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## Temporary Absence Program

As an agency of the Ministry of Community Safety & Correctional Services the Ontario Parole Board (OPB), has legislated authority to grant supervised conditional release to adult offenders sentenced to Ontario provincial correctional institutions. OPB is responsible for parole decisions and unescorted temporary absence decisions of 72 hours, or longer, for adult inmates serving sentences in provincial correctional institutions.

The decision to grant a Temporary Absence (TA), which is a privilege, requires careful consideration of all available information, including input from victims of crime. While the needs of the offender are to be considered, protection of the public is the most important consideration. Each TA must have a clear reason for release.

Like parole, temporary absences are subject to stringent risk criteria based on the review of relevant documentation and an in-person hearing before a quorum of two Board members appointed from the community.

### Temporary Absence: what is it?

The temporary absence program allows an offender to be absent from the institution, with or without escort, for a defined period of time and is an opportunity for him/her to prepare for release to the community. The offender will be required to abide by terms and conditions. This absence is considered a privilege. Temporary absences may be granted to assist with rehabilitation and successful reintegration into the community or for medical or humanitarian reasons.

### How does Temporary Absence differ from Parole?

A temporary absence allows an offender to be away from the institution for short periods of time (up to sixty days) for a specific purpose following which the offender must return to the institution. An offender can apply for an additional temporary absence if they require further time to complete their goals in the community and are doing well. Parole is intended for the offender's full release to the community during which time he/she will be supervised until their sentence is completed at final warrant expiry. Usually temporary absences will assist in preparing the offender for parole but they may also occur after the offender's parole eligibility date.

### How does this program work?

In Ontario, the Board is responsible for making decisions regarding all unescorted temporary absences of 72 hours and longer, while the Superintendent of the institution has responsibility for all escorted temporary absences regardless of length and unescorted temporary absences of less than 72 hours in duration..

### What are the Types of Temporary Absences?

#### Humanitarian

- allows an offender to attend to essential personal matters, serious illnesses and funerals of family members. The offender will only be allowed out of the institution for the time needed to deal with the personal matter.

#### Medical

- allows an offender to attend for medical appointments/treatment and will last only as long as required to complete the appointment/treatment.

#### Rehabilitative

- allows the offender to participate in rehabilitative activities to assist him/her to return

successfully to the community. These may include, but are not limited to treatment activities e.g. substance abuse treatment program (including assessment), specialized education programs, technical training programs and employment.

### **Who is eligible for a Temporary Absence?**

An offender may apply for a temporary absence if they have no outstanding charges (except if bail has been granted on those). The Board in all cases will consider good behaviour and active participation in available programming within the institution.

### **What are the conditions for temporary absence?**

An offender granted a temporary absence will have to follow conditions standard to all TA passes as well as any special conditions that the Board believes are necessary for the offender's release.

### **Can a temporary absence be cancelled?**

A temporary absence can be cancelled if it is determined that the purpose of the release cannot be met, or if it appears that the offender has violated, or is about to violate, a term or condition.

### **What can you tell me about Electronic Surveillance?**

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services administers an electronic surveillance program that uses various technologies to monitor selected offenders on temporary absence. This requires an offender to be in specific locations at specific times.

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