

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Commitment** - the transfer of the physical custody of the youth from the Court to the Department of Youth Services

**Discharge** – the end of the Department of Youth Services legal custody of a youth.

**Discharge Review** - process where the Release Authority considers whether to end the legal custody of a youth in the Department of Youth Services.

**Early and Judicial Release** –A youth who is early released is done so by the Department of Youth Services and a youth who is judicially released is released by decision of the court.

**Minimum Sentence (MSED)** – the minimum length of time that the court has sentenced a juvenile offender to DYS. Judges specifically gives a minimum and a maximum sentence, i.e, six months to age twenty-one, but the minimum is the date the youth will most likely be released back to the community.

**Office Conference Day** – the first Wednesday of each month is set aside for Registered Victims to meet face-to-face in Columbus, or by videoconference in a Regional Office, or by telephone with a Release Authority member to provide victim input for the upcoming release/discharge review of a juvenile offender.

**Release Review Panel**– a review process conducted by the Release Authority in a correctional facility to determine if a youth should be released. A decision is made to release or set a new release date.

**Victim Impact Statement** – a statement, usually in writing that describes the type and extent of the physical, economical, or emotional harm suffered by the crime victim. This should be submitted prior to the Release Review Panel.

**Victim Representative** – individual chosen by the victim or by another authorized person, to receive notification of Release Authority reviews, hearings, releases and discharges related to the youth, and the individual who represents the victim at such hearings.



### **Important Information**



In 2010 the Ohio Department of Youth Services began to make numerous changes to meet the requirements of a Federal lawsuit. These changes will impact the process for victims of juvenile offenders The (possible) effects are:

1) Juvenile offenders will be presumed to be released upon their minimum sentence as set by the Judge in Juvenile Court, 2) Victims will

be receiving more frequent notices of release reviews, 3) Victims of juvenile crimes with juvenile offenders in DYS will need to be aware that juvenile courts often

judicially release youth and notification to victims of these judicial release hearings and the hearing outcome are to be provided by the county prosecutor, 4) It is important for

Registered Victims or automatically ‘opted in’ victims completing Victim Impact Statements to provide specific details regarding any threats or intimidating behaviors exhibited by the juvenile offender, the anniversary date of the crime, any other important dates on which the victim would not want the juvenile offender released such as a victim’s birthday.

As a crime victim of a juvenile offender we encourage you to actively participate in the process.

Your participation in the Office Conference Day meeting is important.

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### **Mission Statement**

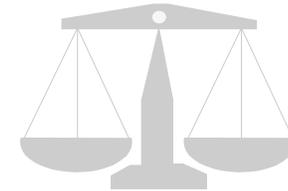
*The Department of Youth Services - Office of Victim Services (OVS) recognizes the statutory and constitutional law of Ohio that mandates services to victims of juvenile offenders, thus, OVS will provide the opportunity for victims to seek information; communicate facts, feelings and opinions reflective of their concerns; and, to ensure notification of any change (except changes brought forth by judicial release) in the status of the juvenile offender.*

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# OHIO DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

## Office of Victim Services



*“If you wish for peace. . .  
work for justice”*

**Ohio** | Department of  
Youth Services

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Harvey J. Reed, Director

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Office of Victim Services  
30 West Spring Street, Fifth Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
Phone: 1-800-872-3132 Fax: 614-995-0289  
E-Mail: Victim.Services@dys.ohio.gov

The Office of Victim Services is an important part of the Department of Youth Services. It serves as a supportive and informative resource for victims of crime. The Office provides the following services to victims of juvenile crime:

- Information, referral services and advocacy for victims throughout the juvenile corrections process;
- The opportunity to meet with a representative of the Release Authority on Office Conference Day (first Wednesday of each month);
- Information regarding the status of a youth in a DYS facility or under parole supervision;
- Notification of upcoming reviews, releases, discharges and revocation decisions;
- Community education regarding policies and procedures of the Department of Youth Services and the Release Authority;
- Referrals to appropriate federal, state, or local community resources, including victim service agencies, victim compensation and VINE;
- Notification of victim rights including the right to designate a victim representative; and,
- Opportunity to provide victim input in the form of a Victim Impact Statement.

#### IMPORTANT NOTE

If you have been a victim of a crime, committed by a youth currently in the Department of Youth Services and desire to discuss your rights, or services available to you, please contact the **Office of Victim Services @ 1-800-872-3132.**

#### Victim Registration

Information identifying the victims of felony-level juvenile crime is provided by the county juvenile court that sentenced the youth to the Department of Youth Services. The Office of Victim Services sends an Initial Letter with a Victim Notification Form to victims with juvenile offenders with felony level 4 or 5, and an “opt out” form to victims of offenses of violence, primarily felony levels 1-3, a V.I.N.E. brochure, and a Victim Impact Statement Form. **The forms sent by the Office of Victim Services to victims of crime should be properly completed by the crime victim and returned to the Office of Victim Services as soon as possible.**

#### Sharing Information/Victim Input

A registered victim or automatically “opted in” victim will be mailed notification of reviews, releases, and discharge decisions involving their offender. The written notices are sent approximately 15-60 days prior to a change in the offender’s status. For release and discharge reviews victims have the opportunity to mail additional statements regarding the crime to the Release Authority Board . Registered or automatically “opted in” Victims may attend an Office Conference Day to speak directly with a Release Authority Board Member . Office Conference Day is the first Wednesday of each month and can be in-person in Columbus or by videoconference or phone call. Upon receiving the release or discharge review notices the Registered or automatically “opted in” Victim should contact the Office of Victim Services to schedule an appointment for the next Office Conference Day as soon as possible.

#### Telephone Inquiry

When a Victim Notification Form is returned by a victim or an automatically “opted in” victim to the Office of Victim Services a Personal Identification Number (PIN) is assigned. An automatically “opted in” victim or Registered Victim will be asked to provide their PIN prior to any discussion over the phone. Victims are encouraged to use the toll-free Infoline number by dialing 1-800-872-3132. The Infoline is staffed from 8:00am – 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. A voicemail system is available for

after hours and on weekends that provides emergency access to OVS staff. After hours and weekends this number can be used to call OVS staff for emergencies.



## Infoline

# 1-800-872-3132

**If you have questions or concerns you may contact the Office of Victim Services by calling the toll-free Infoline.**

#### ◆CRIME VICTIM RIGHTS◆

- Right to be provided information about your rights as a crime victim
- Right to appoint a victim representative
- Right to be updated on the current status of the criminal investigation
- Right to be notified of an offender’s arrest or release
- Right to have items in law enforcement possession released
- Right for discussion and information from the prosecutor
- Right to have no other person threaten or intimidate you
- Right to participation in a court hearing
- Right to make a statement about the impact of the crime on you
- Right to receive notice when an offender escapes
- Right to receive information from, and provide information to, the Department of Youth Services about the offender’s incarceration and parole status.