



Understanding your Rights as a Victim

Introduction to Victims Bill of Rights

VICTIMS RIGHTS IN CANADA

VICTIMSFIRST.GC.CA

WHO IS A VICTIM OF CRIME

WHO IS A VICTIM?

Under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights, a victim is an individual who has suffered:

- **physical or emotional harm;**
- **property damage; or**
- **economic loss**

as the result of an offence.

A person may also act on behalf of a victim in certain circumstances, including when the victim is deceased or incapable of acting on their own behalf.

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PREAMBLE

THE FOUNDATION OF VICTIMS' RIGHTS

THE CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS RECOGNIZES THAT:
CRIME CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON VICTIMS AND SOCIETY;

- VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES DESERVE COURTESY, COMPASSION, RESPECT AND DIGNITY;
- THE IMPACTS OF TRAUMA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED;
- THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM SHOULD BE VICTIM-CENTRED AND CONSIDERATE OF VICTIMS' NEEDS AND CONCERNS;
- AVOIDING RETRAUMATIZATION IS IMPORTANT; AND
- VICTIMS HAVE AN INTEREST IN TIMELY TRIALS AND THE TIMELY RESOLUTION OF MATTERS RELATING TO OFFENCES.

THE CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS RECOGNIZES RIGHTS RELATING TO:

Respect

To be treated with respect, courtesy, compassion and fairness.

Timely Justice

To have the victim's interest in a timely trial and timely resolution considered.

Information

To receive information about rights, the justice process, services, proceedings and other matters covered by the Act.

Protection

To have security and privacy considered and to receive protection from intimidation and retaliation.

Participation

To convey views about decisions affecting the victim's rights and have those views considered.

Restitution

To have the court consider making a restitution order and, where ordered but unpaid, to have mechanisms available for enforcement.

VICTIMS RIGHT TO INFORMATION

- **the criminal justice system and the role of victims;**
- **services and programs available to victims;**
- **their rights under the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights;**
- **how to make a complaint if a right is infringed or denied;**
- **the status and outcome of the investigation;**
- **the location, timing, progress and outcome of proceedings; and**
- **certain information concerning an offender's conditional release or an accused found not criminally responsible or unfit to stand trial.**

INFORMATION FOR REGISTERED VICTIMS

Victims who have registered with Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) or the parole board of Canada are also able to get information:

- **The status of the offender who harmed them**
- **The offenders release date, destination, and conditions of release 14 days prior to release**
- **Information about offenders progress in relation to their correctional plan**
- **A current photo of the offender prior to certain release**
- **Notification when a federal offender has been removed from Canada by the Canadian Border Service Agency**
- **Copies of PBC decisions; and**
- **CSC's victim - offender mediation services**

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE — 2026 AMENDMENTS

THE 2026 AMENDMENTS PROVIDE THAT VICTIMS HAVE A RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT
AVAILABLE **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROCESSES**, INCLUDING:

- HOW THE PROCESS WORKS;
- WHAT OUTCOMES MAY BE EXPECTED; AND
- THE FACT THAT PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY AT EVERY STAGE.

VICTIM'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION

VICTIMS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- HAVE THEIR SECURITY CONSIDERED BY APPROPRIATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AUTHORITIES;
- HAVE REASONABLE AND NECESSARY MEASURES TAKEN TO PROTECT THEM FROM INTIMIDATION AND RETALIATION;
- HAVE THEIR PRIVACY CONSIDERED; AND
- REQUEST TESTIMONIAL AIDS WHEN APPEARING AS A WITNESS.

2026 AMENDMENT

VICTIMS ALSO HAVE A SPECIFIC RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROTECTION MEASURES AVAILABLE TO THEM WITHIN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.

IDENTITY PROTECTION & TESTIMONIAL AIDS

VICTIMS MAY REQUEST TESTIMONIAL AIDS WHEN APPEARING AS WITNESSES. DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND APPLICABLE LAW, THESE MAY INCLUDE MEASURES SUCH AS:

- TESTIFYING FROM OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM OR BEHIND A SCREEN;
- HAVING A SUPPORT PERSON PRESENT; AND
- OTHER MEASURES INTENDED TO ASSIST WITNESSES IN GIVING EVIDENCE.

2026 AMENDMENTS STRENGTHEN IDENTITY-PROTECTION PROVISIONS. FOR A VICTIM WHO IS A COMPLAINANT OR WITNESS, THE AMENDED PROVISION INCLUDES RIGHTS TO:

- BE ASKED WHETHER THEY WANT THEIR IDENTITY PROTECTED;
- REQUEST IDENTITY PROTECTION;
- BE INFORMED WHEN AN IDENTITY-PROTECTION ORDER IS MADE; AND
- BE INFORMED OF THE RIGHT TO APPLY TO REVOKE OR VARY THE ORDER.

FEDERAL CORRECTIONS & CONDITIONAL RELEASE

VICTIMS MAY HAVE RIGHTS TO RECEIVE CERTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING AN OFFENDER'S CONDITIONAL RELEASE, INCLUDING INFORMATION ABOUT REVIEWS, TIMING AND CONDITIONS OF RELEASE.

VICTIMS MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL CORRECTIONS AND PAROLE PROCESS THROUGH MECHANISMS PROVIDED BY THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE OF CANADA AND PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA.

THE CVBR EXPRESSLY COVERS INFORMATION ABOUT CONDITIONAL-RELEASE REVIEWS AND THE TIMING AND CONDITIONS OF RELEASE.

[Victim's right to protection \(justice.gc.ca\)](https://www.justice.gc.ca)

VICTIMS' PARTICIPATION AND INTERESTS ARE RECOGNIZED THROUGHOUT THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROCESS, INCLUDING:

BAIL PROCEEDINGS

JUDGES MUST INCLUDE IN THE RECORD THAT THEY CONSIDERED THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF EVERY VICTIM AND THE COMMUNITY WHEN MAKING A BAIL DECISION.

SENTENCING

THE CRIMINAL CODE RECOGNIZES THE HARM DONE TO VICTIMS AND THE COMMUNITY AS PART OF THE SENTENCING PROCESS.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS

VICTIMS HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRESENT A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT AND HAVE IT CONSIDERED BY THE COURT.

SUPPORTS WHEN PRESENTING A STATEMENT

VICTIMS MAY REQUEST OR USE AVAILABLE TESTIMONIAL AIDS AND SUPPORTS WHEN PRESENTING THEIR VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT, SUBJECT TO THE APPLICABLE CRIMINAL CODE PROVISIONS.

VICTIM'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

VICTIMS HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRESENT VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS
AND HAVE THEM CONSIDERED.

VICTIMS' VIEWS ABOUT DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR RIGHTS
WILL ALSO NEED TO BE CONSIDERED.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS

A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT GIVES A VICTIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO DESCRIBE HOW THE CRIME HAS AFFECTED THEM.

A STATEMENT MAY DESCRIBE:

- PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM;
- PROPERTY DAMAGE;
- ECONOMIC LOSS; AND
- OTHER IMPACTS THE OFFENCE HAS HAD ON THE VICTIM.

VICTIMS HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRESENT A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT TO THE COURT AND HAVE IT CONSIDERED.

VICTIM STATEMENTS MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO OTHER CRIMINAL JUSTICE AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA AND THE PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA.

VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS — NCRMD

VICTIMS MAY PREPARE AND FILE A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT WHEN AN ACCUSED HAS BEEN FOUND NOT CRIMINALLY RESPONSIBLE ON ACCOUNT OF MENTAL DISORDER (NCRMD).

THE STATEMENT MAY DESCRIBE:

- PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM;
- PROPERTY DAMAGE;
- ECONOMIC LOSS; AND
- THE IMPACT THE OFFENCE HAS HAD ON THE VICTIM.

THE STATEMENT MAY BE FILED WITH THE COURT OR REVIEW BOARD AND MUST BE CONSIDERED WHERE REQUIRED BY THE CRIMINAL CODE. VICTIMS MAY ALSO REQUEST TO READ OR OTHERWISE PRESENT THEIR STATEMENT AT THE HEARING.

FEDERAL CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE

VICTIMS CAN PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE PROCESS IN SEVERAL WAYS.

VICTIMS MAY:

- DESIGNATE A REPRESENTATIVE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON THEIR BEHALF.
- CHOOSE WHETHER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OFFENDER WHO HARMED THEM AND WITHDRAW A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION IF THEY NO LONGER WISH TO RECEIVE IT.
- REQUEST TO LISTEN TO AN AUDIO RECORDING OF A PAROLE HEARING, SUBJECT TO APPLICABLE RESTRICTIONS.
- SUBMIT A VICTIM STATEMENT TO CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA AND THE PAROLE BOARD OF CANADA.
- PRESENT A VICTIM STATEMENT AT A PAROLE HEARING.

[Victim's right to participation \(justice.gc.ca\)](https://www.justice.gc.ca)

VICTIM'S RIGHT TO SEEK RESTITUTION

VICTIMS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- HAVE THE COURT CONSIDER MAKING A RESTITUTION ORDER AGAINST THE OFFENDER.
- PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT ELIGIBLE FINANCIAL LOSSES RESULTING FROM THE CRIME.
- IF RESTITUTION IS ORDERED BUT NOT PAID, HAVE THE ORDER ENTERED AS A CIVIL COURT JUDGMENT THAT CAN BE ENFORCED AGAINST THE OFFENDER.

IMPORTANT: RESTITUTION IS NOT AUTOMATIC. THE RIGHT IS TO HAVE THE COURT CONSIDER MAKING THE ORDER.

FINANCIAL LOSSES

A JUDGE CAN ORDER RESTITUTION FOR FINANCIAL LOSSES RELATED TO:

- DAMAGED OR LOST PROPERTY DUE TO THE CRIME;
- PHYSICAL INJURY OR PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM DUE TO THE CRIME;
- PHYSICAL INJURY DUE TO THE ARREST OR ATTEMPTED ARREST OF THE OFFENDER;
- COSTS FOR TEMPORARY HOUSING, FOOD, CHILDCARE AND TRANSPORTATION DUE TO MOVING OUT OF THE OFFENDER'S HOUSEHOLD (THIS ONLY APPLIES IF A VICTIM HAS MOVED BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN PHYSICALLY HARMED OR THREATENED WITH PHYSICAL HARM DUE TO THE OFFENCE, ARREST, OR ATTEMPTED ARREST OF THE OFFENDER); AND,
- COSTS THAT VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT HAD TO PAY TO RE-ESTABLISH THEIR IDENTITY, AND TO CORRECT THEIR CREDIT HISTORY AND THEIR CREDIT RATING.

RESTITUTION RECOVERY

YOU CAN HAVE THE RESTITUTION RECOVERY PROGRAM TRY TO GET
MONEY FROM THE OFFENDER IF:

- YOU OPT IN TO THE PROGRAM BEFORE SENTENCING
- THE OFFENDER HAS NOT PAID BY THE DUE DATE
- THERE IS A CHECK BOX AT THE END OF THE STATEMENT ON
RESTITUTION TO OPT IN OR OPT OUT OF THE PROGRAM.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VAP)

THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA OFFERS THE **VAP** TO ELIGIBLE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME IN ALBERTA, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VICTIM OF CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY ACT.

THE **VAP** IS INTENDED TO OFFSET FINANCIAL LOSS AND ASSIST IN RECOVERY FROM INJURIES THROUGH:

- EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
- COUNSELLING
- PHYSICAL INJURY SUPPORT AND SERVICES

ELIGIBILITY

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE IF:

- YOU WERE THE VICTIM OF A SERIOUS CRIMINAL CODE OFFENCE
- THE CRIME HAPPENED IN ALBERTA – YOU DO NOT NEED TO LIVE HERE TO BE ELIGIBLE
- YOU REPORTED THE CRIME TO POLICE WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME
- YOUR APPLICATION IS RECEIVED WITHIN 2 YEARS OF THE DATE OF THE CRIME – IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THIS MAY BE EXTENDED
- YOU SHOULD INCLUDE A REASON FOR THE DELAY IN THE APPLICATION FORM

- YOU DO NOT HAVE TO WAIT FOR A CHARGE OR CONVICTION TO APPLY, BUT THE INCIDENT MUST FIRST BE REPORTED TO A POLICE AGENCY.
- ANY INJURIES MUST BE VERIFIED BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL (DOCTOR OR COUNSELLOR) WHO TREATED YOU FOR THE INJURIES.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ELIGIBILITY, CONTACT THE VICTIMS OF CRIME
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM BY EMAIL AT VICTIMSOFCRIME@GOV.AB.CA

IF A VICTIM'S RIGHTS ARE NOT RESPECTED

MAKING A COMPLAINT ABOUT INFRINGEMENT OR DENIAL OF A VICTIM'S RIGHT

THE CANADIAN VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS (CVBR) DEFINES A VICTIM AS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS SUFFERED PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL HARM, ECONOMIC LOSS OR PROPERTY DAMAGE AS A RESULT OF A CRIME COMMITTED IN CANADA.

ALL VICTIMS MAY EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS UNDER THE CVBR WHILE THEY ARE IN CANADA. CANADIAN CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS MAY EXERCISE THESE RIGHTS EVEN IF THEY ARE OUTSIDE OF CANADA, AS LONG AS THE CRIME TOOK PLACE IN CANADA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH OF THESE CVBR RIGHTS, VISIT [CANADA.CA/VICTIMS](https://canada.ca/victims).

FEDERAL COMPLAINTS & THE OMBUDSPERSON

IF A COMPLAINANT HAS EXHAUSTED THE INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCESS OF A FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY, AND THEY ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THAT PROCESS, THE COMPLAINANT MAY CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL OMBUDSMAN FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS.

THE OMBUDSMAN MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THE ISSUES RAISED WITHIN THE COMPLAINT OR REGARDING THE COMPLAINT PROCESS, PROVIDE THE COMPLAINANT WITH INFORMATION.

The federal departments, agencies or bodies from which victims have a right to receive the information include, but are not limited to:

- **(a)** the Royal Canadian Mounted Police;
- **(b)** the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions;
- **(c)** the Correctional Service of Canada;
- **(d)** the Parole Board of Canada;
- **(e)** the Miscarriage of Justice Review Commission;
- **(f)** the Canada Border Services Agency; and
- **(g)** the Department of Justice.

Every person deserves to be met with compassion, respect and dignity, to be heard, supported and given the space to move forward in their own way.

Healing does not follow one path or one timeline. Sometimes, simply knowing that someone believes you, stands beside you and reminds you that you are not alone can make a difference.

May we continue to create spaces where people feel heard, respected and supported as they find their way forward.

“THIS RESOURCE PROVIDES GENERAL INFORMATION AND IS NOT LEGAL ADVICE. LAWS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES MAY CHANGE. – UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2026.”