



## Purpose of this brochure...

This brochure was designed to provide simple and comprehensive information to victims of crime, their families, and other concerned individuals pertaining to notice of an offender's release in Massachusetts.

### **Becoming Certified for Notification**

In order to be notified of an offender's release from custody, you must apply to be certified with the Criminal History Systems Board (CHSB). You can fill out an application with any Victim Witness Advocate located in your local District Attorney's Office, the MA Department of Correction, the MA Parole Board, the Sheriff's Department or Criminal History Systems Board by calling one of the offices. You can also print an application from the Internet at [www.mass.gov/chsb](http://www.mass.gov/chsb). The application must be faxed or mailed to CHSB for you to become a certified petitioner. Once you are certified, you are entitled to receive the following notifications:

### **Types of Notification:**

#### **14 Day Advance Notification of the following:**

- Transfer to less secure status (minimum security, pre-release)
- Final Release date from custody
- Consideration for parole supervision
- Parole release date

#### **Emergency Notification of the following:**

- Escape from any correctional setting or program activity
- Escape from parole supervision
- Court ordered release
- Breach of confidentiality

### Common questions...

#### **How do I get notified when an offender is going to be released from prison?**

You must be certified by the CHSB to be registered for notification. Your information will be forwarded to the appropriate custodial authority and the Parole Board so that you will be notified.

#### **Who can be certified for Notice of an Offender's Release?**

The victim, witness, parent/guardian of a minor aged victim and family member of a homicide victim may be certified for notification. In addition, any person who is in fear of an inmate in Massachusetts may become certified under a Citizen's Initiated Petition (CIP). To be certified as a "CIP" you must include a statement explaining your fear of the inmate with your application. Please call CHSB (617) 660-4690 for further information.

#### **What is the difference between a "state sentence" and a "House of Correction" sentence?**

A state sentence is typically more than 2 1/2 years and means that the offender has been sentenced to serve a term of incarceration in the Department of Correction (DOC). While in the custody of the DOC, the inmate may be housed at various institutions, depending on the inmate's classification status. A House of Correction sentence is typically less than 2 1/2 years and means that the offender is sentenced to serve a sentence at a local House of Correction, run by the Sheriff's Department.

#### **Who actually provides the notification?**

The Department of Correction or Sheriff's Office will provide all notifications pertaining to an adult offender's transfer and release from custody. The Parole Board will provide all notifications pertaining to an adult offender's parole. The Department of Youth Services provides all notification concerning Youthful Offenders and Juvenile Delinquents.

#### **Can an offender earn time off of their sentence?**

Yes, Mass. General Law mandates that all correctional facilities allow offenders to earn time off of their sentence for participating in programs. Please call the correctional agency where the offender is incarcerated to find out how much earned good time they may receive if they participate in certain types of programming. In addition, if an offender was held in

jail prior to being sentenced, that amount of time will be reduced from their sentence.

#### **Will I be notified of the inmate's upcoming parole hearing?**

Yes, if you are certified through CHSB, you will be notified if an offender is considered for, or granted parole. Please call the Parole Board at (877) 228-8482 for further information.

#### **What role does a certified person play in the parole process?**

Any certified person can submit input to the Parole Board to assist the Board in making a balanced, informed decision.

#### **What should I do if I move or change my contact information?**

You must call CHSB at (617) 660-4690 to update any changes in your name, address and/or phone number(s).

#### **Will the inmate be informed that I am being notified?**

No, the existence of your certification is kept confidential.

#### **What should I do if I am receiving unwanted contact from an inmate?**

You should immediately contact the custodial authority where the offender is housed. If you are not sure who to call, you may call CHSB at (617) 660-4690 and you will be referred you to the appropriate agency.

#### **How do I find out more information about a Youthful Offender and/or juvenile delinquent in DYS custody?**

You may call the Victim Services Unit at the Department of Youth Services at (617) 960-3290 for more information.

#### **How do I find out about the classification of registered sex offenders?**

You may call the Victim Services Unit at the Sex Offender Registry Board at (978) 740-6441.

*If you have any additional questions or need further assistance, please feel free to contact any of the agencies listed on the back of this brochure.*