

period of up to 10 years. All may be reappointed. The government may also appoint temporary members for a maximum period of one year and a temporary substitute member for a member who is absent or unable to act. Representatives of police forces, of provincial, municipal, or other local governments, of local professional, trade, or community associations in any region may be designated to act as regular members in the review of cases of inmates serving life sentences for murder or indeterminate sentences as dangerous offenders. These persons are known as regional community board members.

The board has exclusive jurisdiction and absolute discretion to grant, refuse, or revoke full parole or day parole for any person serving a sentence of imprisonment imposed under an act of Parliament or for criminal contempt of court. The board has no jurisdiction over a child under the Juvenile Delinquents Act or a person serving an intermittent sentence under Section 663 of the criminal code.

Until recently, only Ontario and British Columbia had their own parole boards, with jurisdiction over the paroling of inmates serving the indefinite portion of a definite-indefinite sentence. Under a section of the Parole Act that came into effect on September 1, 1978, it is now possible for any interested province to establish its own parole board, with jurisdiction over all inmates serving a definite sentence in provincial institutions. To date, Quebec and Ontario have taken advantage of the new legislation.

Parole is a conditional release of a prison or penitentiary inmate who has served a specific portion of the sentence as laid down by law, meets certain criteria and is considered ready to finish his sentence in the community. The inmate is released under specific conditions and remains under supervision until the expiry date of his sentence.

The decision of the board regarding an inmate is based on reports received from the police, the sentencing judge and professional correctional staff. Reports may also be obtained from a psychologist or a psychiatrist. A community investigation is made to gather information about the inmate's family, background, work record and relationship with the community. These reports help the board assess whether the offender can lead a law-abiding life. For any type of release, penitentiary inmates are seen by board members in a hearing. Case review for provincial prisoners is based on written reports.

Inmates who are not serving a life or indeterminate term become eligible for consideration after serving one-third of their sentence or after seven years, whichever comes first. Inmates who have been convicted twice for offences involving violent conduct have to serve one-half of their sentence before parole eligibility. The eligibility date is set by the Parole Act and regulations, and the criminal code.

Before an inmate is eligible for full parole consideration, the board may grant longer part-time releases, known as day parole, for education or training when the course is not available in the institution or for special work projects. Inmates return to the institution or to a special centre regularly, often every night, during the period of release, which may last four months. Most inmates may start a day parole program at the half-way point before their full parole eligibility date. Inmates serving life sentences for murder become eligible three years before their full parole eligibility date. Day parole is often a testing ground for release on full parole.

The board also has authority to grant unescorted temporary absences; this is the first type of release for which penitentiary inmates are eligible. The board must also approve escorted temporary absences for anyone serving a sentence for murder. Temporary absences are given for medical, humanitarian or rehabilitative reasons.

One type of release that is not the result of a board decision is mandatory supervision. Anyone who is not paroled and is released from a federal institution more than 60 days before the end of his sentence, because of earned remission, is subject to supervision for the full period of that remission. This is a release to which the inmate is entitled by law. If an individual does not want to be supervised in the community, his only option is to remain in the penitentiary until he has served all of the sentence. If he chooses mandatory supervision, the release conditions are the same as for parolees.

The parole system provides a means for the reintegration of offenders into the community. However, the board always keeps in mind the protection of society. To ensure this protection, all parolees are subject to conditions that, when violated, can entail a return to prison.