offense must by statute have a two-stage hearing. At the first stage the Board receives a report on each offender and makes a decision whether to pass the case to the next stage or vote no. If the offender is passed to the second stage, their case will be heard at the next month's hearing. At that time the District Attorney, victim or victim's representative and the offender's supporters can appear and speak to the Board. Offenders who have committed non-violent offenses have only a single stage hearing.

16) **What is the difference between a personal appearance and a jacket review?**

Parole Board policy determines who makes a personal appearance before the Parole Board and who will have a review by the Board but will not make a personal appearance. This is called a jacket review. Generally speaking offenders whom have committed a violence offense and are incarcerated for the third time or less make a personal appearance before the Board. For every offender who is considered for parole the Board receives an investigative report prepared by a member of the Parole Board staff and can also receive mail relating to that offender at their post office boxes.

17) **Does writing letters to the Parole Board members make a difference?**

Writing a letter may or may not influence the decision that is made, however the Board welcomes input so that the decisions they make are informed ones.

18) **If one chooses to write letters to Board members when should those letters be mailed and what information should they contain?**

Letters to the Board should be mailed to arrive during the three-week period prior to the beginning of the meeting but no later than one week prior to the start of the meeting to allow time for the Board to read the letters. If someone is protesting a parole they should explain why. If someone is writing in support of parole they should explain what the offender has accomplished, where they plan to live if released and what they plan to do such as employment or training opportunities or furthering their education. [Click here for Board members names and addresses and further information.](#)

19) **Does a person have a better chance of getting a parole recommendation if they leave the state?**

While an offender can request parole to another state, it does not improve their chances of receiving a positive recommendation.

20) **Is the Parole Board required to give reasons for their decisions?**

No, there is a Supreme Court Case, which states that the Board Members are not required to give reasons for their decisions. Parole is considered a privilege and not a right.

21) **How does someone find out the results of the Board Meeting?**

The results of the Board Meeting can be obtained by calling the Parole Board office at 405-602-5863 on the Monday after the meeting after 2:00 p.m. or by checking our web site at [Board results](#). To follow the file at the Governor's office click [here](#).

22) **If someone is not recommended for parole, when will they be reconsidered?**

If someone was not recommended by the Parole Board and they committed a non-violent offense they will be reconsidered on an annual basis. If they committed a violent offense they usually will be reconsidered every three years or when they are within one year of discharging their sentence.

23) **If an offender is recommended for parole what is the process that takes place as the file is processed to the Governor's Office?**

If an offender is recommended for parole, a parole certificate is prepared by our office and sent to the offender's location for them to sign. While this is taking place the Department of Corrections is checking the offender's home offer. Once these two items have been completed and any stipulations are finished the file is then sent to the Governor's Office. This process can take up to 30 days or more if there are stipulations to be completed. Once the file is at the Governor's Office, he has 30 days in which to act on the recommendation. To follow the file at the Governor's Office click [here](#).

24) **Is there anything one can do to expedite files being sent to the Governor's office?**

No, certain steps must take place before the file can be sent to the Governor's Office. (See question 23) All files are processed as quickly as possible.

25) **What is the difference between a stipulation and a condition of parole?**

A stipulation of parole is a program that must be completed while the offender is still incarcerated. A condition of parole is a program the offender completes or participates in after they have been released to the community.

26) **What is necessary for an offender to be eligible for a medical parole?**

Medical paroles are based on a statutory provision that allows the Department of Corrections to recommend an offender to the Parole Board because of the offender's serious medical condition. Offenders should speak with the medical personnel at their facility if they believe their conditions would warrant this consideration.

27) **What is commutation?**

A commutation is a reduction in a person's sentence to something less than the original sentence. For example from 25 years to 15 years or from a life sentence to a set term of years.

28) **How do you apply for a commutation?**

There is no special process to apply for a commutation. The Parole Board can consider someone for a commutation at the time of his or her regular parole consideration.

29) **What is a pardon?**

A pardon is executive recognition that someone has turned their life around and has become a productive citizen. A pardon is granted by the Governor after a recommendation by the Parole Board.

30) **When is someone eligible to apply for a pardon?**

To be eligible for pardon a person must have completed their sentence including any parole or probation time or have been released from the incarceration portion of their sentence for at least five years.

31) **How does someone apply for a pardon?**

Someone can apply for a pardon by contacting our [office](#) and obtaining an application or download the application from our web site [here](#).

32) **What does a pardon do and how is that different from an expungement?**

Under Oklahoma law, a pardon by itself will not clear a person's record. It does not prevent a prior criminal record from being considered when decisions are made concerning employment or other matters. Even if one is granted a pardon, their record may continue to affect them. A person who was less than 18 years old at the time the offense was committed and who has received a pardon may seek to have their record expunged. See Title 22 O.S. §18(5). Also any person convicted of a non-violent felony that has received a pardon for the offense and has not been convicted of any other misdemeanor or felony and has no felony or misdemeanor charges pending, may after 10 years have passed (since the conviction) file a motion for expungement. See Title 22 O.S. § 18(7). The motion for expungement must be filed with the District Court where the conviction occurred. The Pardon and Parole Board is not involved in the expungement proceeding. If you have additional questions concerning expungement you should contact an attorney.

33) **Does a person need an attorney to obtain a pardon/parole/commutation?**

While some offenders hire an attorney to help them with their parole or commutation consideration or pardon application, one is not required to be successfully considered for any of these types of clemency.

34) **How are offenders supervised once they are released on parole?**

Once someone is released to parole supervision they are supervised by a Probation and Parole Officer who works for the Community Corrections Division of the Department of Corrections. Parole time is served as calendar time and parolees are not eligible for earned credits, (Formally known as good time).

35) **What is a parole revocation?**

If someone is released on parole and they do not follow the rules and conditions their parole can be revoked. When a parolee has reportedly violated a condition of his release, a warrant may be issued for his arrest. This warrant is issued by the DOC and suspends the running of the sentence from the date of issuance. Depending on the circumstances a finding of probable cause can be made or a preliminary hearing can be held, again DOC handles this. In either case the Parole Board becomes involved when the Parole Board's General Counsel, acting as a Hearing Office, conducts the final hearing. After the final hearing the Hearing Officer submits a written report containing a recommendation to the Governor. The Governor then decides whether or not to revoke the parole and also whether credit is given for time the parolee was on parole, which is called street time credit.

36) **What is the cost of supervision?**

The current cost of incarcerating someone can be up to \$20,797 per year. The average cost of supervising someone on parole is \$710 per year. Someone on parole pays a parole fee of \$40 per month to the DOC.