

# The Family Guide to Federal Corrections in Alberta – Edmonton Area



*“Safety and Harmony in Our Community”*

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## Who We Are

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We work with people to eradicate the root causes of crime so we can build a safe, healthy community though:

- Promoting an awareness of the problem of crime and its impact on society.
- Encouraging greater responsibility with the community for crime prevention, and
- Providing services to people who are, or have the potential to be in conflict with the law or who have been victims of crime.

We have been part of the Edmonton community since 1984, and have branches across the country to serve your needs.



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## Introduction

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Few things are as disruptive and taxing on family life as having a family member incarcerated. Everyone living in prison is a member of a family. This is not only hard on them, but on all of their friends and family as well. To those left to cope without a member of their family, the separation and worry can be overwhelming. In addition to the emotional toll, the costs of calls and visits – especially where travel is involved – can add its own financial burden.

This guide is designed with the intent of helping families and friends of men incarcerated in Alberta navigate our sometimes complex and intimidating Criminal Justice System. It provides simple, straightforward information to help you understand what your loved one will be going through in prison and on conditional release, and what you can do to help you and your family. We hope to lay a roadmap for you to understand the criminal justice and correctional processes, to de-code some of the specialized lingo used in the correctional community, and to stay connected with your friend or loved one. Finally, you will be provided with a list of resources to give you the tools necessary for dealing with the incarceration of someone close to you.

This guide is not intended to provide you with legal advice, and it does not expect to address all possible situations that you or your loved one may encounter. Our objective is to familiarize you with the system, provide an opening for you to ask questions, and let you know who you can contact for further assistance or information.

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## Going to Prison: The Criminal Justice Process Explained

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Within our Criminal Justice System are four distinct parts. Each has its own area of authority and responsibility:

- **Law Enforcement:** Protects the public, investigates crime, and arrests suspects.

- **The Courts:** Prosecutes the accused, decides on guilt or innocence, and sentences those convicted.
- **Corrections:** Carries out the sentence. The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) is responsible for administering federal sentences (two years or more in length). Alberta Justice and Solicitor General is responsible for carrying out sentences of less than two years.
- **Parole Board of Canada (PBC):** An independent body that makes decisions regarding the release of offenders.

The Criminal Justice Process can be a long and complex one. We will now explain the step-by-step process that your family member will go through as they make their way through the Criminal Justice System, from arrest to the end of their sentence.

### Arrest:

Police need to have reasonable cause in order to place someone under arrest. They can arrest someone if they have a warrant, or if they have good reason to believe that someone has committed a crime or is able to commit one. After being arrested, any one of the following things can happen:

- The suspect will be released without charge.
- The suspect will be released with an Appearance Notice which indicates when they need to show up to Court.
- The suspect will be held in custody until he appears before a Judge for a Show-Cause Hearing. This needs to happen within 24 hours of arrest.

### Show-Cause Hearings:

During a Show-Cause Hearing, which are also known as Bail Hearings, the Judge will decide whether or not charges will be laid and whether the suspect will be released before trial. After a Show-Cause hearing, one of the following things will happen:

- The accused will be released without charge. There is no trial in this case.
- The accused will be released with an Appearance Notice which indicates when he needs to show up to Court for trial. If he does not attend Court as directed, a warrant for their arrest will be issued.
- The accused will post Bond (an amount of money to be determined by the Judge), and is then released with an Appearance Notice that indicates when they need to show up to Court for trial. If the accused does not attend Court as directed, then a warrant is issued for his arrest, and he forfeits the money he put up for Bond. This money goes to the Court, and it will not be returned.
- The accused has a Surety (a person who promises to make sure the accused attends Court as directed) and is released with an Appearance Notice. If the accused does not show up for trial as directed then a warrant is issued for their arrest. The surety also risks facing charges.
- The accused will be held in custody in a Pre-Trial Detention Centre (also known as Remand) until the case goes to trial. The Court must have good reason to hold someone in custody before trial. Reasons for holding someone in Pre-Trial Custody include the reasonable

belief that the accused poses a risk to the public, or is too great a risk to flee instead of attending Court. In Alberta, Remand Centres are run by Alberta Justice and Solicitor General.

\* Failing to attend Court is a Criminal Code offence.

### Getting a Lawyer or Legal Advice

The Law can be complicated and difficult to navigate without the knowledge that comes from the years of schooling and practical knowledge that lawyers receive. Do not expect to be able to understand it without help. Contact a lawyer as soon as possible after you have been charged.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees an accused person the right to a fair trial, regardless of wealth. To ensure all people have access to legal representation Legal Aid is provided to those facing charges and who cannot afford a lawyer.

- Legal Aid Alberta:  
300 - 10320 102 Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4A1  
Phone: 780-427-7575
- Edmonton Community Legal Centre:  
200 – 10115 100a St.  
Edmonton, AB T5J 2W2  
Phone: 780-702-1725
- Student Legal Services of Edmonton:  
11011 88<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Edmonton, AB T6G 0Z3  
Phone: 780-492-2226

Lawyers are governed by a professional code of conduct that requires them to keep their clients' information confidential. For this reason, a lawyer cannot give information to family members about a client unless that client give his permission first.

### Trial:

The accused will be tried, either by a Judge and jury, or by Judge alone. The outcome of a trial can be any one of the following:

- The accused will be found not guilty and will be released without restrictions.
- The accused will be found guilty and will be sentenced.

You will usually be allowed to attend trial unless you have been called to testify. Attending Court is a good way of showing your support to your loved one throughout the Court process.

### Sentencing:

Once an accused has been found guilty of a crime, it is the responsibility of the Judge or jury to decide on a sentence using the sentencing principles found in the Criminal Code of Canada. Examples of these principles include; deterrence (both for the convicted and the general public), proportionality (the sentence must be appropriate for the offence), and incapacitation (incarceration prevents the offender from posing a risk to the public).

There are a number of options available for sentencing:

- **Community Sentences or Alternative Measures:** this

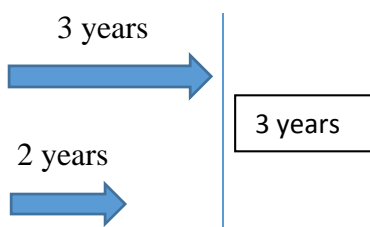
includes Absolute Discharge, Conditional Discharge or Suspended Sentence (commonly referred to as Probation), Intermittent Sentences, Community Service, or a Fine. These sentences are administered by the Province.

- **Provincial Incarceration:** a period of incarceration under two years (“two years, less a day”) is administered by the Province and the offender is housed in a provincial institution. Refer to the Resources section for a list of Provincial Institutions in Alberta.
- **Federal Incarceration:** Any term of imprisonment for two years or more is carried out in a federal penitentiary and administered by Correction Service Canada (CSC).

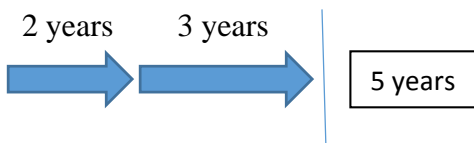
A number of considerations go into the calculation of sentences:

- **“Dead Time”:** If an offender spent time in Pre-Trial Custody before being convicted (“dead time”), they have the ability to deduct that time from their sentence (“credit for time served”).
- **Concurrent Sentences:** if an offender has been convicted of and sentenced for more than one offence at once they can serve the sentences for those offences concurrently. To be sentenced concurrently means that an offender will serve the sentences for each offence at the same time.

Example: An offender is convicted and sentenced on two counts of Assault. On the first count of Assault he is sentenced to 3 years. On the second count of assault he is sentenced to 2 years, concurrent with the 3 year sentence. This means he will serve the longer of the two sentences (3 years).



- **Consecutive Sentences:** Using the same example as above, if an offender is convicted of the same two offences, and is sentenced to serve them *consecutively*, this means that he will serve each sentence once after the other. So, once he is complete the 3 year sentence, he will then start serving the second 2 year sentence, for a total of 5 years of incarceration.



#### Additional Sentence Information:

- **Provincial/Federal Time and Credit for Pre-Trial Custody:** whether the sentence is served in a Provincial or Federal institution is determined by the Net Amount

determined once credit for time served is deducted.

Example: If an offender is sentenced to 3 ½ years and is given 24 months for time served, this would bring his sentence to less than two years, to be served in a Provincial institution.

- **Ancillary Orders:** A Judge has the option of adding a number of Ancillary Order to a sentence. These can be orders to supply a DNA sample, being added to the Sex Offender Registry, and Weapons Prohibitions. The expiry date of these orders is independent from the length of their sentence. For example, a Weapons Prohibition can be for life.
- **Long Term Supervision Order:** If an offender meets certain criteria he can be declared a Long-Term Offender. This allows for the offender to be supervised for up to an additional 10 years after the completion of their original sentence.
- **Dangerous Offender Designation:** If an offender meets certain criteria, he can be declared a Dangerous Offender. This places the offender on an indeterminate term of incarceration to be reviewed regularly. If granted Parole, they are also subject to supervision for an indeterminate period of time.
- **Life Sentence:** Contrary to popular belief, a life sentence in Canada means *life*. For First Degree Murder, the *minimum* term of incarceration is 25 years. At that

point, the offender becomes *eligible* for Parole. If granted Parole, that offender will be supervised until the end of their life. For Second Degree Murder, the Court has the option of setting Parole eligibility between 10 – 25 years.

### Why Give Credit For “Dead Time”?

The Criminal Code of Canada states that similar crimes should receive similar sentences. Giving credit for “Dead Time” or “Time Served” in Pre-Trial Custody ensures that this fairness principle is upheld.

Example: Mr. John and Mr. Howard are both sentenced to 10 years for a crime they committed together. Mr. John was held in Pre-Trial Custody (Remand) for 3 years before going to trial. Mr. Howard was released on Bail (also known as a Recognizance, or “Recog.”). In handing down his sentence, the Judge has the option of giving Mr. John credit for his 3 years served in Remand.

If the Judge choose not to give Mr. John credit for 3 years served then he will need to serve the entirety of the 10 year sentence given. This means he would actually serve more time in custody than Mr. Howard.

If the Judge gives Mr. John 1-for-1 credit then he would still serve more time incarcerated than Mr. Howard. This is because of the structure of Parole eligibility.

Mr. Howard would be eligible for Parole in 40 months (1/3<sup>rd</sup> of 120 months), and

for Statutory Release in 80 months (2/3s of 120 months).

Mr. John has already been incarcerated for 36 months, but he still needs to wait until the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> point for his Parole eligibility (1/3 of 84 months = 28 months), and wouldn’t be eligible for Statutory Release until he has served 56 months of his sentence.

So, in order to give Mr. John and Mr. Howard equal sentences, Mr. John would need to be given more than 1-for-1 credit for time served which was allowed until recent legislation was passed. Currently Judges may only give 1-for-1 credit for time served.

### Doing the Time: Prison and Conditional Release:

Once given a federal sentence, an offender will be transferred to the custody of Correctional Service Canada (CSC) under whose authority they will be until the expiry of their sentence, including community time.

There are 3 legal ways out of prison:

- **Warrant Expiry:** this refers to the very end of someone’s sentence. Also referred to as “hitting your Warrant,” or “Maxing Out.”
- **Conditional Release:** this can come in the form of Day Parole, Full Parole, or Statutory Release.
- Having your sentence overturned by the Courts.

Most offenders do not spend the entirety of their sentence in prison. Most are given the opportunity of serving the rest of the

sentence in the community on a form of Conditional Release. When on a conditional release, the offender must follow certain conditions, appropriate to their case, and supervised by a Parole Supervisor who ensures they are adhering to those conditions. If they are found to be breaking one of their conditions of release, their release may be suspended.

Once suspended, one of the following will happen:

- A decision will be made to maintain their release, and they will be allowed to re-commence with the community portion of their sentence, or
- A decision will be made to revoke their release and they will be placed in a federal penitentiary until eligible for release again.

### End of Sentence:

The legal authority to incarcerate a person in Canada is given by a Warrant of Committal, which specifies the length of their sentence. The last day of their sentence is their Warrant Expiry Date, or “WED.”

Once an offender reaches their WED, they are released from the authority of CSC:

- If residing in a Community Residential Facility (CRF, or Halfway House), or Community Correctional Centre (CCC) then they will be released from it.
- He will no longer need to report to a Parole Supervisor, and
- He will no longer be bound by the conditions of his release.

Things to consider:

- If he is subject to a Long Term Supervision Order (LTSO), he will still remain on supervision in the community until the expiry of that Order (maximum 10 years).
- Life sentences have no Warrant Expiry Date. Anyone on a life sentence will serve their sentence, whether in prison or in the community, for the duration of their life.
- If there are Ancillary Orders attached to the sentence, they do not expire at an offender’s Warrant Expiry Date. For example, a lifetime weapons ban remains in place once the WED is reached.

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## Prison: The Correctional Process Explained

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### The Intake Process:

Once sentenced to federal time, the offender will be transferred back to a Pre-Trial Detention Centre after which they will be placed in a federal penitentiary. Where possible, a Preliminary Assessment Interview is held in Pre-Trial to begin the assessment process.

Once in the federal system, each offender undergoes an intake procedure designed to assess his risks and needs:

- **Needs Assessment:** This determines their medical, program, and security needs.
- **Correctional Plan development:** An offender’s Correctional Plan documents how their sentence is to



be managed from beginning to end, including programs and activities, security classification, and considerations for community release.

- **“Pen” Placement:** this determines which penitentiary the offender will be sent to.
- **Institutional Orientation:** This stage provides the offender with information about the prison they are being placed in. It covers his rights and responsibilities, facility rules, policies and procedures, the availability of educational, employment, spiritual and programming resources, and information on resolving disputes with CSC.

### The Correctional Plan:

Prison is about more than just idle time. In addition to good behaviour, inmates are expected to participate in the correctional process, the goal of which is to address the behaviour which brought them there and to prepare them for becoming a responsible citizen.

This process is guided by their Correctional Plan, which is determined at intake and monitored throughout their sentence. It identifies required programs and activities, and contains their Security Classification. It has a large impact on how they serve their time, and on where they will serve their sentence.

Here is how it works:

- **Programs and Activities:** During intake, CSC will develop a list of required programs and activities

designed to address the issues that contributed to the offender’s incarceration. Some of the program areas available include family violence, and substance abuse. Progress against their Correctional Plan is a primary consideration when deciding on applications for transfer, Private Family Visits, or Conditional Release. This is continually monitored by CSC.

- **Security Classification:** At intake, CSC assesses the risk each offender poses to himself, the public, and to the security of the institution, its staff and other inmates. This determines their security classification. The ultimate goal is to reduce their community classification leading up to community release so that they can be safely managed in the community.

An offender’s security classification is regularly reviewed. A reduction in classification is referred to as “cascading down” and results in the move to a less secure institution. An increase in classification results in moving to a more secure one. There are minimum, medium, and maximum security institutions.

### Progress Against the Correctional Plan: Why Bother?

Making progress against your Correctional Plan involves successfully completing all required programs and activities, and a reduction in security classification. Making

progress with their Correctional Plan can lead to the following things for an offender:

- **Living Conditions:** living conditions depend on the security classification of the institution. The higher the classification, the more restrictive the living conditions are. There are restrictions placed on freedom of movement, time spent in cells, and available jobs, programs and recreation activities.
- **Benefits:** progress is a consideration made in decisions regarding transfers, and visitation.
- **Program Availability:** program availability varies from prison to prison, so an offender may need to transfer in order to complete necessary programming.
- **Conditional Release Availability:** opportunity for Parole and Statutory Release are available at all prisons, but Unescorted Temporary Absences (UTA's) and Work Release (WR) are only available at medium and minimum security prisons.
- **Being Granted Parole:** Parole is the fastest way out of prison and all offenders are eligible to apply for it at some point in their sentence. The decisions of the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) are influenced by how much progress an offender has made against their Correctional Plan.
- **Being Accepted at a Halfway House:** When being evaluated for residency, many Halfway Houses look at an offender's progress to determine whether they are accepted there.

### Pen Placement:

At the completion of intake, an offender is sent to a prison that matches their security classification. The prison they are initially placed at is called their "parent institution."

Each new inmate receives an Inmate Orientation Handbook specific to that prison.

CSC does make attempts to place offenders in a prison closest to home and family but there are several factors which may prevent this from happening:

- **Safety and Security:** safety and security are paramount considerations when it comes to placement, and this can severely limit where an offender is placed.
- **Geography:** Many federal prisons in Alberta are located in remote areas. This can make it difficult to place offenders close to home.
- **Bed Space:** If there is no bed space available at a more ideally placed prison, they will need to wait for availability to open up before being able to transfer.
- **Program and Service Availability:** the programs or activities required for an offender to take may not be available at the prison closest to home.
- **Cultural Considerations:** Although all federal prison provide services in both official languages, English is the primary language in Alberta institutions. If an offender wishes to transfer to a primarily French-speaking prison they can apply to do so. CSC also runs a number of Aboriginal-oriented prisons.

## Transfer:

There are three types of transfers:

- **Voluntary Transfer:** a request can be made by an inmate to be moved to a different prison. He must meet necessary criteria for that prison.
- **Involuntary Transfer:** this is a decision to move an offender to another institution. This can be done for safety or security reasons.
- **Emergency Involuntary Transfer:** this is made by CSC in emergency situations due to urgent medical, mental health, and safety or security concerns.

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## Living in Prison

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Dealing with the correctional process can be both intimidating and frustrating for a family trying to support an offender in prison. Intimidating because of all of the policies and procedures, rules and regulations to remember. Frustrating because of how unnecessary some of the rules can seem. This section explains what daily life is like in a prison setting, and hopefully provides insight for the reason behind the rules and procedures governing everything that is done.

## Housing:

The type of housing an inmate lives in depends on the security level of the prison. Most prisons in Canada operate at one of three security levels: minimum, medium, and maximum. There are specialized facilities, however, that operate different parts of the facility at different security levels.

- **Minimum Security:** these are the least restrictive. Typically house inmates in more dormitory-style accommodations, rather than cells.
- **Medium Security:** more restrictive than minimum security. Inmates are housed in cells.
- **Maximum Security:** the most restrictive. Inmates are house in cells.

Most cells are designed to house only one inmate. In cases of over-crowding, cells often house two inmates. This is known as “double-bunking.”

Some prison will have specialized units with different conditions of confinement:

- **Aboriginal Pathways Unit:** address the cultural and spiritual needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis offenders.
- **Administrative Segregation Unit:** this is often referred to as “The Hole,” “Solitary Confinement,” or simply “Seg.” It is a unit intended to isolate the inmate from the general population (“Gen Pop”). Inmates in “seg” are housed in their cells 23 hours a day, with outings for exercise and showers. Access to programs and activities is very limited.
- **Drug-Free Unit:** has a zero tolerance policy towards drug use. An inmate has to submit to regular testing in order to live on such a unit.
- **Hospital Unit:** houses inmates receiving physical, mental, or palliative healthcare.

## Food:

In most prisons, meals are prepared by kitchen staff and served 3 times a day

usually in a cafeteria-style setting. Some minimum security units are oriented to independent living styles where inmates prepare their own meals. Tray service is provided to inmates housed in segregation or hospital units. Special accommodations are made for special diets for religious or diagnosed medical purposes.

### **Clothing:**

Basic clothing is issued to all inmates. At the beginning of their sentence, inmates are allowed to bring in some or their own appropriate clothing.

### **Housework and Laundry:**

Inmates are expected to keep their own cell or living area clean, as well as clean their own laundry. The rest of the unit is kept clean by Unit Cleaners. Laundry service is provided to inmates housed in segregation and hospital units.

### **Healthcare:**

Basic health, dental, vision, and mental healthcare are provided for all inmates. Healthcare and Emergency First Aid personnel are always kept on site. If an issue arises requiring care not offered at the specific institution then accommodations will be made to move that inmate to a facility that does provide it. This may be an outside facility, if required.

There is a greater prevalence of certain communicable diseases among people in the prison system, and CSC has programs in place to try to prevent the spread of them. These include educational programs, screening and testing, and by making harm reduction supplies available. Condoms, water-based lubricant and bleach are available to all inmates. The Methadone Maintenance Program is also available.

### **Daily Routine – Work, Programming, and Education:**

During the day, inmates are in work, school, or programming. Those without required programming to attend are expected to maintain a job in the prison.

For most offenders these jobs entail working in the kitchen, laundry, or with CSC's Corcan Industries. Some inmates are allowed Work Releases into the community, returning to the prison at night.

Basic education and upgrading are available in federal institutions. Inmates who have not graduated High School are required to attend schooling. There are also some opportunities for distance or correspondence courses from post-secondary institutions.

### **Recreation and Social Life:**

Inmates are granted opportunities to participate in a variety of recreational and social programs. Opportunities vary from prison-to-prison but include access to gyms, outdoor field, running track, hobby rooms, and libraries.

Spiritual services are also offered by a number of faith groups who regularly make visits, as well as CSC's Chaplaincy Services.

A number of cultural, special interest, and support groups also make visits, such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

### **Money:**

At the start of an offender's sentence, a trust account is set up for them.

- Any money that an inmate brings into the institution or is given to him by his family is deposited into this account.

- Inmates are paid for the work they do in prison. Some older inmates also receive pension earnings from pension funds they paid into before being incarcerated. Each inmate is charged for room and board, which is deducted from his pay, and the balance is added to his account.
- At the end of offender's incarceration, the balance left on his account is provided to him.

### About Pensions

Private Pension benefits (pension funds offenders paid into while working) are paid to offenders once they become eligible to receive them. Public Pension Benefits (CPP, OAS, and GIS) are slightly different.

- **CPP:** this is a public pension plan paid for by all working Canadians who earn enough to pay CPP premiums. Only workers who pay into CPP will receive CPP benefits once eligible. Even at the maximum pay scale, inmates earn too little to be eligible to pay into CPP while incarcerated. However, if they have previously contributed to CPP, they will receive CPP benefits once they become old enough.
- **OAS and GIS:** these are public pension benefits available to the elderly. Elderly offenders are not eligible to receive OAS or GIS benefits while incarcerated. A person who is receiving them, and is then subsequently incarcerated, has those benefits suspended until release.

### Canteen:

Each inmate has a canteen, usually owned and operated by the inmates where they can buy things such as hygiene items, snack foods, soft drinks, and postage stamps with the money they have held in their trust account.

## Staying Connected

Offenders who have the support of friends and family, especially while incarcerated, are more likely to succeed past the completion of their sentence than those who have not received that support.

- All of us, whether in prison or not, need support during the difficult times in our lives. Being incarcerated is particularly stressful, though. Offenders who receive that support from friends and family report lower levels of stress and depression which gives them the opportunity to focus their efforts and concentration on their Correctional Plan and learning new skills.
- If offenders do not have a circle of support to rely on outside of prison then they will begin to build that support inside the prison. There are groups inside of prisons who target people who are vulnerable and recruit them for their own benefit. These circles tend to reinforce criminal behaviour and attitudes and are not conducive to learning the skills and making the progress necessary to lead a crime-free lifestyle.

- One of the benefits of having a positive circle of support is that they hold us accountable. Having that support can be a strong motivating force for making positive progress.

It is easy to imagine some of the stresses your loved one will be going through while they are incarcerated, but there is a separate set of challenges for their family and friends on the outside.

- **Expense:** travelling expenses and the cost for phone calls can add up. Since he is not paying these bills it may be difficult for him to realize how much of a financial burden it can be on you. It is important to be honest and set reasonable limits and expectations on your level of contact and visitation if this poses an issue for you. Having them missing from your lives is stressful enough without adding bills you cannot afford to pay. A less expensive alternative to phone calls and travelling is sending letters to each other.
- **Legal Issues:** do not try to visit if there are Court Orders restricting you from contacting each other. Circumstances where this may take place include if you are a co-accused, or No-Contact Orders.
- **Time:** the effort put into maintaining contact with each other can be time-consuming and he may not realize how much that time may cut into things like holding down a job, maintaining your household, and taking care of yourself. Again, it is important to be clear and honest with him and to set reasonable limits, and allow him to see your perspective.

- **Stress:** visiting prison can be intimidating and stressful especially when the experience is new and unfamiliar to you. It's important to remember that the stress that comes from new and unfamiliar territory will usually subside given time. Secondly, remember that there is no "right way" of staying connected with someone you care about in prison. Acknowledge and honour your own feelings and do not expect to do more than you can do.

### **Sending Letters:**

Letters from you are allowed to be brought into prison, and letters from him are allowed to be sent out.

- When addressing the envelope, make sure to include the name of the offender and the postal address of the prison. If he has moved, the prison will try to forward the letter to him, but always include your name and return address.
- Do not put any items in the envelope besides the letter or a card. All mail, except that coming from lawyers or the government, is inspected for contraband. The offender also cannot include anything else in the envelope. All outgoing mail is checked as well.
- If the offender is no longer at a particular prison staff will try to transfer the letter to the correct prison. If he is out on Conditional Release, then it will be forwarded to his Parole Officer. If he has reached his Warrant Expiry, then it will be returned to you.

**Sending Packages:**

You can send personal property to offenders, but only at the beginning of their sentence, within 30 days of reaching their Parent Institution. For specific information on sending property, contact the institution they are being housed in.

**Sending Money:**

Inmates can receive money from family members and friends, which is deposited into their trust account. For specific information on how to do this, contact the institution your loved one is being housed in.

**Phone Calls:**

All inmates, whether in the general population or in segregation can make phone calls from prison. They cannot, however, receive calls.

- Before an inmate can call a phone number they need to add it to their approved phone number list by filling out an application. Staff will confirm that the person named in the application approves having contact with the inmate. They can maintain a maximum 40 phone numbers on this list. The phone system will not accept 1-800 or 1-888 numbers.
- The cost of a phone call can be billed to either the inmate or to the one receiving the phone call.
- All calls to family and friends can and may be monitored by staff.

**Visiting:**

There are several rules that need to be followed when visiting with an inmate. If they are broken some of the consequences include:

- The visitation being cut short.

- Only being allowed screened visits rather than open visits.
- Being denied entry to the prison.
- Visiting privileges being suspended.
- If you have broken the law, not just prison rules, you can be charged with a criminal offence.

There are several reasons for so many rules being in place about visitation in prison:

- The visiting area is a busy place full of other inmates' family, friends, children etc. and they all want a pleasant visiting experience. A code of conduct and dress maintains this atmosphere.
- Safety is a primary consideration. Contraband does get smuggled into prison by being passed from visitor to inmate. Additionally, not everyone who wants to visit an inmate wishes him well, and they may wish him harm. For this reason, a number of security precautions are in place:
  - All visitors are thoroughly searched.
  - There are strict rules about what a visitor can bring into and take out of prison.
  - The conduct and movement of visitors is closely monitored.
  - Before visiting an inmate, you need to be approved by that inmate to be added to their Approved Visitors List.
  - You cannot visit anyone else in the prison, even the person at the next table, unless you are on their Approved List.
  - Staff will also check your I.D. to make sure you are who you say you are.

All inmates, in general population or in segregation are approved visitors. There are, however, restrictions on inmates who are in the Intake and Assessment Centre. For further information about visiting someone in intake, contact the Assessment Centre directly.

All federal prisons offer both regular visits and private visits.

### Regular Visits:

Regular visits take place in the Visiting Area during regular visiting hours. Visits can be either open or closed.

- **Open Visits:** also known as “Contact Visits,” these take place around the Visiting Area with no glass separating the inmate from the visitor. Physical Contact is allowed.
- **Closed Visits:** also known as “Screened Visits” or “Restricted Visits,” these take place in the Visiting Area with a glass barrier between the inmate and visitor. No physical contact is allowed, and you must talk through a phone.

Visiting outside of regular hours may be accommodated for out-of-town visitors and other special circumstances, such as a death in the family.

Visiting an inmate is a 3-step process:

- Be added to the inmates Approved Visitor’s List.
- Book a visit at their prison.
- Attend the visit.

This is the general procedure for regular visits at federal institutions, however rules may vary from prison-to-prison so it is best to get information specific to your loved one’s prison by contacting Visits and

Correspondence and asking for information on their visiting guidelines.

### Step 1: Being Approved to Visit

There are several steps to being added to an inmates Approved Visitors List:

- Fill the application form called “Visiting Application and Information Form (Inmate) (CSC/SCC 653E)” It is the inmate’s responsibility to mail this to you, however it is also available on CSC’s website ([www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)), under to the Forms section.

If any children (18 years and younger) will be accompanying you on your visit, you need to add them to the form and complete the waiver form titled “Visiting Application and Information Form (Inmate) Child Safety Waiver (CSC/SCC 0653-01E)” Anyone over the age of 18 has to fill out their own form.

- Mail the form to the prison where the offender is serving along with two recent photographs of yourself.
- CSC will review the application, perform a criminal record check on you and inform the inmate of whether or not you have been added to their list. It is the inmate’s responsibility to let you know.
- Make sure the information you put on the form is true and accurate, and inform the prison of any changes, such as a change in address, or if you’re added to another inmate’s visiting list. Failure to do so can result in your visiting privileges being suspended.



- If an inmate moves, his visitor list goes with him. It is not necessary to re-apply.
- You must re-apply every two years in order to remain on an inmate's visitor's list.

### Step 2: Booking a Visit

Some prisons allow visits without booking ahead but most prisons allow at least 24 hours' notice. For specific rules on arranging visits contact the prison you loved one is housed in. Contact information for all prisons in Alberta is included in the resources section of this guide.

### Step 3: Attending a Visit

Before departing for a visit there are several things you need to make sure of first:

- **Lockdown:** if a prison is on lockdown, then all visits are suspended until the lockdown is lifted. During lockdown, all inmates are confined to their cells and no one is allowed in or out of the prison. Phone contact is also restricted during this time, and all pre-arranged visits are cancelled. Staff will make attempts to contact scheduled visitors but it is good practice to call ahead yourself to make sure you don't waste a long drive.
- **Identification:** make sure you bring proper government-issued photo I.D. with you on each visit you make.
- **Money:** You are allowed to bring in approximately \$8.00 in coins (no bills) to be used to purchase food and beverages from the vending machine available in the Visiting Area. For an exact figure on how much you can bring in, contact your loved one's specific prison.

- **Other Articles:** at most prisons, you are not allowed to bring anything else into the Visiting Area without prior express approval from prison staff, except for some supplies for babies or children such as food, diapers, or homework. Contact the specific prison you will be visiting for exact rules on this.
- **Dress Code:** both the inmate and his visitor must be dressed appropriately.
  - Do not wear clothing that is sexually suggestive or revealing. Footwear is also required at all times.
  - Any clothing bearing wording or symbols that could be interpreted as racist, contain profanity, or are otherwise offensive are not allowed.
  - Clothing displaying drug or crime-related material are not allowed.

When you arrive for your visit there are several things to consider:

- **Identification:** always have valid, government-issued photo I.D. for each visit you make.
- **Lockers:** most prisons provide lockers to hold your belongings, like your purse, cell phone, or jackets etc.
- **Security Check:** you will be required to walk through a metal detector, and may be subject to a drug inspection by a Drug Detector Dog, an Ion Scanner, or a frisk search. If you refuse to submit to any of these you will be denied entry.

- **Clean and Sober:** anyone under the influence of any kind of intoxicant will be denied entry into the prison.

During your visit, there are more things to consider. The Visiting Area must maintain an appropriate visiting atmosphere, and there are several guidelines to keep it in place:

- **Affection:** shaking hands, embracing, hugging, and appropriate kissing are permitted. Prolonged necking, kissing or fondling are not tolerated.
- **Emotions:** raising your voice, hitting or fighting are not tolerated.
- **Children:** you must be supervising your children at all times, and must control their behaviour to maintain a quiet, comfortable atmosphere.
- **Contraband:** bringing in any unauthorized items (drugs, weapons, cellphones, etc.) is prohibited.

### Private Family Visits:

Private Family Visits (PFV) take place in special family visiting units located at the prison and can last up to 72 hours. Anyone considered family (spouses, common-laws, children, parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) can participate in a PFV. PFV's can take place as often as every two months, depending on space availability.

Contact the Visits and Correspondence unit of the specific prison you will be visiting for specific information on PFV's.

### Visiting with Children:

Maintaining contact with their children is important to those serving prison sentences, and is important to the children as well.

There are specific guidelines on bringing children in to visit an inmate.

- Visiting Areas do accommodate children, and some include toys.
- All underage children need to be accompanied by an adult at all times, provided all the necessary paperwork is completed.
- Supervision of any children in your care must be maintained for the duration of your visit. Failure to do so will result in your visit being cut short.
- Consider not bringing your children the first couple times you visit. This allows you to familiarize yourself with visiting practices and procedures without the stress and distraction of caring for your children. This also allows you to prepare your children for their first visit with the information you have.

### Contraband:

Bringing contraband into a prison is against visitation rules and, in some cases, against the law. Bringing in contraband can:

- Result in your visits being suspended or restricted to closed visitation.
- Result in criminal charges for yourself.
- The inmate can also be charged, lose privileges, or potentially be moved up in Security Classification. This may have impacts on his chances for Parole.

Situations can arise in prison that can make an inmate or their visitor feel compelled to bring in contraband. Manipulation, threats, violence, and blackmail can occur to extort people into becoming “mules” bringing

certain items into the institution. It is important to consider:

- There is rarely ever “just one time.” Cooperating with them once tells someone that you are the kind of person that will give in, and if you do so without being caught, a dependable “mule.”
- Once they know those two things, the inmate and their visitor will likely remain targets. Cooperating end up leading you to more trouble, not less.

How to address the problem:

- **Talk to prison staff:** they have experience and training in how to deal with the situation and will know how to help you, including increased protection for an inmate, if required.
- **Talk to the police:** they can arrange for your safety in the community.
- **Tip Line:** call at 1-866-955-9550 to leave an anonymous tip about contraband in prison or about threats to someone’s safety in prison.

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## Prison Troubleshooting

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### Talking to Someone at the Prison:

You may speak to either an inmate’s Institutional Parole Officer (IPO) or the Unit Manager about your family member. They must first receive permission from the inmate to speak to you about them. If they do not receive this permission they can also speak about them in the most general terms about information that is available to the public.

### What to do Where There’s a Family

#### Emergency:

When there is a serious incident or a death in the family and need to contact an inmate to inform them you need to phone the prison they are housed in and explain the situation to staff who will follow procedure from there.

#### What to do if you’ve Lost Contact:

If you need to get in touch with a loved in prison but do not know where they are you can contact CSC’s Regional Headquarters for assistance in locating them.

#### CSC Regional Headquarters – Prairie Region

3427 Faithful Avenue

PO Box 9223

Saskatoon, SK S7K 3X5

Phone: 306-659-9300

Fax: 306-659-9210

#### Disputes:

**Between Inmates:** disputes can arise between inmates for a variety of reasons, including simple misunderstandings, perceived or actual insults, or unpaid debts. There are several avenues to resolve these disputes:

- Inmate Committee/Peer Counsellors: these are in-prison position staffed by inmates who help resolve disputes by acting as a line of communication between inmates and staff, and provide information about programs, services, harm-reduction, and mediating disputes.
- Protective Custody: also known as “Check in”

- **Transfer:** an inmate can be transferred, either voluntarily or involuntarily for concerns to their safety.

**Disputes with CSC:** If an offender has an issue with a decision made by CSC, there are several options for handling it:

- **Third Party:** inviting a third party to advocate on your behalf such as an Inmate Committee, Peer Counselling Office, a lawyer, or an agency such as enCompass Community Safety Agency.
- **Filing a Grievance:** how to do this is outlined in the Inmate Handbook provided by each institution as well as in CD81, and in the Offender Complaint and Grievance Procedures Manual made available in each prison library.
- **Office of the Correctional Investigator:** an independent body, separate from CSC, and serves as ombudsman for federal offenders.

### Office of the Correctional Investigator

PO Box 3421, Station “D”  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6L4  
Toll Free: 1-877-885-8848  
Email: [org@oci-bec.gc.ca](mailto:org@oci-bec.gc.ca)  
Web: [www.oci-bec.gc.ca](http://www.oci-bec.gc.ca)

- **Canadian Human Rights Commission:** if a complaint is related to discrimination or harassment you may file a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

### Canadian Human Rights Commission

344 Salter Street, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 1E1  
Toll Free: 1-888-214-1090  
Web: [www.chrc-ccdp.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca)

### Harm Reduction:

Safer Sex Supplies and Safer Drug Practices Supplies are available in all federal prisons. Condoms, water-based lubricants, and bleach are available to all offenders without needing to ask staff. The Methadone Maintenance Program is also available.

### Crisis and Suicide Intervention:

Prison time can be stressful, and it is important to know that it is especially stressful at the beginning of the sentence, the end of the sentence, and the first two weeks after being released. This has the potential to lead to circumstances of crisis or, worse, suicide.

- All correctional staff take the issue of suicide seriously and are trained to detect signs of suicidal thoughts, and on how to intervene when they are present. All offenders are regularly checked on to ensure their well-being, and staff receive training on emergency first aid should an attempt occur.
- Inmates take suicide seriously. It is part of prison culture to take care of fellow inmates and will encourage one another to seek out help when it is needed.
- You can help. If you have reason to believe someone you know in prison is having thoughts of suicide tell

prison staff. Talk to his Institutional Parole Officer (IPO). If you cannot get a hold of them, phone the prison’s main switchboard and inform them.

Crisis Resources

Adult Community Urgent Services and Stabilization Team..... 780-342-7777

Distress Line..... 780-482-HELP(4357)

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## Conditional Release: Parole and More

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There are two conventional ways out of prison:

- Be released at the end of your sentence (“reach your warrant” or “max out”).
- Be granted some form of Conditional Release.

### Truth in Sentencing?

There is skepticism in the community about releasing offenders into the community instead of leaving them in prison until the very end of their sentence and many wonder why our system even allows it. Why? Because it works, and keeps communities safer.

Research shows that offenders given a more gradual, and transitional release back into the community are more likely to remain law-abiding. This is what Conditional Release does. It graduates offenders to less controlled forms of supervision allowing

offenders the opportunity to demonstrate change in the community in preparation for release.

When granted a Conditional Release, an offender agrees to abide by conditions placed on him by the Parole Board of Canada. These conditions can place restrictions on various things, including where they live, who they can associate with, where they can go and what they can do. Any failure to follow these conditions can result in a suspension and subsequent revocation of their release, and return back to prison.

### Escorted Temporary Absences (ETA):

A temporary absence from the institution escorted by CSC staff.

**Who is eligible:** All offenders.

**When are they eligible:** At any time during their sentence.

**Example:** needing to attend a medical centre for treatment.

### Unescorted Temporary Absence (UTA):

A temporary absence from the institution without a CSC escort.

**Who is eligible:** Only minimum and medium security offenders.

**When are they eligible:** Depends on length of sentence:

- 2-3 year sentence: eligible after 6 months.
- 3 years or longer: eligible after 1/6<sup>th</sup> of sentence.
- Life or Indeterminate sentence: eligible 3 years prior to Parole Eligibility Date (PED).

**Example:** for medical, administrative, compassionate, or humanitarian reasons.

### Work Release (WR):

A temporary absence where the offender is allowed to go to work in the community (paid or unpaid work), while under supervision of CSC, usually returning to the institution at night.

**Who is eligible:** Only minimum and medium security offenders.

**When are they eligible:** Once they are eligible for UTA's.

**Example:** an offender may be granted access to the community to help with sandbagging during a flood emergency.

### Day Parole (DP):

A release when an offender is allowed to leave the facility during the day to participate in community-based activities, returning nightly to a Halfway House or an institution. Prepares an offender for an expanded release such as Full Parole or Statutory Release.

**Who is eligible:** All offenders.

**When are they eligible:** Depends on length of sentence:

- 2-3 year sentence: eligible after 1/6<sup>th</sup> of sentence.
- 3 years or longer: eligible 6 months prior to the Parole Eligibility Date (PED).
- Life or Indeterminate: eligible 3 years prior to PED.

**Example:** an offender can leave a Halfway House or institution and go to work, and other community-oriented activities before returning in the evening.

### Full Parole (FP):

A permanent absence where the offender serves the rest of their sentence living in the community, still under CSC supervision. In some cases under certain circumstances, offenders on FP may still be required to reside at a Halfway House.

**Who is eligible:** All offenders.

**When are they eligible:** Depends on length of sentence:

- Most sentences: eligible after serving 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sentence *or* 7 years, whichever is less. However, at the time of sentencing, the Judge may set FP eligibility at 1/2 of the sentence or 10 years, whichever is less.
- Life sentence for High Treason or First Degree Murder: Eligible after 25 years of sentence.
- Life sentence for Second Degree Murder: Eligible after serving between 10-25 years of sentence, whenever their PED was set at the time of sentencing.
- Indeterminate: eligible after 7 years of sentence.

### Statutory Release Date (SRD, “Stat Release,” or “Stat”):

This is a legislated release date. By law, most offenders need to serve the remaining 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of their sentence in the community, under CSC supervision. Some offenders released on the SRD are required to reside in a Halfway House, either until their Warrant Expiry, or until the residency condition is lifted by the PBC.

**Who is eligible:** All offenders, except those serving a life or indeterminate sentence.

**When are they eligible:** For those not serving a life or indeterminate sentence, 2/3<sup>rd</sup>'s.

**Calculating Conditional Release Dates:**

That date when an offender is eligible for Parole or Statutory Release is determined by the laws governing his sentence:

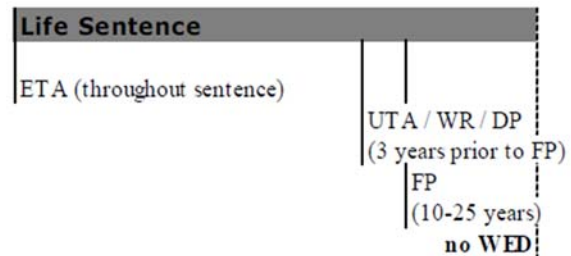
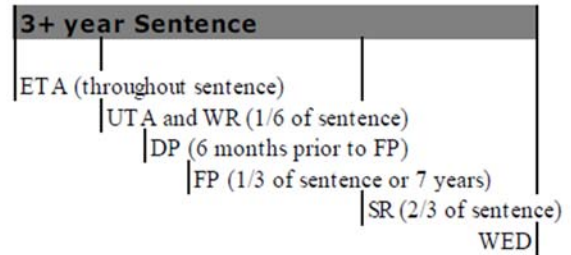
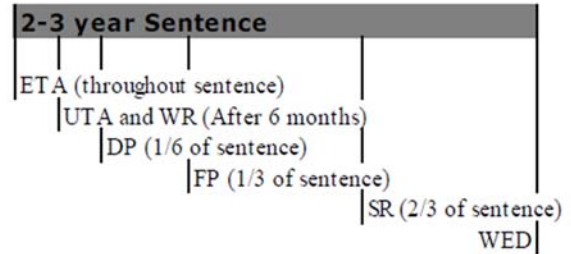
Conditional Release dates are calculated on the net sentence after any credit is given for Pre-Trial Custody (“dead time”).

There are additional considerations to make when calculating Conditional Release dates, such as whether there are any concurrent sentences and whether the offender was under a previous sentence when the offence occurred.

There are certain offences where the Judge may set Parole Eligibility at 1/2 of their sentence instead of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the sentence.

The easiest and most accurate way to determine these dates is to get in contact from you loved one and/or their Case Management Team (CMT).

**Conditional Release Eligibility Timeline:**



- ETA - Escorted Temporary Absence
- UTA - Unescorted Temporary Absence
- WR - Work Release
- DP - Day Parole
- FP - Full Parole
- SR - Statutory Release
- WED - Warrant Expiry Date

**Living in a Halfway House**

When someone is granted a Conditional Release, they may be given a condition to reside in a Halfway House (Community Residential Facility, CRF). It is not a prison, but it is not just a place to live either. Halfway Houses are designed to function as bridge between prison life and community living, so they have features of both.

Any resident of a Halfway House must follow the rules of their facility in addition to following the conditions of their release, and the Halfway House still will closely monitor residents to make sure they are adhering to the rules and their conditions. Residents are provided with a Resident Handbook and given a full Intake process informing them of all rules and regulations of the Halfway House. A Caseworker will also be assigned to their file to work with them one-on-one with their reintegration.

### **Housing:**

Most Halfway Houses (CRF's) are small apartment buildings and large houses and are located in residential areas. Residents will be housed in rooms, sometimes two to a room, one in the bedroom/one in the living room, or some single occupancy situations.

### **Food:**

Some Halfway Houses prepare food for their residents and serve it communally. Others will store food on the premises and allow resident access to it to prepare themselves, and others will simply provide their residents with a grocery allowance and allow them to buy their food at a local grocery store and then prepare themselves.

### **Clothing:**

Offenders will arrive with any clothing they had in their possession in prison. They may be allowed to have visitors or community members come by and give them clothing, and some CRF's keep clothing stored for residents in need. Otherwise, they will be directed to other community resources that provide clothing.

### **Housework and Laundry:**

Residents of CRFs are expected to maintain the upkeep of their own living areas, as well as do their own laundry. At most Halfway Houses, the other household chores are spread out amongst all residents.

### **Healthcare:**

Offenders should have been working on their Alberta Health Card application while in the institution. If they did not do so it is their responsibility to get themselves covered. CSC may cover the cost of some medications in some circumstances for a certain amount of time.

### **Daily Routine: Work, Programming, and Education:**

All Halfway Houses are different. Some are more program-focused and may offer intensive substance abuse treatment, for example. In such a House, all residents will need to participate in "group" like other Recovery Houses.

Most Halfway Houses have more of a focus on reintegrating offenders back into the community. Like most other members of the community they are able to take part in schooling, including post-secondary, work, and other community-oriented activities. Staff are on-hand to assist residents with finding these resources in order to help with their reintegration.

### **Recreation and Social Life:**

Most Halfway Houses offer something in the way of recreational or social life. Within the House itself there may be exercise facilities, a common room with television, games, and reading materials, as well as organized social events like holiday dinners. Residents are encouraged to seek out



appropriate local programs they can participate in whether it's a House of Worship, a local support group, or a local gym. Discounted gym passes may be available to residents depending on the community.

### Money:

When an offender moves to a Halfway House, the balance of the trust account they maintained while in prison is released to him. Staff may assist residents with setting up a bank account.

Residents are not charged room and board while living in a Halfway House and they are not paid a daily stipend.

Residents are not eligible for welfare while residing at a Halfway House.

Residents that have the ability to work are expected to be working, seeking out work, or in school or training. Those unable to work due to age may receive income from pension plans they paid into before being incarcerated.

### Restrictions:

Halfway Houses have their own set of rules to maintain the good order of the facility and monitor its residents. Here are some:

- **Curfews:** Halfway House residents may be subject to curfews. Failure to report for these curfews can result in serious consequences, including suspension.

When an offender first arrives at a Halfway House they may be subject to a 24/7 curfew that does not allow them to leave the facility for the first few days to a week of their residency, or at least severely limits

what community access they are given. This orientation period allows them to familiarize themselves with the CRF, its residents, staff, and the community.

- **Searches:** CRF staff do possess legal authority under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to conduct searches of the CRF premises, including resident property (their rooms, vehicles, cellphones, laptops, including hard drives etc.)
- **Reporting to CSC:** If staff detect any breaches of a resident's conditions of release, or if they perceive any increase in their risk to re-offend this will be reported to CSC.

Halfway Houses may revoke their support for residency if a resident becomes overly disruptive, or becomes unmanageable in-house.

Always remember, despite the fact your loved one is out of prison, Halfway House living has its own set of restrictions and stresses. It is tempting to think that you finally have your friend or partner back, totally and completely, but they are still living life closely supervised. It is a good form of support not to make them lose sight of their Correctional Plan and progress by expecting too much of them.

### Staying in Touch:

Halfway Houses allow letters, phone calls, and visits. Check ahead for visiting guidelines.

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## Release and Reintegration

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When an offender is released he has to re-integrate both back into his family unit which has, in some cases, learned to function without him, and back into his community and society at large. Many times their community and society has changed in radical ways since being incarcerated. To imagine this, just imagine all that has changed just in the technology we use and how confusing a now everyday term like “Online Banking” may be to someone who has just spent the last 25 years of their life behind bars. Without actually being out in society and living through its changes first-hand offenders have an uphill battle trying to follow trends and changes.

Your friend our loved one may not be facing as big a challenge as the one described above, but his release will not come without its own set of challenges. As family member you will not be immune to these challenges. There are 7 areas of concern where offenders may run into challenges:

1. His social network and associates.
2. Employment and education.
3. Substance abuse issues.
4. Emotional and mental health issues.
5. Attitude and thinking patterns.
6. Community functioning.
7. Family functioning and dynamics.

There are resources available to help you and your family deal with the challenges of reintegration:

- **Time’s Up: A Reintegration Toolkit for Families.**

Lloyd Withers, Marg Holland and Elizabeth Martin. Canadian Families and Corrections Network, 2005.

ISBN 0-9688923-5-3

[www.cfcn-racfd.org/text/timesup.pdf](http://www.cfcn-racfd.org/text/timesup.pdf)

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## Support for them, for you, and the kids.

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### Support for Them:

There are several community agencies that bring their services into Alberta prisons in addition to what they provide in their respective communities upon your loved one’s release. A full list of these agencies and services can be found in the Inmate Handbook each offender receives, and contact information for Alberta prisons can be found in the Resources section of this guide. Here is a list of resources that will provide services to offender in the institution and/or out in the community.

- Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous
- Community Mental Health Initiative
- Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer
- Ethno-Cultural Liaison Officer
- Religious programs for a variety of faith groups.

### Support for You:

#### Information:

- Canadian Families and Corrections Network: provides information and referral service to families and offenders:  
Toll free (English): 1-888-371-2326  
Toll free (French): 1-877-875-1285  
Web: [www.cfcn-rcafd.org](http://www.cfcn-rcafd.org)

- Encompass Community Safety Agency: offers referrals, support and assistance to families of offenders:  
Phone: 780-428-7590  
Web: [www.myencompass.ca](http://www.myencompass.ca)
- Children of Inmates:  
Provides articles and information, and encourages dialogue regarding children whose parents are incarcerated.  
Twitter Handle: @KidsOfInmates  
Web: [www.childrenofinmates.org](http://www.childrenofinmates.org)
- Correctional Service Canada: “Quick Facts” page provides links to publications with information on corrections  
Web: [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)

### Support for the Kids:

Having a parent go to prison can be stressful on their children. The parent of caregiver left behind can begin to feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities which can result in their child or children feeling left out and not listened to. Oftentimes there is a taboo on speaking about a family member in prison, so any dialogue is forbidden. These leaves the potential for children to cope with their feelings in unhealthy ways. So what can you do?

- Tell them the truth. Children are often more resilient than we give them credit for and can deal with the situation, given they are told what the situation is.
- Find an adult they can talk to. Working their feelings out through dialogue will prevent them from acting out. If that avenue for dialogue can't be you, try to find someone else. Uncles, aunts, friends, spiritual leaders, and programs in the

communities are other opportunities for support.

- Allow your child to maintain contact with the incarcerated parent. As explained in the Staying Connected section (Page 13) of this guide, visits with children are accommodated, and communication through letters and phone calls is possible.
- Help your child feel normal. There are resources available to help children see that they are not alone in their situation.

### Resources for Caregivers:

- The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated – Children of Prisoners Library: based in the USA, this site includes a library of information about children with incarcerated parents.
- Web: [www.fcnetwork.org/resources/library](http://www.fcnetwork.org/resources/library)

### Books for Kids:

- **Jeffrey Goes to Jail**: published by the Canadian Families and Corrections Network. Request a free copy by contacting the CFCN  
Toll free (English): 1-888-371-2326  
Toll free (French): 1-877-875-1285  
Web: [www.cfcn-rcafd.org](http://www.cfcn-rcafd.org)  
Email: [national@cfcn-rcafd.org](mailto:national@cfcn-rcafd.org)
- **Let's Talk About When a Parent Goes to Jail**: by Maureen Wittbold. PowerKids Press. 1997.  
ISBN 0823950433, 9780823950430
- **Visiting Day**: by Jaqueline Woodson. Scholastic Incorporated. 2002.  
ISBN 0590400053, 9780590400053

- **The Same Stuff as Stars:** by Katherine Patterson. 2002.
- **Help for Kids! Understanding Your Feelings About Having a Parent in Prison or Jail: For Kids Ages Six and Older:** by Carole Gesme, Michele Kopfmann. Pine Press. 1993.  
ISBN 096337611X, 9780963376114
- **The Scholar and Feminist Online Children of Incarcerated Parents – Recommended Reading List:** based in the USA, this page lists books written for children of incarcerated parents.  
Web:  
[www.sfonline.barnard.edu/children/reading.htm](http://www.sfonline.barnard.edu/children/reading.htm)
- **What Should I Say?** by Dr. Sandra Keller. SkyBlue Publishers. 2011.  
ISBN 978-0-9738706-2-6
- **Should I Be Sad?** by Dr. Sandra Keller. SkyBlue Publishers. 2011.  
ISBN 978-0-9738706-1-9
- **Daddy’s Coming Home!** by Prison Fellowship of Canada. 2013.  
Jayeness Inc.  
ISBN 978-0-9918491-0-9

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## Resources

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### Community Resources:

#### Help Right NOW:

AB211 (Info on All Services, 24/7)..... 211  
 Distress Line:  
 Edmonton & Area.....780-482-HELP  
 AB (call no charge): .....1-800-232-7288  
 Seniors Abuse Helpline:.....780-454-8888  
 Suicide Grief Support Program....780-732-6654

Police, Fire, Ambulance: .....911

### Aboriginal Persons Resources:

Aboriginal Counselling Services of Alberta  
 .....780-448-0378  
 Canadian Native Friendship Centre  
 .....780-761-1900  
 Ben Calf Robe Society.....780-477-6648  
 Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society  
 .....780-481-3451  
 The Edmonton Native Healing Centre  
 .....780-482-5522  
 Metis Urban Housing Corporation. .780-452-6440  
 Native Counselling Services of Alberta  
 .....780-423-2141

### Addictions:

Alberta Health Services-Addiction Services:  
 Addiction Helpline (24/7). ....1-866-332-2322  
 Addictions Recovery Centre. ....780-427-4291  
 Adult Counselling. ....780-427-2736

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). ....780-424-5900  
 Cocaine Anonymous (CA) ..... 780-425-2715  
 George Spady Centre Society.....780-424-8335  
 Narcotics Anonymous (NA) ..... 780-421-4429  
 Problem Gambling Resource Network:  
 .....780-461-1259

### Food:

Edmonton’s Food Bank: .....780-425-4190  
 To find Free Meals phone 211

### Government:

Alberta Ombudsman (Edmonton).....780-427-2756  
 Government of Alberta (All AB Government  
 Services).....780-310-0000  
 Government of Canada.....1-800-O-CANADA  
 Office of the Correctional Investigator  
 .....1-877-885-8848

### Health:

Alberta Health Services (AHS):  
 Health Link AB (24/7).....780-408-LINK  
 Mental Health Help Line (24/7).....1-877-303-2642

### Housing:

Emergency Shelters:  
 Hope Mission (Men & Women).....780-422-2018

Herb Jamison Centre (Men; 18-60yrs)  
 .....780-429-3470  
 E4C-WEAC (Women 18yrs and up)  
 .....780-423-5302  
 For more agencies that help with housing/transitional  
 housing call 211

Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board  
 (Edmonton).....780-496-5959

### Immigrant:

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA):  
 .....780-474-8445  
 Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers  
 .....780-424-7709

### Legal:

Legal Aid Alberta.....1-866-845-3425  
 Legal Aid Edmonton.....780-427-7575  
 Student Legal Services.....780-492-2226  
 The Law Society Lawyer Referral Service:  
 .....1-800-661-1095  
 Parole Board of Canada National Office  
 .....613-954-7474  
 Prairies Regional Office (Alberta) .....780-495-3404

### Mental Health:

Alberta Health Services  
 Mental Health Help Line (24/7).....1-877-303-2642  
 Community Urgent Services & Stabilization Team  
 .....780-342-7777  
 Canadian Mental Health Association  
 Edmonton Region .....780-414-6300  
 Distress Line (In Edmonton).....780-482-HELP  
 Distress Line (Outside of greater Edmonton  
 region).....1-800-232-7288  
 Suicide Grief Support Program ....780-732-6654

### Transportation:

Edmonton Transit (Within Edmonton).....311  
 Edmonton Transit (Outside Edmonton City Limits)  
 .....780-442-5311

### Financial Assistance:

Government of Alberta:  
 Alberta Supports Centre (Info Line)  
 .....780-644-9992  
 Income Support Contact Centre (24/7)  
 .....780-644-5135  
 Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped

(AISH) .....780-415-6300

### Youth:

Alberta Health Services-Addiction Services  
 Youth Counselling (under 19 yrs) ...780-422-7383  
 Youth Detox .....780-644-3627

### Organizations you'll find in Prison:

Encompass – Edmonton.....780-428-7590  
 #101, 10010-105 St, Edmonton, AB T5J 1C4  
 Online: [www.myencompass.ca](http://www.myencompass.ca)

Calgary John Howard Society.....403-266-4566  
 917-9<sup>th</sup> Ave South East, Calgary, AB T2G 0S5  
 Online: [www.calgaryjohnhoward.org](http://www.calgaryjohnhoward.org)

Other John Howard Society Offices in AB  
 Grand Prairie.....780-532-0373  
 Lethbridge.....403-327-8202  
 Medicine Hat.....403-526-5916  
 Red Deer.....403-343-1770  
 Online: [www.johnhoward.ab.ca](http://www.johnhoward.ab.ca)

### Correctional Service of Canada:

#### Community Corrections in AB:

Community Corrections is responsible for  
 supervising all offenders on Conditional Release  
 (parole, Statutory Release, etc.)

Calgary Area Parole.....403-292-5505  
 101-225 Manning Road North East  
 Calgary, AB, T2E 2P5  
 Fax: 403-292-5510

Drumheller Parole.....403-820-6078  
 PO Box 3000, Highway 9  
 Drumheller, AB, T0J 0Y0  
 Fax: 403-820-6182

Edmonton Area Parole.....780-495-4900  
 9530-101 Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Edmonton, AB, T5H 0B3  
 Fax: 780-495-4975

Edmonton Rural Parole.....780-495-4900  
 9530-101 Ave, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
 Edmonton, AB, T5H 0B3  
 Fax: 780-495-4975

Grand Prairie Parole.....780-538-8905  
 PO Box 23250  
 Grand Prairie, AB, T8V 7G7  
 Fax: 780-814-6867

Lethbridge Parole.....403-382-4780  
 704-4 Ave South, Room 401  
 Lethbridge, AB, T1J 0N8  
 Fax: 403-382-4781

Medicine Hat Parole.....403-528-3090  
 770 6 Street South West, Suite 203  
 Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 4J6  
 Fax: 403-292-5510

Red Deer Parole.....403-340-4276  
 4805-48 Ave  
 Red Deer, AB, T4N 3T2  
 Fax: 403-340-4277

Southern Alberta Area Parole.....403-292-5522  
 140-1925 18 Ave North East  
 Calgary, AB, T2E 7T8  
 Fax: 403-292-5510

**Federal Institutions in AB:**

Regional Headquarters – Prairie.....306-659-9300  
 3427-faithfull Ave, PO Box 9223  
 Saskatoon, SK, S7K 3X5  
 Fax: 306-659-9210

Bowden Institution (Medium/Minimum Security)  
 .....403-227-3391  
 Highway #2, PO Box 6000  
 Innisfail, AB, T4G 1V1  
 Fax: 403-227-6022

Drumheller Institution (Medium/Minimum Security)  
 .....403-823-5101  
 Highway #9, PO Box 3000  
 Drumheller, AB, T0J 0Y0  
 Fax: 403-823-8666

Edmonton Institution (Maximum Security)  
 .....780-472-6052  
 21611-Meridian Street  
 Edmonton, AB, T5Y 6E7  
 Fax: 780-495-7826

Edmonton Institution for Women (Multi-level  
 Security).....780-495-3657  
 11151-178<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Edmonton, AB, T5S 2H9  
 Fax: 780-495-2266

Grande Cache Institution (Medium Security)  
 .....780-827-4200  
 Hoppe Avenue, Bag 4000  
 Grande Cache, AB, T0E 0Y0  
 Fax: 780-827-2984

Grierson Centre (Minimum Security)...780-495-2157  
 9530-101<sup>st</sup> Ave (Basement)  
 Edmonton, AB, T5H 0B3  
 Fax: 780-495-4755

Pê Sâkâstêw Centre (Minimum Security that  
 promotes a healing process based on Aboriginal  
 culture).....780-585-4104  
 Highway #2A, PO Box 1500  
 Maskwacis, AB, T0C 1N0  
 Fax: 780-585-3588

**Laws, Rules, and Policy Governing  
 Federal Corrections:**

- Corrections and Conditional Release Act (CCRA)
- Corrections and Conditional Release Regulations (CCRR)
- Commissioner’s Directives (CD)
- Standard Operating Practices (SOP)

These are made available in every prison library and can be found at CSC’s website:  
[www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/lgs/ltn-eng.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/lgs/ltn-eng.shtml)

## References

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- 1 David Eby, *The arrest handbook* (Vancouver: B.C. Civil Liberties Association, 2003), 11
- 2 Eby, *Arrest*, 41-44
- 3 Canada. Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, *Sentence Calculation: How does it work?* (Ottawa, 2005), 17-18
- 4 Sentencing Law can be found in the Criminal Code (Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, c. C-46), parts XXIII-XXIV, <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/>
- 5 Further information on the Correctional Process can be found in the Commissioner's Directives, available on the CSC web site: CDs 705, 705-7, 710-2 <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/plcy/toccd-eng.shtml>
- 6 Correctional Services of Canada, *Basic facts about the Correctional Service of Canada*, (Ottawa, Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2005), 14-15
- 7 Further information on the policies governing living conditions can be found in the Commissioner's Directives, available on the CSC web site: CDs 709, 880, 352, 800, 821, 720, 730, 860 <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/plcy/toccd-eng.shtml>
- 8 Canada. Service Canada. "Overview of the Old Age Security Program, 2012-08-08, <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/isp/oas/oasoverview.shtml>
- 9 I.M. Grenada, "The Catch and Release Conundrum," *The Incarcerated Inkwell*, <http://theincarceratedinkwell.ca/?p=891>
- 10 Correctional Service of Canada. Correctional Service Canada. "The Safe Return of Offenders to the Community Statistical Overview April 2005", 2012-07-09, [http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/safe\\_return2005/sr2005-eng.shtml](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/rsrch/safe_return2005/sr2005-eng.shtml)

- 11 Canada. Public Safety, *Sentence Calculation*, 20-24
- 12 Lloyd Withers, Marg Holland and Elizabeth Martin, *Time's Up: A reintegration toolkit for families*, (Kingston: The Canadian Families and Corrections Network, 2005), 7

Encompass Community Safety Agency would like to thank all the staff, clients, and organizations that contributed the information in this guide. Much of this guide was derived from an original publication written by Encompass Community Safety Agency Mainland B.C., and we would like to especially thank them for sharing it with us.

Written by: Ian Donovan and Sara Riddle.

To order copies of this guide or to report any errors or omissions, please contact:

Encompass Community Safety Agency  
Phone: 780-428-7590  
Email: [info@myencompas.ca](mailto:info@myencompas.ca)

## Appendix

### Pre-Release Planning Worksheet

What are your plans when you are released and returning to the community? This worksheet is designed to help you start thinking about and planning your release. This worksheet is broken down into the following parts: Identification, Housing, Transportation, Personal Needs, Employment, Recreation/Leisure Time, Addictions Treatment/Aftercare, and Support Systems.

#### Identification

**Please note that the Edmonton Encompass Community Safety Agency does not pay for identification. We are willing to send you birth certificate and social insurance card applications if you require.**

- |                          |     |     |    |                             |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----------------------------|
| 1. Social Insurance Card |     | Yes | No | Cost: \$10.00               |
| 2. Birth Certificate     | Yes | No  |    | Cost: Depends on Province   |
| 3. Provincial Id         |     | Yes | No | Cost: \$57.00 (5 year ID)   |
| 4. Driver’s License      | Yes | No  |    | Cost: Same as Provincial ID |

#### Housing

Where are you going to live when you get out? There are many factors to consider when you are deciding where to live when you first get out:

- Will your Probation/Parole officer approve of where you plan to live?
- Is it in the area of where you committed the offence?
- Will you be living around positive, supportive people or around negative influences?
- How do you plan to pay rent and utilities?
- Can you look for a job and/or get to work from where you plan to live?
- Can you get to your support group and/or treatment program from where you plan to live?

Use the space below to write down as much as you can about where you are going to live.

Identify at least three different possibilities of where you might live when you first get out. Plan 1 should be a place that is “solid, or for sure”. Plan 2 and 3 are possibilities.

**Plan 1:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Where: address or as much as you know</b> |
| <b>Who lives there:</b>                      |
| <b>Possible Issues:</b>                      |



**Plan 2:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Where: address or as much as you know</b> |
| <b>Who lives there:</b>                      |
| <b>Possible Issues:</b>                      |

**Plan 3:**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Where: address or as much as you know</b> |
| <b>Who lives there:</b>                      |
| <b>Possible Issues:</b>                      |

**Transportation**

How are you going to get around once you are released? Do you have a driver's license? Can you get to where you need to go by bus? Will you own a vehicle? What is your plan for getting to places you need to go? Will you depend on others for rides (are they dependable)? **Use the space below to identify how you plan to get to all the different places you need to go:**

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**Personal Needs**

Think about how much money you will need to get started. Where you live will determine the cost of rent. Typically, you will need first month's rent plus damage deposit for a new move-in. On top of that, you still need to eat, buy work and/or interview cloths, get transportation, recreation, and personal hygiene items. Do you have other expenses such as childcare or fines? Do you know of places/agencies where you can access resources to cut the costs of personal needs?

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| Housing        | \$ |
| Utilities      | \$ |
| Food           | \$ |
| Transportation | \$ |
| Monthly Debts  | \$ |
| Insurance      | \$ |
| Recreation     | \$ |
| Other          | \$ |

Total:\$

If you have earned money while incarcerated understand it is not going to get you far. Most individuals will quickly need more than the clothing and other items when they leave prison. You will need to eat and get around. You might get lucky and find a job quickly, but there are no guarantees. A good savings plan now can help you figure out what kind of money you will need to get started on life outside prison.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| How much money do you have right now in your inmate account? | \$ |
| How much money do you have in your outside savings/checking  | \$ |
| How much money do you have in other types of assets?         | \$ |
| Add it all up to figure out how much you have                | \$ |

How much are you spending right now on your personal needs? Write down how much money each month you spend on canteen and how you usually spend your money:

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## Employment

When you leave the institution, you will find you have some ability, talent and skill for a variety of jobs. What are you looking for in a job?

- Good wages
- Benefits-vacation pay, health insurance, etc.
- Hours that suit your needs- but remember to be flexible
- Work that you actually like doing
- Opportunities for more training and advancement

Every one of us is good at something. You may be well aware of your skills and talents, even if you have never seriously used them. In the space below, write down what you are thinking about where you would like your job to take you:

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I am most interested in the field of:

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| ▪ Construction  | ▪ Retail               |
| ▪ Clerical      | ▪ Painting             |
| ▪ Sales         | ▪ Hairdressing         |
| ▪ Labourer      | ▪ Repair/Maintenance   |
| ▪ Cleaning      | ▪ Transportation       |
| ▪ Food Services | ▪ Wood work/ Carpentry |
| ▪ Production    |                        |
| ▪ Plumbing      | ▪ Other _____          |
| ▪ Lawn Care     |                        |

Three jobs that would get me started in that field are:

|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

Three jobs that I can aim for are:

|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

Three ways I can start preparing for this type of work are:

|    |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

**Recreation/Leisure Time**

Boredom and lack of structure in your day are two of the biggest triggers for recidivism and relapse. While you are in prison, your day is planned out for you. Once you are on the outside, what are you going to do with your time? If you do not follow through on plans to participate in healthy and productive activities, you might get right back into a cycle of negative and destructive behaviors. Use the space below to identify healthy and productive activities that you can participate in once you are released. Try to think of activities you can start doing now and can continue doing once you are released.

| What | Where | When | How Often |
|------|-------|------|-----------|
|      |       |      |           |
|      |       |      |           |
|      |       |      |           |
|      |       |      |           |

**Addictions Treatment/Aftercare**

For many individuals, some form of addiction treatment, aftercare and/or support group in the community will be helpful. For some of you, it may be mandatory. If you participated in treatment program while incarcerated, you learned a variety of new attitudes, behaviors, and skills. You will need to continue to practice those new skills, behaviors and attitudes when you are released in order to remain clean and sober. In the space below, identify treatment programs, aftercare programs, and/or support groups that you might attend in your community. If you need help identifying these, please talk to your case worker or Edmonton Encompass Community Safety Agency Staff.

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Addictions Treatment Programs |
| Addictions Aftercare Programs |

**Support System**

Successful reintegration into the community often depends on having a good support system. A good support system is not just family and friends. A good support system includes a wide variety of individuals. Fill in the names of those people below. Identify the names of your supportive friends and family and their relationship to you. Include your Probation/Parole Officer, Sponsors, AA/NA Community Support, family, friends, etc.

| Name | Telephone | Relationship to You |
|------|-----------|---------------------|
|      |           |                     |
|      |           |                     |
|      |           |                     |
|      |           |                     |
|      |           |                     |
|      |           |                     |