

Early Termination of Parole FAQ

What is parole?

Parole is a form of supervision granted only by the Parole Board after a person has served part of their sentence in prison. If released from prison early, you are on parole until the time you were sentenced to serve in custody is complete.

Is parole the same thing as probation?

No. Probation is a form of supervision a person is sentenced to serve by the court. A court may sentence someone to probation instead of time in prison for all or part of their sentence. The court does not sentence a person to parole; only the Parole Board can allow a person to be on parole.

Terms to Know

- **Department of Community Supervision** – The Department of Community Supervision supervises both people on parole and probation.
- **Board of Pardons and Parole** – A group of five individuals who make decisions such as early terminations and revocations of parole.
- **Commutation** – Reducing a person’s time on parole; otherwise known as early termination of parole.
- **Split Sentence** – A sentence requiring a person to serve part of the time they were sentenced to in custody and part of the time on probation. Probation starts after you complete the time you were sentenced to serve whether that was in custody or on parole.
- **Qualified Offense** – An offense listed under O.C.G.A. 42-8-21; includes offenses such as burglary in the second degree, many drug offenses, theft offenses, and criminal damage to property.

Who decides whether to commute my parole?

The Board of Pardons and Paroles, not the court you were sentenced in, controls commutation of parole sentences.

Is it possible to get off parole early?

Yes. Under Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 475-3-.10 (7) and O.C.G.A. 42-9-52 the Parole Board will review a person’s parole for commutation in the following instances:

1. When a person serving a non-violent offense has served 2 years of their parole with satisfactory adjustment in society.
2. When a person sentenced for First Degree Arson, Firearms Offenses or Trafficking has served 3 years of their parole with satisfactory adjustment in society.
3. When a person sentenced for a violent offense has served 5 years of their parole with satisfactory adjustment in society.
4. When a person serving a split-sentence for a Qualified Offense has served 12 months of their parole.

**A person sentenced for a non-violent offense that is also a Qualified Offense under O.C.G.A. 42-8-21 will be reviewed after serving 12 months of their parole.*

How do I request early termination of parole?

If eligible, the Board will review your case for commutation at the appropriate time listed in the above four instances. Talk to your parole officer well in advance to confirm your commutation eligibility date so that you can provide documentation to your parole officer to submit to the Board when your case is reviewed. If you are not eligible under the above listed descriptions, you can still ask for your parole officer to reach out to the Board about commutation of your parole.

What information should I share with my parole officer when requesting early termination?

Once you begin your parole, ask your parole officer what they would like to see from you in order to be willing to recommend your parole be commuted when the time comes. Contact your parole officer in advance of your expected commutation eligibility date and provide documentation supporting your “satisfactory adjustment in society.” For example: completion of any special conditions of your parole, proof of employment, any counseling or mentorship you have received, volunteer work, proof of stable housing etc. Ask if your parole officer would be willing to write a brief letter stating they are in support of commutation of your parole as well.

What happens to my probation once I am off parole?

If you received a split sentence, your probation will begin after your parole is commuted or completed. Your parole and probation conditions are *not* the same. Review your sentencing document (disposition) to make sure you understand what your probation conditions are. You are eligible for early termination of probation once you complete 3 years of your *probation sentence* and (1) have no new arrests since being sentenced; (2) have no violations of probation in the preceding 24 months; and (3) have paid all restitution. Learn more about early termination of probation at <https://gjp.org/probation/>

How does getting off parole and/or probation impact my right to vote?

You can vote in Georgia if you are not currently serving a sentence for a felony conviction, meaning you completed incarceration, parole, and probation. If you are serving a felony First Offender or Conditional Discharge sentence and the status has not been revoked, you CAN vote even while on parole or probation. Your right to vote is automatically restored upon completion of your sentence—you do not need your record expunged or pardoned to vote. Visit GJP.org/Voting to learn more.