

Your Voice: Victim Impact Statement

The Victim Impact Statement (VIS) form is a detailed account of the emotional/psychological, physical and financial impact of the crime on the victim and family members. The VIS form is also designed to collect information from victims who wish to be notified by criminal justice professionals throughout the process. The VIS form is considered by prosecutors, judges, and the Board of Pardons and Paroles when making important decisions involving the case.

Prosecutors must consider the VIS form before entering into a plea bargain agreement. The prosecutor may also use the VIS form to determine how much restitution to request as part of a sentence. Prior to the imposition of a sentence or prior to accepting a plea agreement, the judge must inquire as to whether a VIS has been returned, and if one has been returned it must be considered before imposing a sentence.

If the defendant is sentenced to community supervision (probation), the community supervision officer will have access to the VIS form to use for notification purposes. If the defendant is sentenced to the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division, the court is required to attach the VIS form to the offender's commitment papers. Once received by the TDCJ, the VIS form will be processed to add the adult victim to the confidential Victim Notification System, if requested, and included in the offender's parole review file.

The VIS form is considered by the Board of Pardons and Paroles prior to voting a case during the parole review process.

If you wish to complete a VIS form, you may download the form from the TDCJ website (www.tdcj.texas.gov/publications). If you do not have access to the internet, you may obtain a VIS form from county and district attorneys, victim service providers throughout the state, and the TDCJ Victim Services Division.

Extension of Protective Order

If an offender is the subject of a protective order issued on or after September 1, 1999, and is confined or imprisoned on the date the protective order expires or if the protective order would expire not later than the first anniversary of the date the person is released from confinement or imprisonment, Texas statutes mandate that the protective order be extended. For more information or assistance, please contact the Texas Legal Services Center's AVOICE program at 888-343-4414.

Restitution

Some offenders are ordered to pay financial restitution to compensate victims for losses incurred as a result of the crime. Restitution can be ordered only by the sentencing judge and must be recorded on the sentence and judgment or order revoking probation. For more information about restitution, contact the TDCJ Business & Finance Division at 866-464-4137.

Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue

The TDCJ Victim Services Division Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue (VOMD) program, in accordance with Code of Criminal Procedure art. 56.13, provides an opportunity for victims or surviving family members of violent crime to initiate an in-person meeting with the TDCJ offender responsible for their victimization.

The VOMD can be a very sensitive and highly emotional process. The mediator assigned to the case will work closely with the crime victim during the preparation phase, during the mediation, and after the mediation has occurred. Crime victims have expressed a sense of taking back control once they meet directly with the offender to describe the impact of their victimization and to receive answers to questions regarding the offense.

For more information, contact the TDCJ Victim Services Division.

**Texas Department
of Criminal Justice**

Victim Services Division

Mailing Address:
8712 Shoal Creek Blvd.
Suite 265
Austin, Texas 78757-6899

Toll-Free Hotline:
800-848-4284

Fax:
512-452-0825

E-mail:
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov

Website:
www.tdcj.texas.gov

The mission of the Victim Services Division is to provide a central mechanism for crime victims to participate in the Criminal Justice System.

The goal of the Victim Services Division is to ensure that victims are not left behind at the crime scene but can be involved, if they desire, at any stage of the criminal justice process.

Texas Department of Criminal Justice
**Victim Services
Division**

Your
RIGHTS
Your
VOICE
Your
PARTICIPATION



The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division provides mandated services to crime victims, witnesses who testified against the defendant at trial and concerned citizens when the offender is incarcerated in the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division (adult prison system) or on parole/mandatory supervision. Available services include:

- Notification regarding offender status;
- Assistance in determining offender status;
- Processing of Victim Impact Statement (VIS) forms, protest material, and other information submitted by victims, concerned citizens, and criminal justice and victim services professionals;
- Assistance to victims requesting interviews or meetings with Board of Pardons and Paroles members during the parole review process;
- Explanation of parole and mandatory supervision procedures;
- Victim Offender Mediation Dialogue;
- Information and referral services for victims, victim service professionals, and criminal justice professionals through the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse;
- Victim witness preparation and accompaniment when viewing an execution;
- Referral for restitution inquiries; and
- Training opportunities, including workshops, webinars and the Texas Victim Assistance Training (TVAT) Online for victims, victim service professionals and criminal justice professionals.

Toll-Free Hotline 800-848-4284

The TDCJ Victim Services Division staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM central standard time. Victims, witnesses who testified against the defendant and concerned citizens may contact staff to inquire about an offender’s status, learn about services provided by the TDCJ Victim Services Division and obtain additional information and referrals.

Registering for Notifications/Services

Victims, witnesses who testified against the defendant and concerned citizens may use the toll-free number to register for notifications regarding an offender’s status. Registration options include:

- receiving notifications by e-mail, letter or both;
- registering to speak with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles during the review process;
- registering to receive an automated telephone call when the offender is being processed for release; and
- registering for text notifications on warrant actions when an offender is on supervision.

Some registration options are available to statutory victims only and may have additional restrictions. If you have not had an opportunity to discuss these options with one of the TDCJ Victim Services Division representatives and are interested in registering for any of these options, please contact the TDCJ Victim Services Division for assistance. All of your contact information will remain confidential.

Victims are welcome to visit our office to discuss additional concerns. To make an appointment for your visit call the hotline or e-mail us at:

victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov

IMPORTANT REMINDER

PLEASE NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS, MAILING ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER CHANGES.

Be Informed. Be Involved.

The TDCJ Victim Services Division manages the confidential Victim Notification System in order to keep registrants informed of offender status after conviction and sentencing to the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division.

Contact is made through the confidential Victim Notification System when the:

- Offender enters the parole review process;
- Parole review process is completed and offender receives a tentative favorable vote for release or release is denied;
- Offender’s release certificate is issued for parole or mandatory supervision;
- Offender is discharged at time of release;
- Offender’s parole or mandatory supervision is revoked by the Board of Pardons and Paroles;
- Offender dies while incarcerated or while under supervision;
- Offender is released to or received from a bench warrant; and
- Offender escapes and is recaptured.

Automated Telephone System

In addition to our victim notifications, those registered on the confidential Victim Notification System can retrieve limited offender status information via telephone 24 hours a day through the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system by calling 877-894-8463 and entering their Personal Identification Number (PIN) provided by the TDCJ Victim Services Division.

Those registered on the confidential Victim Notification System may also request to receive an automated telephone call notifying them that the offender is being processed for release.

Important Notice

If a victim was registered with the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) system in the county where the offender was jailed while awaiting trial or transfer to the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division, they will need to register with the TDCJ Victim Services Division Victim Notification System to receive notifications regarding an offender’s status while incarcerated in the TDCJ Correctional Institutions Division or on parole/mandatory supervision.

The VINE program is designed to provide victims with quick and easy access to **limited** information regarding the offender’s status. To register for **complete** notification and be involved in the parole process, the victim must register with the TDCJ Victim Services Division. Contact us at:

800-848-4284

victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov

Parole Review Process

Statutory victims have the right to submit materials to the Board of Pardons and Paroles to consider during an offender’s parole review. Crime victims, witnesses who testified against the defendant and concerned citizens may send protest materials to the TDCJ Victim Services Division at any time to be included in an offender’s parole review file. Crime victims often describe how the crime affected them and continues to impact them and their families. Any new information, pictures, pertinent newspaper articles, etc., may be included. The offender’s parole review file is a permanent file that will be considered by the Board of Pardons and Paroles; anything submitted will remain in the file and cannot be returned.

Statutory victims have the right to meet with the Board of Pardons and Paroles during the offender’s parole review process. To request a meeting with the Board of Pardons and Paroles, please contact the TDCJ Victim Services Division.

All correspondence and phone calls, including the VIS form, are confidential.