

What is a pardon? Where individuals have lost civil liberties (such as the right to vote or the right to own and possess firearms) as a result of criminal convictions, they can apply to the Governor through the Maryland Parole Commission for a pardon for restoration of these rights. **This is not legal advice.** Please consult an attorney about your particular situation.

PARDONS F.A.Q.

- ◆ **Does MVLS help with pardons?** No.
- ◆ **Does a pardon erase a criminal conviction from public access and court files?**
 - ◆ No. A pardon does not eliminate or erase criminal convictions. The records of the conviction continue to exist in both court and law enforcement files, unless you obtain an expungement from the court that originally presided over the case.
- ◆ **How does obtaining a pardon benefit me?**
 - ◆ Aside from restoring rights you may have lost as a result of your convictions, a pardon can be useful in helping you present yourself as a responsible and law-abiding citizen to employers and licensing agencies.
- ◆ **I'm currently on probation for the crime I want to pardon. Can I apply for a pardon?**
 - ◆ No. Applicants must wait for five years from the date of sentence, release from incarceration, or release from parole or probation, whichever last occurred. There is a ten-year wait for felonies, and a twenty-year wait for violent or drug-related felonies. The twenty-year wait is eligible for a fifteen-year wait on good cause.
- ◆ **Can I apply for a pardon while incarcerated?**
 - ◆ No application for pardon will be considered while the petitioner is incarcerated.
- ◆ **What factors are considered in deciding whether to grant a pardon?**
 - ◆ Factors considered include the nature and circumstances of the crime, the effect of a pardon on the victim and community, the sentence given, other anti-social behavior of the petitioner, and the reason the pardon is needed.

THE PROCESS

What do I need to do to apply for a pardon?

You must fill out a pardon application, which can be found at <https://www.dpscs.state.md.us/publicservs/pdfs/Application-for-Pardon-Revised.pdf>, and submit:

- ◆ Three character reference letters
- ◆ Copy of photo identification or driver's license
- ◆ Copy of your birth certificate
- ◆ Certified copy of your entire driving history from the MVA
- ◆ Certified copy of the judgment and sentence for all felony, misdemeanor, and traffic convictions
- ◆ Copy of any high school, college, training school or university diplomas
- ◆ If you served in the military-a copy of your separation papers and if convicted of an offense by court-martial, a copy of the court-martial promulgating order

If you decide to proceed with a pardon application, be aware that there is no guarantee or right to pardon. It is completely at the discretion of the Governor to grant a pardon.

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