

Prison Release Preparation Guide

From the beginning:



START SAVING MONEY RIGHT AWAY

All federal inmates are given a job assignment. Once you have purchased your initial necessities, begin saving as much as you can afford to. You will need as much money as possible when you are released.



MAINTAIN A VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

Having a valid driver's license when you are released will make your transition considerably smoother. If your driver's license will be expired by your release date, it may be possible to renew it through the mail.



BE AWARE OF YOUR CREDIT

Inmates are ideal targets for identity thieves because of their isolation. Consider a credit freeze to protect you while you are away.

Request a credit report well before your release so you have time to deal with any irregularities before you get home.

USE YOUR TIME WISELY

Get your GED if you don't already have it.

Enroll in classes offered through your facility's Education Department.

Any certifications you can earn while in prison may help secure employment upon your release. Take advantage of any opportunities for vocational training.

Earn a college degree through the mail from a reputable and accredited program.



When you're getting close:



Release preparation in the BOP typically begins around 18 months prior to your release date. Your facility will likely offer a variety of classes and events to help with your reentry. Your Case Manager will also begin meeting with you to discuss your plans for your post-release housing and employment.



PREPARE YOUR RÉSUMÉ

If possible, include letters of reference from former employers or coworkers who can write about your positive qualities as a worker, acknowledge your criminal history without going into detail, and assert their belief that you have the ability to move past it.



LET PEOPLE KNOW

Let your loved ones know that your release date is approaching and you will be looking for employment. Someone in a loved one's network might know of a possible work opportunity.



SOCIAL SECURITY

If your SSI benefits are suspended or terminated, you must request to have them reinstated upon your release and you must provide a copy of your release documents.

If your BOP facility has a pre-release agreement with a local SSA office, your Case Manager might be able to help expedite the process so you can start receiving your benefits as soon as possible after your release.



REQUEST YOUR MEDICAL RECORDS

You will want documentation to show to your doctors after your release.

This will likely take some time so make the request far in advance.

Before you leave:

Every BOP facility will have its own standard release procedures. Talk to your Case Manager to ensure you are prepared and know what to expect.



ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION

The BOP will provide you with transportation if necessary.

If you are being picked up by a loved one, make sure they know when to arrive, where to go, and what to expect.



RELEASE CLOTHING

The BOP will provide appropriate clothing for your release if necessary.

You can have approved clothing mailed to the facility prior to your release date.



MAIL PROPERTY HOME

If you want to take home more than you can physically carry, consider mailing the bulk of it home prior to your last day.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Make sure your loved ones know how to reach you after your release.

Update any magazine subscriptions or other mail with your release address.

*IF YOU ARE RELEASING TO A HALFWAY HOUSE

Every halfway house has different rules and restrictions. Read your paperwork carefully to understand what is allowed and stock up on approved commissary items you will need right away. It may be some time before you are allowed to go to a store.



UNDERSTAND YOUR RESTRICTIONS

Every federal district has its own set of rules for supervised release, and each state its own set of rules for SOR compliance. Understanding your restrictions will help you prepare for a successful transition home.

The day of your release:



On the day of your release you will report to R&D (Receiving and Discharge) to complete the required release steps.



PROCEDURES MAY VARY AT EACH FACILITY BUT WILL INCLUDE:

Physical search (only if you are being released to the custody of law enforcement agents)

Form completion

Dress out (changing into your release clothes)

Receipt of any prescription medication

Receipt of funds, including the balance from your account and any transportation stipend deemed necessary

Receipt of property, including any identification available

Final clearance

AT WWW.PROBATIONINFO.ORG YOU CAN:

Follow our Prison Reentry Checklist

Find Reentry Resources near you

Explore restrictions for felons living in each federal district

Compare Sex Offender Registry requirements in every state and territory

Search our directory to find a lawyer near you who specializes in Federal Supervised Release revocation and Sex Offender Registry removal.

