



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the telephone number for the Rhode Island State Probation Office?

401-458-3020

Q: What are the requirements for becoming a U.S. Probation Officer?

Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university with specialization in criminal justice, criminology, psychology, sociology, human relations, business or public administration. Must be physically capable to do field work and possess a valid driver's license. First-time appointees must not have reached their 37th birthday at time of appointment.

Q: What is the difference between "probation", "parole", and "supervised release"?

Probation is a term of community supervision imposed by the court in lieu of a prison sentence. Parole is a period of community supervision imposed by the U.S. Parole Commission to be completed after release from a prison term. Supervised release is a period of community supervision imposed by the court to be completed after release from a jail or prison sentence.

Q: What type of identification do I need when reporting to the Probation Office?

All persons entering the Probation Office in the John O. Pastore Federal Building must present a valid picture ID and are required to pass through a magnetometer and have all belongings and packages subject to physical and/or x-ray examination by the United States Marshals Service. Additionally, a person cannot bring any weapons, cameras, cell phones, recording devices, or television equipment into the office. If an offender is reporting his/her release from an institution or community corrections center, he/she should bring any release papers given by the institution.

Q: What is the Presidential Pardon?

Any person convicted of a felony loses certain rights, including voting, holding public office, serving on juries, and securing certain occupational licenses. The Federal Firearms Act prohibits the possession of a firearm of any kind by a person convicted of a felony. A Presidential Pardon restores some of those rights.

Q: Can you tell me if someone is on supervision; and, if so, may I speak with the supervising officer about violations of law or supervision conditions?

If an individual is on supervision due to Pretrial Diversion, that information may not be disclosed. The fact that an individual is on supervision due to pretrial release, a probation sentence or a term of supervised release is a matter of public record, obtainable through the U.S. District Clerk's Office. We can relay that public information and can also advise if an individual is on parole. However, we cannot disclose any additional file information. You may speak with the supervising officer to provide information that may be of assistance in the supervision of any individual under our supervision, including the reporting of apparent violation behavior.

Q: Does a Pretrial Services Officer work for the U.S. Attorney's Office, also known as the "government"?

No. Pretrial services works directly for the U.S. Courts and, more specifically, for all judges in the District of Rhode Island. The role of the Pretrial Services Officer is not to prosecute your case or defend your case. It is to provide objective, unbiased, verified information to the Court and supervise the defendant in the community. The U.S. Attorney's Office works for the Department of Justice.

Q: I am on Pretrial supervision and I was arrested or cited. What do I do now?

Notify your officer immediately if you have been arrested, cited, or questioned by law enforcement for a law violation.

Q: I was sentenced and have been allowed to self surrender to a Federal institution. Am I still on supervision?

Yes, all pretrial defendants remain on supervision until such time that they are placed on probation or surrender to prison.

Q: Does the Pretrial Service office drug test individuals who are placed on supervision?

The office does do drug testing of individuals if the Court has ordered drug-testing as a condition of release.

Q: By what day of the month must my probation officer receive my written monthly report?

The written monthly report is due to the USPO by the fifth day of each month.

Q: Must I submit to urinalysis even though my offense is not drug-related?

Yes. The Court may approve unannounced urine testing on any person under supervision.

Q: What happens if I violate my conditions of release?

All violations are reported to either the sentencing Court, the U.S. Parole Commission, or the Military Parole Board. Based upon the nature and/or severity of the violations, either more stringent conditions may be imposed or formal Court and/or Parole Commission proceedings may take place, which could result in incarceration.

Q: Will my probation officer come to my home or workplace?

Yes. The USPO shall make both home and workplace visits to ensure compliance with the conditions of supervision and to assess your adjustment at home and in the community.

Q: I have an urgent issue and my officer is not available. What should I do?

In the event you need immediate assistance and your supervision officer is unavailable, call the office at 401-752-7300 and you will be directed to someone who can assist you.

Q: I am on drug testing and was just prescribed medication by my doctor. What should I do?

All prescriptions should be immediately reported to your supervision officer. You are required to bring in all prescriptions to each drug test for verification purposes.

Q: How can I learn more about the Federal Probation and Pretrial Services System?

<http://www.uscourts.gov/>

Q: What is the difference between a pretrial services officer, probation officer, and parole officer in the federal system?

In some large districts around the country, two distinct agencies exist, one to handle pretrial services matters and one to handle probation, supervised release, and parole matters. In Rhode Island, all these matters are handled by one agency, known as the United States Probation and Pretrial Services Office. Our officers are assigned to either the Investigations Unit or Supervision Unit. The Investigations Unit handles pretrial services arrests and post-conviction presentence reports. The Supervision Unit handles pretrial services, probation, supervised release, and parole supervision.