



Women Parole Applicants

*Helpful Information
about the Parole Process*



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■ What is parole?

Parole is a type of conditional release that is granted by the Parole Board of Canada (PBC).

Parole gives you a chance to serve part of your sentence in the community, under the supervision of a Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) Parole Officer.

If granted, there are conditions you need to follow while on parole.

■ What are the different types of parole?

There are two types of parole – day parole and full parole.

- **Day parole** lets you participate in community-based activities and helps you get ready for release on full parole or statutory release. When you are on day parole, you must return to a community-based residential facility (CBRF), or other approved location, at the end of each day or as otherwise directed.
- **Full parole** lets you serve part of your sentence under supervision in the community, usually while living on your own, but sometimes in a CBRF.

Other types of conditional release

Temporary absences are usually the first type of release that you may receive. Temporary absences may be escorted (ETA) or unescorted (UTA). You may be considered for this type of release for various reasons (for example, personal development, contact with family, medical reasons or community service). For more information, talk to your Primary Worker.

Statutory release (SR) is a release that happens by law once you have served 2/3 of your sentence. While it is not a decision of the PBC, the Board is responsible for imposing conditions on your statutory release that you must follow. You are not eligible for statutory release if you are serving a life or indeterminate sentence.



I When am I eligible for parole and how do I apply?

Eligibility

For **full parole**, you are normally eligible at 1/3 of your sentence, or 7 years, whichever one is less.

You are normally eligible for **day parole** 6 months before your full parole eligibility date.

Eligibility timeframes may be different depending on your sentence length or if you are serving a life or an indeterminate sentence.

If you do not know your parole eligibility dates, you can ask your Parole Officer.

Applying for day parole:

To apply for **day parole**, you need to complete an application form.

Applying for full parole:

The PBC will automatically schedule you for a **full parole** review one month before your full parole eligibility date. You will be notified by the PBC in writing when your review date has been scheduled.

There may be circumstances when you may need to apply to be considered for full parole.

Note: Parole application forms ask you to provide your release plans, your possible community supports and reasons for applying. Ask your Parole Officer for an application form. Once you fill it out, they will send it to the PBC.

| Why should I apply for parole?

Parole helps you to reintegrate into the community, gradually and safely, with supports while under supervision.

It provides you with a chance to:

- develop and connect with your community supports (for example, family, friends, mental health worker, substance abuse sponsor, employment counsellor, parenting support, mentor, Elder, spiritual or religious support);
- begin participating in community programs, interventions, and/or traditional/cultural practices;
- look for and get a job and/or upgrade your education; and,
- establish a healthy routine.

If you are not granted parole, the reasons will be provided at the hearing and in the PBC's written decision. This can help you focus on those areas identified to prepare you for your next parole hearing and your eventual safe return to the community.

How do Board members make their decision?

PBC Board members make the decision to grant or deny parole by way of a parole hearing or by an in-office file review (sometimes called a paper review). In most cases, the first day or full parole review will be done through a hearing.

Whether or not the decision is made through a hearing or file review, Board members will consider all relevant information available to them, including:

- any **information you provide** verbally or in writing, to make this decision;
- what **you have learned**, the **skills** you have developed and **any progress** you have made by yourself or through participation in programs, cultural or traditional activities and/or interventions that address your risk to re-offend and support your safe return to the community;
- your **behaviour** in the institution and while on any previous release(s) (*what you have done to address your areas of risk and/or needs since the time you committed the offence, what challenges you have faced and how have you dealt with those challenges*);
- any relevant **background factors**, such as poverty, systemic racism, and Indigenous social history, that may have played a factor in your criminal and social history;
- any **information from the victim(s) of your offence(s)**; and,
- your **release plan and your community risk management strategy** (*think about your strengths, skills, motivation and the external sources, including your community supports, that can help you to maintain the positive gains and changes you have made*).

■ What is a parole hearing?

Parole hearings may take place in person or by video conference. A parole hearing provides an opportunity for Board members to assess risk by having a conversation with you about your strengths, progress and the areas they may want to learn more about. The PBC is committed to providing you with a respectful, inclusive and safe space to help facilitate the conversation.

■ What is a culturally-responsive hearing?

The PBC recognizes the important role that culture and community play in the journey to successful reintegration.

Indigenous offenders, and non-Indigenous offenders committed to an Indigenous way of life, may request culturally-responsive hearings (Elder-Assisted Hearings and Community-Assisted Hearings) which include the participation of an Elder or Cultural Advisor. Elders or Cultural Advisors provide important information (for example, information related to culture, traditions, and/or ceremonies) to Board members and may facilitate ceremonies on request, such as a smudge.

They do not participate in the decision-making.

Speak to your Parole Officer for more information, or request a copy of the PBC pamphlet *Elder-Assisted and Community-Assisted Hearings*.

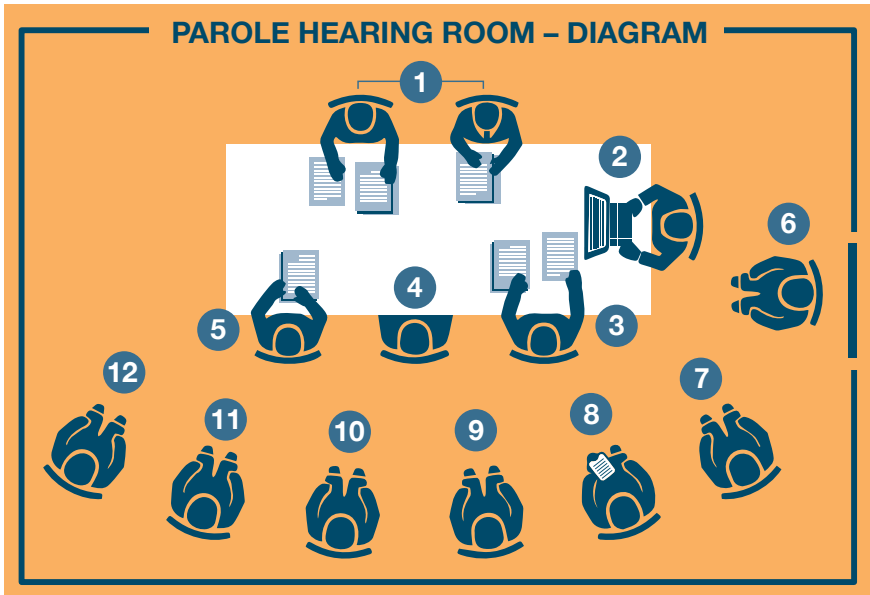
I Preparing for a parole hearing

Once your review is scheduled, you will get a letter from the PBC with detailed information.

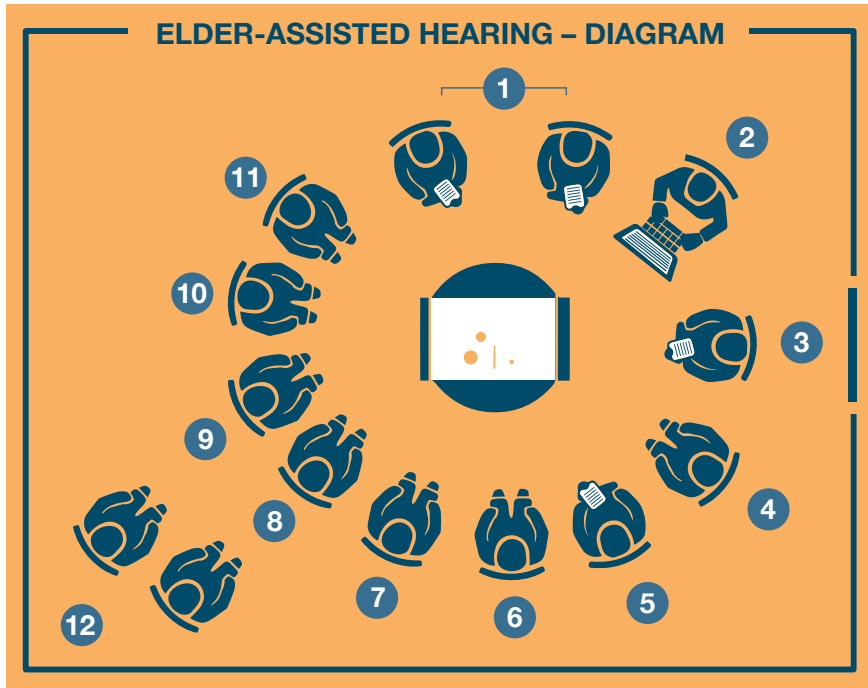
It is important that you take the time to review the information you receive. You can also ask your Parole Officer for help with any area(s) that you do not understand.

Who will be there:

- **Your Parole Officer and assistant** (if you have one) **will attend the hearing with you.** For more specific information about assistants, please read the section “Understand your rights.”
- **A Hearing Officer and Board member(s) will also attend** from the PBC.
- **If an Elder Assisted Hearing, the PBC Elder or Cultural Advisor will attend.**
- **Victims may attend and present a statement** about how the offence has impacted them. (The statement(s) will be shared with you before the hearing.)
- **Other observers** may attend, but will not speak during the hearing. (Observers may include: CSC and/or PBC staff members, students, and media.)



1 PBC Board Members	7 Observer: General Public
2 PBC Hearing Officer	8 Observer: Media
3 CSC Parole Officer	9 Offender Support Person
4 Offender	10 PBC Regional Communications Officer
5 Offender Assistant	11 Victim
6 Correctional Officer	12 Victim Support Person



- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 PBC Board Members | 7 CSC Elder |
| 2 PBC Hearing Officer | 8 Indigenous Liaison Officer/Indigenous Community Development Officer |
| 3 CSC Parole Officer | 9 Victim Support Person |
| 4 Offender Support | 10 Victim |
| 5 Offender Assistant | 11 PBC Elder |
| 6 Offender | 12 PBC Regional Communications Officer and observers, if applicable. |

** Note: Hearing participants usually sit in the inner circle and observers in the outer circle due to their non-participatory role in the hearing. In consultation with the PBC Elder, determination regarding seating arrangements is at the discretion of the Board members. Victims, victim assistants and offender support may request to sit inside the circle.*

What will happen:

- **Board members will introduce themselves**, make sure you understand **your rights**, and **explain the hearing process**. They may also want to know how you would prefer them to address you (for example, first name, preferred pronoun).
- The **Hearing Officer** will make sure you received the **procedural safeguards information** and ask you whether you have any questions about them. These mandatory safeguards outline your rights within the hearing process.
- Your **Parole Officer** will **talk briefly about your case and give recommendations** relating to your release.
- **Board members will ask questions**, discuss your case and **make a decision, which they will present to you with the reasons for the decision**. They may highlight areas that you could make progress on. (In exceptional cases, they may make a decision at a later date.)
- Board members will explain and make sure you understand any **special condition(s)** you must follow if you are granted parole.
 - ▶ These special conditions are specific to your identified areas of risk and must be reasonable and necessary to help you manage those risks and protect the community (for example, abstain from alcohol, avoid certain people or areas, and/or follow treatment).

Helpful tips:

- Before the hearing, write down key things you want to share with the Board members. Think about your strengths (for example, skills, attitude, motivation) and how these strengths can help you when you return to the community.
- Take at least two deep breaths before you start talking.
- During the hearing, take your time answering questions.
- Don't be afraid to let the Board members know if you don't understand something.
- Ask to take breaks when you feel overwhelmed or need time to collect your thoughts.
- Let the Board members know what conditions you feel will assist you when you are released to the community.

Remember to always answer honestly. There are no right or wrong answers, or trick questions.

Understand your rights:

You have the right to:

- **receive all information** that the PBC will use to make their decision in your case;
- **be heard or make a written submission** to tell the Board members what you want them to know about you and consider when making their decision;
- have the **hearing** conducted in **English or French**;
- **have an interpreter** if English or French is not your first language;
- **have an assistant present**—either from the community or within the institution, who can support you and advise you before you answer questions and who may also make a statement on your behalf. *An assistant can be your family member, a friend, lawyer, community support, or another person you would like to have there to support you (speak to your Parole Officer to request a copy of the PBC pamphlet *Offender Assistants at PBC Hearings*);*
- be **advised of observers** present; and,
- **invite community supports** to **observe** your hearing (**Note:** All observers have to fill out an application form and be approved by the PBC.)

■ What can I expect after the PBC has made a decision?

- You will **receive a copy** of the written decision and reasons.
- If there was a hearing, you can ask your Parole Officer for an application form to get a **copy of the audio recording**. Once you fill out the form, your Parole Officer will send it to the PBC.
- A PBC decision can be appealed based on specific reasons outlined in the law. If you feel you have grounds for an appeal, you or a person acting on your behalf must submit to the PBC's Appeal Division a completed PBC appeal decision form, written detailed reasons clearly stating the grounds for appeal, and any supporting documents. Talk to your Parole Officer for more information and important timelines.

■ A final important reminder...

A hearing can be a stressful event. Knowing what to expect and spending a bit of time preparing may help you feel more at ease with the process.

In the absence of a hearing, your voice can also be heard by the PBC by writing a submission to the Board to be considered in the decision-making process.

For more information or if you have any questions, talk to your Primary Worker and/or Parole Officer.

