
Planning for Success

Release Planning

2013

About this booklet

This booklet was designed to help you do some release planning – to think about what you’re going to do once you’re no longer in custody. It was produced by The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland and reflects the knowledge and experience of our staff, volunteers and clients. It contains information about government services and community-based organizations for the Lower Mainland of BC. Use it to help you do release planning while you’re still in custody and as a handy reference when you’re released.

If you need information specific to another area of BC, contact your local John Howard office. You’ll find contact information for all John Howard Offices in BC at the back of this booklet.

About The John Howard Society

The John Howard Society promotes a safe and peaceful community through effective and humane criminal and social justice programs. The society has been serving offenders and families of offenders in Canada since 1929. We have branches across Canada to serve you.

One of our core services is our Community Services program, which provides information and referral to offenders and their families. Our services are available:

- **Online** through our website and through email
- **In the community** through our Community Services Office and through our Phone Helpline
- **In all BC prisons** through our phone Helpline, as well as in person through our Inreach program, available at all BC Federal prisons and at most BC Provincial prisons. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us. You’ll find contact information for all John Howard Offices in BC at the back of this booklet.



JohnHoward
SOCIETY OF THE LOWER MAINLAND OF B.C.

Community Services Office
752 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC V5V 3C1

Phone: 604-872-5471 (Ext. 222)
Fax: 604-872-1442
Email: reception@jhslmbc.ca
Online: www.jhslmbc.ca

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Your First Day Out

You've probably been thinking a lot about the day when you're finally out of this place. Maybe you've been thinking about all the things you *want* to do on this day, like getting a pizza, or watching a hockey game with your kids. And like most of us, you probably have a list in your head of the things you *should* do, like getting your taxes filed and upgrading your education. But on Release Day, there are only three things you *must* have figured out:

- Where are you going to sleep that night?
- How are you going to get there from prison?
- How are you going to pay for it?

Deal with this first.

- If you are going back home, make sure to contact your family and let them know in advance when you'll be released, especially if you're expecting them to pick you up.
- If you are going to a Shelter, make sure you know if there's a room.

For more information, see the **Housing** section of this guide or phone 211.

- If you are going to a Recovery House, set this up before you get out. You'll need to get accepted by a program ahead of time.

For more information, see the **Drug/Alcohol Addiction** section of this guide.

Money

If you don't have any money when you're in prison, you'll need to get some once you are released.

Organizations like the John Howard Society and the Salvation Army **DO NOT** offer financial assistance.

A Job in Prison

There are jobs you can get within the prison.

Any money you earn in prison that you don't spend will be given to you in the form of a cheque when you are released.

Federal Prison: If you're employable, you're expected to have a job while in Federal Prison. For more information on how to get one, see the Inmate Orientation Handbook you got upon arrival.

Provincial Prison: If you're employable, you're expected to have a job while in Provincial Prison. Being employed helps you earn Remission. If you don't have a job, put in a request to Programs to get one.

Provincial Jail (Pre-Trial, Remand Centre): You're not expected to have a job while in Pre-Trial Centre, but if you'd like one, just fill in a "Work Waiver" and submit it to Programs.

A Bank Account

Why should I get a Bank Account?

It's cheaper than the alternatives (cheque cashing outlet, payday loan company).

- You can cash your Government of Canada or Government of BC cheque at any bank in BC for **FREE**, provided it is for less than \$1500. You don't even have to have an account. You will have to show **one** piece of ID with both your photo **and** your signature, such as a driver's license, or two other pieces of ID. On the other hand, a cheque-cashing outlet will charge you for cashing a government cheque.

Example: Cost of cashing HST/GST Credit cheques for 1 year (4 cheques, \$100.00 each)

At a bank (customer or non-customer): \$0.00

At a cheque-cashing outlet: about \$24.00 (4 x 6.00)

- You can deposit or cash any other cheque at your bank or credit union, if you have an account there. There's usually, but not always, a monthly account fee or a transaction fee. They may put a hold on the cheque, but that has to do with who issued the cheque, not with you. On the other hand, a cheque-cashing outlet will not put a hold on the cheque, but will charge you for cashing the cheque.

Example: Cost of cashing paycheques for 1 year (26 cheques, \$1040.00 each)
 At a bank: varies from \$0.00 to \$48.00, depending on monthly or transaction fees \$48.00 (12 x 4.00)
 At a cheque-cashing outlet: about \$910.00 (26 x 35.00)

How do I get a Bank Account?

Go to a Bank or Credit Union near you with two pieces of ID.

- Primary ID - Government-issued Picture ID (Driver's License, BCID, Current Passport)
- Secondary ID – Birth Certificate, Health Card, Credit Card, Bank Card

Income Taxes

Why should I bother to File?

There are 3 good reasons to file your Income Taxes:

1. **Avoid Penalties.** If you owe money, there's a financial penalty for filing late and interest is charged on the outstanding balance. You can avoid penalties by filing on time.
2. **Get your Refund.** If they owe you money, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) won't give it to you until you file. If you wait longer than 3 years, you could lose your refund.
3. **Get Benefits.** When you file your taxes, CRA will send you a "Notice of Assessment", which states how much you made that year. This is used by many government benefit programs to verify your income, such as
 - **Medical Services Plan (MSP) Premium Assistance.** If you are low income, you can get premium assistance from MSP to help pay your Medical Services Plan bill. In order to apply, you

need your Notice of Assessment for the previous year so MSP can verify your income.

- **Fair Pharmacare.** If you are low income, you can get Fair Pharmacare, a program to help pay for your prescriptions. In order to apply, you need to Notice of Assessment for the year before last so MSP can verify your income.
- **Income Assistance.** If you apply for welfare, you'll need to provide proof of income. You can use your Notice of Assessment for this.
- **BC Housing.** If you apply for subsidized housing, you'll need to provide proof of income. You can use your Notice of Assessment for this.
- **HST/GST Credit.** If you are low income, you can get a GST/HST credit, a quarterly cheque to help offset what you've paid in GST/HST. To apply for this benefit, file your taxes (even if you had no income) and check the "Yes" box in the GST/HST credit application area.

How do I replace Information Slips?

- If you are filing a tax return for the previous year, and you don't have information slips (T4, T5s, etc), request them from the businesses that issued them (your employer, your bank, etc.).
- If you are filing a tax return for a prior year, and you don't have information slips for that year (T4s, T5s, etc), request them from CRA.
 Phone: 1-800-959-8281 (call no charge)

Where do I get a Tax Package or Other Forms?

For your convenience, CRA mails you a Tax Package for filing your Income Taxes each year. If you need one or a different form:

- **In Prison:** Your John Howard Worker can bring you the forms. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.
- **In person:** At any Post Office or Service Canada office. Current Year's Tax Packages available during tax season (Feb-May) only
- **Online:**
 Download and print the Tax Package for any year or any other form or publication you need from the

CRA site

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/formspubs/menu-eng.html

or, get a printed copy mailed to you by using the CRA online order form.

www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cgi-bin/puborder.cgi?lang=en

- **Phone:** Get a printed copy mailed to you by calling CRA at 1-800-959-2221 (call no charge)

How can I get Help with Filing?

If you can't do them yourself, you can get help doing your taxes.

- During tax season (Feb-April), the Federal Government runs the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program. For more information contact CRA.
Canada Revenue Agency
9755 King George Highway
Surrey, BC V3T 5E1
Phone: 1-800-959-8281 (call no charge)
Online: www.cra-arc.gc.ca
- There are many other agencies that can help you do your Income Taxes (free or low cost). Just ask your John Howard Worker for the “Low Cost Income Tax Services List”. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.

Identification

You can apply for a Birth Certificate, Social Insurance Number (SIN) and BC Care Card while you're still in prison. You can expect to receive your ID 2-3 weeks after you apply.

How can a John Howard Worker do to help me replace my ID?

- Your John Howard Worker can provide you with information and can bring you the forms. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.
- If you're not sure where you'll be when your ID arrives, you can have it mailed to our office. To do this, fill in a “Mailing Address Agreement”, which you can get from a John Howard Worker.

What is Government-issued Picture ID?

To guard against identity theft, many places want you to show valid Government-issued Picture ID as the primary piece of ID. This type of document contains all the information that is important for identifying you - your picture, your legal name, date of birth and signature. To make sure the information is verifiable and current, many places will only accept ID that is issued by a government in Canada and that has an expiry date on it (and yours isn't expired).

These are the most commonly accepted pieces of Government-issued Picture ID in BC:

- Canadian Driver's license (with photo)
- BCID
- Current Canadian Passport

BC Birth Certificate

Why do I need this: You need a Birth Certificate to get a SIN, Driver's License, BCID, BC Care Card, Passport

What do I need to apply: information only, no ID

Cost: \$27.00

How to Apply:

- **In Prison:** Your John Howard Worker can bring you the form. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.
- **In person:** At any BC Vital Statistics Office or Service BC office, you can get the form and apply. For the address, check the Government Pages (Blue Pages) of the phone book or check online.
- **Online:**
Download and print the application and mail it in to the address on the form

or apply by using the online ordering system.

www.vs.gov.bc.ca/births/certificate.html

More Info:

- **Online:** www.vs.gov.bc.ca/births/certificate.html

Other Canadian Birth Certificates

Cost: varies by province, territory

How to Apply:

- **In Prison:** Your John Howard Worker can bring you the form. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.
- **Online:**
Find the right Site for all Provinces, Territories and for other countries on this helpful page www.vs.gov.bc.ca/contact/

More Info:

- **Online:** www.vs.gov.bc.ca/contact/

Social Insurance Number (SIN) Card

Why do I need this: You need a SIN to get any government services or benefits, to get Welfare, to get a job, to file your taxes.

What do I need to apply: One piece of ID

- Birth Certificate issued in Canada, Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, Certificate of Indian Status, Permanent Resident Card

Cost: Original Card: \$0, Replacement Card: \$10.00

How to Apply:

- **In Prison:** Your John Howard Worker can bring you the form. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.
- **In person:** You can get the form and apply at any Service Canada Centre. For the address, check the Government Pages (Blue Pages) of the phone book or check online.
- **Phone:**
Order the form by phone at 1-800-206-7218. Select Option "3"
- **Online:**
Download and print the application and mail it in to the address on the form www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/sin/

More Info:

- **Online:** www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/sin/

Driver's License / BCID

Why do I need this: You need government-issued picture ID as a primary piece of ID to do almost anything, like open a bank account, get in to a bar, or use a credit card. You can use either a Driver's License or BCID for this.

Of course, you also need a Driver's License to drive, buy auto insurance, or rent a car.

- For more information on **getting a Driver's License**, check online at www.icbc.com, click on "Driver Licensing"

What do I need to get BCID or replace my license:

Two pieces of ID

- Primary ID – Driver's License, Birth Certificate issued in Canada, Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, Certificate of Indian Status, Permanent Resident Card, Canadian Passport
- Secondary ID – Any of the above, or a bank card, CSC Conditional Release Card, Employee Photo ID, Credit Card, Parole Certificate ID

Cost: **BC Driver's License:** Replacement: \$17.00, **BCID:** Original \$35.00, Replacement \$15.00

How to Apply:

- **In person:** At any Driver Licensing office.
For the address, check online at www.icbc.com, click on "Driver Licensing" or check the phone book under ICBC

BC Care Card (MSP)

Why do I need this: You need a Care Card to get Health care.

What do I need to apply for MSP: One piece of ID (Photocopy of – Birth Certificate issued in Canada, Certificate of Canadian Citizenship, Permanent Resident Card, Canadian Passport)

What do I need to replace my Care Card: Fill in the application form, no ID required

Cost: Card replacement: \$20.00 (don't send money unless they bill you)

How to Apply:

- **In person:** At any Service BC office, you can get the form and apply. For the address, check the Government Pages (Blue Pages) of the phone book or check online.
- **Online:** Download and print the application and mail it in to the address on the form

or, apply by using the online system.
www.health.gov.bc.ca/insurance

Prison ID

Federal Prison: If you are on Conditional Release (parole, Stat Release) you will have a CSC issued Conditional Release Identity Card.

Provincial Prison/Pretrial Centre: If you are being released from a provincial prison/jail, ask Records (Admissions & Discharges, A&D) for a Face Sheet (ID Referral Report).

Food

Free Meals

Not all these services provide full meals, and may only provide food at certain times. Here is a list of some of the most established Soup Kitchens in the Lower Mainland.

- **The Dugout**
(breakfast)
59 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC
604-685-5239

- **First United Church**
(breakfast weekdays)
320 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC
604-681-8365 (After 4:00 pm: 604-839-6880)
- **Salvation Army Harbour Light**
(call for current schedule)
119 East Cordova, Vancouver, BC
604-646-6800
- **Union Gospel Mission**
(lunch weekdays, dinner nightly)
601 E. Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC
604-681-3405
- **Union Gospel Mission**
(breakfast, lunch)
658 Clarkson
New Westminster, BC
604-525-8989
- **The Front Room – Food4Life**
(breakfast, lunch, dinner)
10667 135 A Street, Surrey, BC
604-589-7777

Food Banks

Food banks distribute groceries to people in need. Once you have a place to live, this could really help out.

Metro Vancouver: Call the Greater Vancouver Food Bank for locations & hours. 604-876-3601
BC: Call 211 or look in the white pages under “Food Bank”

Housing

Unless you have somewhere to go to, you'll need to find a place to stay when you get out. Low cost housing is very hard to find in the Vancouver area, so you need to prepare ahead of time. You might need temporary shelter until you find something more stable.

Temporary Shelter

If you need a temporary place to stay when you get out, there are many places you can stay for free. Remember,

- You may only be able to sleep there at night, not during the day.
- Bed space in shelters is limited. Call the Shelter and Street Help Line (dial 211) to find out where there is space.
- There are rules – respect them or you won't be welcome back.

These are some of the largest Temporary Shelters in the Lower Mainland.

- **Catholic Charities Men's Hostel**
828 Cambie Street, Vancouver, BC
604-443-3292
- **First United Church**
320 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC
604-681-8365 (After 4:00 pm: 604-839-6880)
- **Salvation Army Belkin House**
555 Homer Street, Vancouver, BC
604-681-3405
- **Lookout - The Russell**
740 Carnarvon, New Westminster, BC
604-529-9126
- **Hyland House**
6595 King George Highway, Surrey, BC
604-599-8900
- **Gateway Shelter**
10667 135 A Street, Surrey, BC
604-589-7777

There are **many more Temporary Shelters in BC**. Here's how to find them.

- **The Shelter and Street Help Line (211)**
Shelter Bed Information and Availability for the Lower Mainland and the Fraser Valley
Phone: 211 (call no charge, 24/7)
- **BC Housing**
Lists all the shelters in BC

online:

www.bchousing.org/Options/Emergency_Housing

Stable Housing

Finding stable housing in the Vancouver area can be hard at the best of times, and even more difficult from prison. We can help.

The John Howard Society Homelessness Partnership Strategy program (HPS) can give you information about emergency shelters, supportive housing and where low-cost housing is available. To contact us, call the Community Services Office or put in a request to see us.

Clothing, Furniture and more

Clothing for Release

In Provincial Prison/Jail:

When you were incarcerated, they took the clothes off your back and put them in a storage locker. That's what you'll be released with. But stuff happens. Maybe your clothes got ruined when you were arrested, maybe you've gained or lost a lot of weight since then or maybe you were arrested on a hot summer afternoon and it's now the middle of winter. Here are your options:

- Check to see if a **friend or family member can bring you some**. They can replace the clothes in your locker with the ones they bring (1 for 1 exchange). Ask your Living Unit Officer for details.
- The **Salvation Army** will bring in clothing. This will take some time, so don't leave it until the last minute. Put in a request to see them or phone them. Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services 604-792-8581
- The prison will have a bin of clothing.

In Federal Prison:

- You can take your clothing with you.

Free Clothing

- **First United Church**
320 East Hastings St, Vancouver, BC
604-681-8365 (After 4:00 pm: 604-839-6880)
- **Union Gospel Mission**
601 E. Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC
604-681-3405

Work Clothing

If you don't have the clothes you need to get a job, there's a place that will help you.

- **Working Gear Clothing Society** provides work clothes for unemployed men. You must have a referral from a social services agency, like the Union Gospel Mission. More information about the program is available on their site
87 East Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 1S9
Online: www.workinggear.ca

Inexpensive Clothing, Furniture and more

If you're starting over and need furniture, clothing, and household goods, there are many places you can shop to get a good deal. There are too many to list. Check the phone book or online for addresses.

- Thrift Stores
 - Mennonite Central Committee Thrift Stores
thrift.mcc.org
 - Salvation Army Thrift Stores
www.salvationarmy.ca/britishcolumbia/
 - SPCA Thrift Stores
www.sPCA.bc.ca
 - Union Gospel Mission Thrift Stores
www.ugm.ca
 - United Church Thrift Stores
- Dollar Stores, Discount Stores, Clearance Centres

- Garage / Moving / Estate Sales, Church Rummage Sales
- Used Furniture Stores, Secondhand stores (like Value Village)
- Classified Ads or Buy and Sell Listings (in the paper or online)

Income Assistance (Welfare)

Income Assistance (“welfare”) is the main source of financial assistance in BC. Currently, this program is run by the BC Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and is called the “BC Employment and Assistance” (BCEA). Because the name of the program changes every few years, we'll refer to it using the more familiar term, “welfare”.

Welfare provides both income assistance and helps people get employment. In addition, it provides income assistance to those who are unable to work because of disability.

How do I apply for welfare?

Applying is a 3-step process:

1. Submit an Application
2. Do a 3-week Work Search
3. Attend an Eligibility Interview with Employment and Assistance Worker (EAW), which usually takes place 3 weeks after you submit the Application

It takes a few weeks from when you apply to when you get your first cheque. When you apply, ask at the Welfare Office for the list of places to get free meals and free shelter. This can help you until your cheque arrives.

How do I Submit an Application for welfare?

Before you apply, you should know:

- To Submit an Application, you'll need a **Social Insurance Number**
- As part of the Application, you have to disclose whether you have an **Outstanding Warrant** for an indictable offence or an outstanding warrant under

the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada). You're not eligible for welfare until you resolve these.

- There's a **Checklist** of things you'll need to bring to the Eligibility Interview. Here are a couple of things you'll need to bring:
 - Two pieces of identification (ID), along with a valid Social Insurance Card
 - Primary ID: Government-issued Photo ID - BC Identification (BCID) Card, Driver's license, Passport, Original Citizenship Papers or Immigration Documents), Offender identification card issued by Correctional Services of Canada, Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) issued by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)
 - Secondary ID: Any of the above, or Birth Certificate, immigration or citizenship documents without photos, credit cards
 - Income Tax Notice of Assessment or confirmation that taxes have not been filed

How to Apply:

- **In Provincial Prison/Jail:** Put in a request to Programs to get the Welfare package. Do this 21-45 days prior to release.
- **In Federal Prison:** You will have to wait until you get out before you can apply. You're not eligible while living at a Halfway House.
- **In person:** At any Employment and Income Assistance Office. For the address, check the Government Pages (Blue Pages) of the phone book or check online.
- **Phone:**
BC: 1-866-866-0800 (call no charge, 24/7)
- **Online:**
Fill in the online form
www.iaselfserve.gov.bc.ca/HomePage.aspx#

More Info:

- Online: www.gov.bc.ca/hsd/

Can I be disqualified from receiving Welfare, have my benefits suspended or cut off?

Yes. There are many reasons why. Here are a few you should be aware of.

- Welfare is temporary assistance and MSD can cut you off when you reach your time limit.
- MSD can disqualify you from collecting welfare for lengthy periods of time if you are convicted or plead guilty to welfare fraud.
- MSD can disqualify you from collecting welfare if you lie on the application.
- MSD can disqualify you from collecting welfare if you have an Outstanding Warrant for an indictable offence or an outstanding warrant under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Canada).

What about welfare and Prison?

You are not eligible for welfare while you are in custody or while you are living in a Halfway House. If you are on welfare and get incarcerated, you will not be able to pick up your check, so they will cancel the cheque and close your file.

You'll have to re-apply once you are released. If you are in a Provincial Prison/Jail, you may be able to start the process from in prison. See the information above for details.

What are Disability Benefits?

Disability Benefits are a form of Income Assistance, meant to address the special needs of people with a mental or physical disability.

To qualify, you must have a serious mental or physical medical condition recognized by a doctor.

To apply, you need to fill in the application and you also need a doctor to fill in part of the application. The language in the application can be very complicated, so if you are considering applying, get help with the application process.

- **BC Disability Benefits Advocacy Program** helps people with disabilities to obtain BC Disability. They can help you with the entire process, including the application. Check their site for more information, then call and make an appointment.

BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
Metro Vancouver: 604-872-1278
All of BC: 1-800-663-1278 (call no charge)
Online: www.bccpd.bc.ca/advocacydb.htm

Work

We all have to eat and although it's not the *only* way to pay for the everyday business of living, most of us get a job. But whether you chose to work or to do something else to make a living, you'll have your own opinion about your choice. For example, Howard might be thinking, "John worked overtime every day last week. His job really sucks. He must be sorry the weekend is over", but John might be thinking, "Oh, thank God it's Monday!" We're all different. But, when you look at the choices you have for making a living, you might think that they *all* suck. Well, pick the one that sucks the least.

Having a Criminal Record might limit the type of work you can do, but over 3 million people in Canada have a criminal record.¹

Most of them have jobs!

Steady Employment

Because you're going to be working for a lot of your life, you might be wondering, "What kind of job should I look for?"

- A job you like
- A job that pays well
- A job that will give me a steady source of income

Over the long term, only one of them really matters and that's the last one.

Whether or not you like your job might seem important, but it really isn't. If you need to make a living, you'll do the job no matter how you feel about it. There is a time in your life to get a job you like, but the beginning of your career isn't it. Even if you get your dream job, you

should expect to hate it for the first few weeks. That's just human nature.

Whether a job pays well might appear to be the important thing in determining your financial future, but it isn't. What determines how well off you'll be is not how much you earn, but how much you don't spend. When determining your financial future, money management skills are much more important than how much you earn over your lifetime.

What is really *important* over the long term is getting a *steady* source of income. Periods of unemployment are stressful and expensive. Steady employment (what used to be called job security) allows you to look forward to your days off and gives you the income to enjoy yourself once in a while. With steady employment, you'll be able to save some money for longer-term goals, like buying a car or retiring.

- Steady employment may mean working for the same employer for a long period of time doing the same job. *Example:* Eric has been sorting packages at the Post Office for 20 years.
- Steady employment may mean working for the same employer for a long period of time doing different jobs. *Example:* Steve has been working for an Auto Parts Supplier for 30 years, first in Shipping and Receiving, then in sales and now he's the buyer.
- Steady employment may mean working for different employers but never being unemployed for more than a week at a time. *Example:* Troy is a short order cook. He's worked at a lot of different restaurants over his career, but he never quits one job until he has another to go to.

What kind of guy gets steady employment? A reliable one. Don't even look for steady employment until you know how to keep a job.

Keeping a Job – Be Mr. Reliable

Getting a job, any job, is hard work. There's no sense going to all that work if you don't know how to keep a job. How do you keep a job? Be reliable. Who do employers try to hire? People who look reliable.

- **Do the job they hired you to do.** That means you can't be surfing the web on your smartphone at work

instead of dealing with customers. When you took the job, you agreed to do the work and they agreed to pay you for it. They didn't do that because they need *you*, but because they need *the work* done. Keep your side of the bargain. Do the work and do it well. Because if you don't do it, someone else will have to, so why should they keep you around?

- **Show up reliably.** Go to work every scheduled day. Be there either early or on time every day. If you're sick or late, phone and explain.
- **Be nice.** Be nice and polite to everyone – your boss, your co-workers, the customers, no matter what kind of day they are having, and no matter what kind of day you are having.
- **Keep yourself and your workplace neat and clean.** Dress appropriately and keep both yourself and your workplace clean.
- **Be clean and sober.** You can't do your job well if you're not clean and sober. You can't show up reliably if you're still drunk in the morning. You don't appear neat and clean when you're burned out and reek of dope. You can't be nice to everyone when you're hung over.

If you do all this, you'll be the kind of employee that they're glad they hired. If you lose your job, it won't be because of something you've done. This will make it easier to get another one.

Looking for Work takes:

- **Skill.** It takes skill to write a resume, a cover letter and to do an interview. For help with these skills, see the following listings.
- **Time.** Spend 40 hours a week looking for work. Finding ANY JOB takes time. Finding a GOOD JOB takes even more time. If you spend just a few minutes a day looking for work, it could take you months to find a job.

Getting a Job – Be Mr. Reliable

Getting a job always involves the same **5 steps**:

- **Decide what kind of job you're looking for.** This depends on where you're at in your life. This may involve **Career Planning** and getting more **Education**. But, you also might just decide that at this point you just want any job you can get.
- **Prepare your tools.** No matter what kind of job you're looking for, you always need the same 4 tools: **Looking for Work Clothing**, a **Resume**, a **Cover Letter** and a **Pen**.
 - **Your "Looking for Work Clothing"** is what you wear when you're cold calling, dropping off a resume or going for an interview. It convinces the Employer that you're neat and clean. (For help with this, see the **Clothing** section)
 - **Your Resume** convinces the Employer that you have the education, skills and experience to do the job and that you intend to work. Also, because it shows that other people have hired you and kept you on, it shows that you could be a good employee. (For help with this, refer to the Resources at the end of this section.)
 - **Your Cover Letter** convinces the Employer to look at your resume in the first place. (For help with this, refer to the Resources at the end of this section.)
 - **Your Pen** indicates that you're prepared. You might not need one, but if they want you to fill out an application or any other paperwork and you don't have a pen, you look unprepared. Have a working pen with you at all times
- **Find and Apply for jobs.** There's lots of ways to look. Remember your Tools every time.
 - Ask family and friends
 - Talk to former co-workers and former employers
 - Cold call, which is going from place to place, in person, asking if they're hiring, dropping off resumes or filling in application forms. Know what you're going to say in advance, wear your Looking for Work Clothing, have your resume and a pen. To find places to cold call, look in the Yellow Pages or just go from place to place on a street dropping off resumes.

- Cold call on the web, which is going from site to site, looking for a Careers / Jobs / Job Opportunities page and following the process they have for applying for jobs.
- Job Placement Agencies, Union Halls
- Job Postings on Bulletin Boards - Community Centers, Libraries, some Supermarkets
- Job Postings on Web Sites
- Employment Programs - Teaches you job seeking skills and helps you get a job.
- **Get an Interview.** Your job at the interview is to convince the person who's interviewing you that you are Mr. Reliable because that is who he wants to hire. Your resume might tell him whether or not you have the skills and experience to do the job. Convince him that you do. But while you're at it, convince him that you are Mr. Reliable.

- When answering questions, talk about how you show up on time, you're neat and clean, that you're nice to people.

Example of talking about being nice:

Q: "How would you describe yourself?"

A: "I'm a people person. I really enjoy helping customers."

- If you do an activity that shows commitment, hard work or teamwork, try to work it in. It sets you apart from other candidates.

Example of talking about being neat and clean *and* have an interesting hobby:

Q: "What do your friends say about you?"

A: "Well, my buddies at the Dojo like to make fun of me for always sweeping the mats on which we train before class. They call me Mr. Clean, but I don't like to roll on a dirty mat."

- At the interview, be Mr. Reliable – be there on time, be neat and clean, be clean and sober.
- Usually, after you apply for a job, they call you back for an interview. At a small business, the interview might take place as you're standing

there, giving them a copy of your resume. Always be prepared for an Interview on the Spot.

- Remember that Mr. Reliable always says "Thank-you" .
- **Get a Job.** If you get offered a job, take it. Get some experience. It's easier to look for a job when you already have one.

Resources:

In Provincial Prison:

- Take the **Employment Preparation Program (EPP)**, if offered at your prison. It will teach you more about these skills, you'll earn remission and there might possibly be doughnuts. For further information, put in a request to Programs.

In the Community:

- **Service Canada – Working in Canada** has information on resumes, cover letters, links to job posting sites. Check their site or phone them for an office near you.
Metro Vancouver: 604-893-2200
Canada: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)
Online: www.workingincanada.gc.ca
- **Employment and Labour Market Services** is a one-stop information resource for employment programs and services in BC. To find Employment Assistance Services in person, call Enquiry BC
Metro Vancouver: 604-660-2421
BC: 1-800-663-7867 (call no charge)
Online: www.labourmarketservices.gov.bc.ca
- **Work BC** is an information resource to help you find a job in BC
Online: www.workbc.ca
- **About Jobsearch** offers information on resumes, cover letters, job search, the right answers to interviews questions
Online: jobsearch.about.com
- Read this Book. **What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Manual For Job-hunters And Career-changers.** Richard N. Bolles. Ten Speed Press.
Available at most libraries and bookstores.

Education

Getting more education is a way to a better job and a more interesting future.

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

If you didn't graduate from High School, you still can. No matter what level of education you have currently, the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program can help you upgrade your education for a very low cost. ABE can help you:

- Learn to read or upgrade other skills (writing, math, science)
- Get a Certificate of Completion in Adult Basic Education, your GED high school equivalency, or graduate from High School and get BC Adult Graduation Diploma (the "Adult Dogwood" Diploma)

In Prison:

- **Provincial Prison:** GED and BC Adult Graduation are available at most Provincial Institutions. For further information, put in a request to Programs.
- **Federal Prison:** ABE, GED and BC Adult Graduation are available at most Federal Institutions. For further information, talk to your Institutional Parole Officer.

In the Community:

ABE is available through the Continuing Education department of your local School Board as well as through the Continuing Education department of many Colleges in BC and online. To find a program near you, contact BC 211

Metro Vancouver: 211 (call no charge)
Online: www.bc211.ca

Post-Secondary School

Post-Secondary Education at a Trade School, a College or a University can help you get a good job in a field you like.

- **CareerPlanner** is your one-stop information resource for higher education in BC
Online: www.educationplanner.ca

Mental Health / Stress / Suicide

Everyone experiences stress – it's natural. Without it we would lose the drive to continue living! However, *going to prison is very stressful*. According to the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale², there are only 3 things considered to be more stressful than serving a prison term: they are death of a spouse, divorce, and separation. For many, the most stressful times while serving a prison term are the beginning of the sentence, the end of the sentence and the first two weeks after being released. So, if you're feeling a lot of stress, that's perfectly normal. Give yourself some time to adjust and then you'll be able to move on. Talk to someone. You are not alone.

Stress / Mental Health

All people have problems. Some just know more about how to deal with them.

- Don't think they'll go away on their own. They usually don't.
- Don't think you can't overcome your challenges.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. We all need support.

If you need help dealing with your problems, there are programs set up to help you – support groups, counselling and more.

In Prison:

- Put in a request to talk to Health Care

In the Community:

- **Canadian Mental Health Association** can help you find the services you need.
Greater Vancouver: 604-688-3234
BC: 1-800-555-8222 (Call No Charge)

Crisis and Suicide

You are not alone. Many people have had suicidal thoughts, but with help have found another way to deal with their pain, and have not ended their lives. If you are having thoughts of suicide, please let someone try to help you.

In Prison:

- **Prison Staff** can and will help. If you or someone else in prison is suicidal, tell the staff – any Officer, Health Care Staff, the Pastor, the Elders.

You are not being a rat when you try to get help for someone who is in crisis - you are being a man. How do we know this? The John Howard Society has been in Canadian prisons for over 80 years – we know the code.

- **The John Howard Society** can help. If you or someone else in prison is suicidal, tell us. We will do everything we can to help. You are not alone. Call us.
- **Crisis Line** provides confidential, non-judgmental support for people experiencing distress or despair
Greater Vancouver: 604-872-3311
BC: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-784-2433
(call no charge, 24/7)

In the Community:

- **Crisis Line** provides confidential, non-judgmental support for people experiencing distress or despair
Greater Vancouver: 604-872-3311
BC: 1-800-SUICIDE or 1-800-784-2433
(call no charge, 24/7)

HEP C and HIV/AIDS

What is Hep C?

Hepatitis C (Hep C, HCV) is a blood-borne, viral infection that causes liver damage. Not everyone who has it shows symptoms right away, so many people who are infected don't know they have it!

How do I get Hep C?

Hepatitis C virus is usually transmitted through direct contact with Hep C-contaminated blood, which has to get in to your body. It's not easy to transmit Hep C through other bodily fluids like saliva or semen, unless that bodily fluid has some Hep C-contaminated blood in it and that fluid gets in to your body.

The most common way that Hep C is spread is when you pierce your skin with something that is contaminated with Hep C, or when something that is contaminated comes in to contact with broken skin, like:

- Sharing contaminated equipment (needle, cooker) for IV drug use
- Getting a tattoo or body piercing with a contaminated needle
- Using personal hygiene equipment (a razor, nail clipper, nail scissors or a toothbrush) contaminated by someone else and then, accidentally, piercing your skin or gums with it.

Is there a cure for Hep C?

Although there is currently no cure, there are ways to manage the disease to reduce the damage the virus does to your body. So, get tested and get the medical care you need.

How can I reduce my risk of getting Hep C?

Hep C is hard to kill. It can live for days outside the body - some research says up to 4 days.³ It can be killed with heat, but it can't be killed by detergents or by bleach. So,

- When shooting up, don't use equipment that could be contaminated. If you're not sure, walk away.
- When getting a tattoo or piercing, don't use equipment or ink that could be contaminated. If you're not sure, walk away.
- Don't use someone else's personal hygiene equipment (razor, nail clipper/scissors, toothbrush).

How can I learn more, get tested, get help with Hep C?

In Prison:

- Put in a request to see the Health Care staff.

In the Community:

- **The Lower Mainland Purpose Society**
40 Begbie Street, New Westminster, BC V3M 3L9
Phone: 604-526-2522

What is HIV/AIDS?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that only infects humans. Prolonged infection with HIV can lead to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which is a disease that weakens your immune system and can leave your body unable to fight off infections.

How do I get HIV/AIDS ?

To get HIV/AIDS, you need 3 things:

- A supply of bodily fluids with high levels of HIV (Blood, semen, rectal or vaginal secretions)
- A handy entry point that will allow the virus in to your body (urethra in your penis, your anus, a cut or sore in your mouth, a needle prick to your skin from drugs, tattoos, piercing,)
- An activity that will get the bodily fluids from one person to another (unprotected sex, using contaminated equipment for injection drug use)

Is there a cure for HIV/AIDS ?

Although there is currently no cure, there are ways to manage the disease. So get tested, and get the medical care you need.

How can I reduce my risk of getting HIV/AIDS ?

Just remember to follow Safe Sex, Safe Drug and Safe Tattoo/Piercing practices. So,

- When shooting up, don't use equipment that could be contaminated. If you're not sure, disinfect it or walk away.
- When getting a tattoo or piercing, don't use equipment or ink that could be contaminated. If you're not sure, disinfect it or walk away.
- Don't have unprotected sex.

For further information, see the "Harm Reduction" Section.

How can I learn more, get tested, get help with HIV/AIDs?

In Prison:

- Put in a request to see the Health Care staff
- **Prison Outreach Program (POP)** offers offenders living with HIV information and support. Outreach visits available in many BC Lower Mainland prisons. For help, or to request a visit, phone them.
Prison Outreach Program
Positive Living Society of BC
1107 Seymour Street, 2nd Floor
Vancouver, BC V6B 5S8
From Provincial Prison/Jail: 604-525-8646
From Federal Prison: 1-877-900-2437

In the Community:

- **Positive Living Society of BC** offers programs and services to people living with HIV. Drop-in 10:00 to 4:00, Monday to Friday or phone them.
1107 Seymour Street, 2nd Floor
Vancouver, BC V6B 5S8
Metro Vancouver: 604-893-2200
Rest of BC: 1-800-994-2437 (call no charge)
Online: www.positivelivingbc.org
- **AIDS Vancouver** offers programs and services to people living with HIV.
AIDS Vancouver
1107 Seymour Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 5S8
Phone: 604-893-2201
Online: www.aidsvancouver.org

Harm Reduction

Safer Sex Practices

The best time to have the items you need for safer sex is ALWAYS. To protect yourself, here are some options:

- Abstinence – that means no sex (safest).
- Don't have unprotected sex with anyone unless you are sure they aren't infected.

- Use a latex condom/latex dental dam during sex (oral sex, anal sex, hand job). Don't re-use the condom. If you use a lubricant, make sure it is water-based. Don't use oil-based lubricants. They weaken the condom.

Safer Drug Practices

The health care industry has understood the importance of clean equipment since the 1800s. In a health care setting, all equipment used for administering drugs is pre-sterilized and used only once, so you don't have to be concerned about catching anything. If you're using intravenous drugs, here are some ways to protect yourself.

- Don't do drugs intravenously (safest).
- Don't re-use drug equipment. Use new equipment every time.
- **Don't use contaminated works/rig.**
If you're not sure a needle and anything else you use while shooting up is clean, disinfect it before use. Remember to both **clean and disinfect all the equipment** that touches the drugs or you, not just the needle.

Safer Tattooing/Piercing Practices

Tattooing and Piercing equipment has to be sterile to be safe. The tattooing industry adopted safe practices back in the 1980s, which is why a reputable tattoo parlour feels more like a doctor's office than, well, like a tattoo parlour.

- **Don't use contaminated tattoo equipment.**
In order for piercing or tattooing equipment to be safe for re-use, it has to be sterilized, not just disinfected. You can't do this at home or in prison. Don't get a tattoo or a piercing in a place that doesn't do this.
- **Don't re-use a tattoo needle or a piercing needle.**
The needles used for tattoos and piercings come sterilized and in a package. When the artist uses one, you should see him open the package. When he finishes with it, you should see him dispose of it in a sharps container – otherwise, he could be re-using needles. If you're doing a tattoo or piercing at home or in prison, make sure you're using a sterile needle, not one that's just been disinfected.

- **Don't share ink.**
Ink can't be sterilized. When you get a tattoo, the ink comes pre-packaged and you should see the artist open the package and put it in the gun. If you're doing a tattoo or piercing at home or in prison, don't share ink.

Don't take a chance. Unless you saw it come out of a package, assume the needle you're about to use is dirty. Clean it!

- so you don't shoot it in to your veins

Cleaning Your Equipment

If you want to adopt safer drug practices and safer tattooing practices, you have to keep your equipment clean. There are 3 things you should know.

- **Sterilizing** will kill all pathogens (germs, viruses, mold spores). To sterilize something, you need to *clean off any organic matter* that organisms could hide in and then *treat the item to high heat* for up to an hour, which is typically done using an autoclave. This will kill everything, including Hep C and HIV.
- **Disinfecting** (sanitizing) will kill some pathogens (germs, viruses, mold spores). To disinfect something, you need to *clean off any organic matter* that organisms could hide in and then *cover all surfaces in a disinfectant*, like bleach. This will kill most things, including HIV, but not Hep C.
- **You can't sterilize or disinfect dirty equipment.**
You have to clean off the organic matter *first* before either process will work.

Harm Reduction Supplies

Safer Sex Practices and Safer Drug Practices Supplies are available to you for free.

In Prison:

- **Provincial Prison:** Condoms, water-based lubricants and bleach are available to all offenders without having to ask staff. Methadone Maintenance program is also available.

How to Clean a Needle

Warning – Bleach is not 100% effective against HIV/AIDS, and does not kill Hep C. Still, if you're re-using a needle, this is the best way to protect yourself.

To make cleaning easy, clean your rig right after you use it, before the blood has dried out inside the syringe.

- **Step 1** - Clean it with water 3 times – fresh water every time. Make sure you get out all the organic matter you can see.
- **Step 2** – Disinfect it with Bleach 3 times – fresh, bleach every time. To improve cleaning effectiveness, take your rig apart, and soak each part in bleach for at least 30 seconds. Don't dilute the bleach.
- **Step 3** - Rinse it with water 3 times – fresh water every time. Make sure you rinse the bleach out thoroughly so you don't shoot it in to your veins

- **Federal Prison:** Condoms, water-based lubricants, and bleach are available to all offenders without having to ask staff. Methadone Maintenance program is also available.

A single 30-60 ml bottle of bleach is not considered contraband, so you can't be charged for having one. If you have more than one bottle, you are considered to be in possession of contraband.

In the Community:

- **HealthLinkBC** will help you find a needle exchange or free condoms near you
Phone: 811 (24/7)
- **Alcohol and Drug Information Line** will help you find a needle exchange near you
Metro Vancouver: 604-660-9382
Rest of BC: 1-800-663-1441 (call no charge)
Email: help@bc211.ca
Online: redbookonline.bc211.ca

- **Insite** (Safer Drug Practices supplies, information) 139 East Hastings Street, Vancouver
- **Free Medical Clinic** (Safer Drug Practices supplies, Safer Sex Practices supplies, information) 10667 135A Street, Surrey 604-583-5666

Drug / Alcohol Addiction

“Drug addiction is bizarre in that people will stubbornly cling to it, even if it doesn't make any logical sense at all. They'll keep trying to talk their way out of dealing with what, to others, is an obvious problem.”

- Dave Pavlus, The Last Door Recovery Society⁴

If you are reading this in prison, you've probably already gone through detox. Now, while you're clean and sober, you have an opportunity to get the help you need. Maybe now is the time to talk yourself *in* to dealing with your problem. If you've already tried to deal with it and failed, try again. You don't have to struggle alone.

Non-Residential Services

There are lots of treatment options that don't involve you living in a treatment centre or a Recovery House. Here are some ideas for treatment options you can get no matter where you live.

- **Methadone Maintenance Program**
Taking Methadone is a way of getting off opioids – heroin, oxy, morphine. It's available both inside and outside prison.

In prison: Talk to Health Care

In the Community: Talk to your doctor or phone the Alcohol and Drug Information Line

- **Support Groups**
Groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) are fellowships where people meet to deal with the common issue of addiction. It's a place of acceptance and support from people who have been through what you're going through.

In prison: AA and NA have meetings in many prisons and jails. (Most Recovery Houses and Treatment Centres use the meetings format as a major part of their program, so whether you want to join a support group or go to a Treatment Centre or a Recovery House, going to meetings on the inside will help you to learn about their principles.)

In the Community: Just show up.
To find a meeting near you, phone the Alcohol and Drug Information Line.
To find a support group for other addictions (gambling, internet, sex), call 211

- **Alcohol and Drug Information Line** will help you find what you need to deal with your addiction, including a needle exchange, a methadone program, a support group, a recovery house, or a treatment centre

Metro Vancouver: 604-660-9382 (24/7)

Rest of BC: 1-800-663-1441 (call no charge, 24/7)

Email: help@bc211.ca

Online: redbookonline.bc211.ca

Residential Services

Residential programs aren't for everyone, so make sure you're ready to live by someone else's rules before you start applying. If you're looking for treatment where you live at a house and receive treatment, here are your options:

Recovery Houses

A Recovery House is a clean, safe, sober living environment where you can learn to live free from your addictions. The program is usually 3 months to 2 years in length. You will likely be attending support group meetings such as NA and AA while you are there and many also offer one on one counselling. Many of them also offer help with the everyday business of living – cooking, cleaning, getting an education, getting a job.

You may have heard that not all Recovery Houses are created equal. There is no licensing requirement for recovery houses and so some don't do a very good job while others do an excellent job. Get a referral from someone who knows.

In prison:

For information and referral, talk to the Drug & Alcohol Counsellor at the prison or to your John Howard Worker.

In the Community:

For more information, phone the Alcohol and Drug Information Line

Here are some of the most established houses in the Lower Mainland. There are many more.

- **Last Door**

323 8th Street

New Westminster, BC, V3M 3R3

Phone: 604-525-9771

Toll Free: 1-888-525-9771 (call no charge)

Fax: 604-525-3896

Email: adult@lastdoor.org

Online: www.lastdoor.org

- **Phoenix Society**

13686 94A Avenue

Surrey, BC, V3V 1N1

Phone: 604-583-7166 option "1"

Fax: 604-581-1808

Email: admissions@phoenixsociety.com

Online: www.phoenixsociety.com

- **Together We Can**

2831 Kingsway

Vancouver, BC, V5R 5H9

Phone: 604 451 9854

Fax: 604-451 8863

Email: info@TWCvancouver.org

Online: www.twcvancouver.org

Treatment Centres

Treatment Centres are residential, intensive programs that help you deal with your addiction. The program is usually 4 to 6 weeks in length.

In prison:

For information and referral, talk to the Drug & Alcohol Counsellor at the prison or to your John Howard Worker.

In the Community:

For more information, phone the Alcohol and Drug Information Line. Here are some of the most established Treatment Centres in the Lower Mainland. There are many more.

- Kinghaven**
 31250 King Road
 Abbotsford, BC V2T 6C2
 Phone: 604-864-0039
 Fax: 604-864-9420
 Online: www.kinghaven.ca
- Maple Ridge Treatment Centre**
 22269 Callaghan Avenue
 Maple Ridge, BC, V2X 2E2
 Metro Vancouver: 604-467-3471
 BC: 1-877-678-6782 (call no charge)
 Fax: 604-467-8833
 Email: info@mrtc.bc.ca
 Online: www.mrtc.bc.ca

Legal

Legal Information

- Dial-A-Law** offers information on a variety of legal topics, but not legal advice. Available in English, Chinese and Punjabi by phone and on the Internet.
Metro Vancouver: 604-687-4680 (24/7)
Rest of BC: 1-800-565-5297 (call no charge, 24/7)
 Online: www.dialalaw.org
- Legal Services Society of BC** has a range of free services, providing information, advice and legal aid lawyers to British Columbians. Includes a range of informational publications.
 Online: www.lss.bc.ca (click on “Legal Aid”)
- Law Society of BC**
 Online: www.lawsociety.bc.ca (click on “for the public – Legal Information”)
- BC Civil Liberties Association**
 Online: www.bccla.org (click on “Publications”)

- Click-Law** offers legal information.
 Online: www.clicklaw.bc.ca
- Family Law in British Columbia** provides information about Family Law.
 Online: www.familylaw.lss.bc.ca

Getting Legal Advice

- Access Pro Bono** runs free legal advice clinics throughout BC where volunteer lawyers provide up to a half-hour of free legal advice to clients. Check their site for more information, then call and make an appointment.
Metro Vancouver: 604-878-7400
All of BC: 1-877-762-6664 (call no charge)
 Online: www.accessprobono.ca
- Brydges Line** is a Legal Advice line for those who have been detained, who are under arrest or under active investigation.
All of BC: 1-866-458-5500 (call no charge, 24/7)
- Advice Counsel (Lawyers)**
 (Evenings, Weekends, Holidays):
All of BC: 1-888-595-5677 (call no charge)
- Lawyers (called duty counsel) are also available at most courthouses

Getting a Lawyer

The Law is complicated. When you have been charged with an offence, especially a serious one, it’s not reasonable to expect that you will be able to deal with the legal system without help. Talk to a lawyer as soon as you know you have been charged.

Find a Lawyer

- Lawyer Referral Service** provides you with a referral to a lawyer. More information about the program is available on their site.
Metro Vancouver: 604-687-3221
Rest of BC: 1-800-663-1919
 (Monday-Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm)
Out of Province: lawyerreferral@bccba.org
 Online: www.cba.org

Legal Aid

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees an accused person the right to a fair trial, regardless of their wealth. To ensure that all people have equality when dealing with the legal system, Legal Aid is provided to those who are facing serious charges and who can't afford a lawyer.

To find out whether you are eligible for Legal Aid and to apply, contact The Legal Services Society.

- **The Legal Services Society (Legal Aid)**
Metro Vancouver: 604-408-2172
Rest of BC: 1-866-577-2525 (call no charge)

If you are in jail, call the Legal Services Society office collect and choose the voice mail option for people in jail.

Getting a Pardon

What is a pardon?

The concept of a pardon comes from old England, where, when the King granted a pardon, the person convicted of a crime had the sentence cancelled. In Canada, a pardon means your criminal record is kept separate from other criminal records. A pardon doesn't delete your record – it just hides it. (Although a pardon in Canada is currently called a "Record Suspension", we'll use the older and more familiar term, "Pardon").

What does that mean?

Other Countries:

Having a criminal record may mean you can't get in to other countries. Other countries may or may not recognize your pardon, so having one will not guarantee entry in to another country.

In Canada:

Your record will be removed from the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) database and may not be disclosed without permission from the Minister of Public Safety Canada.⁵

If I get a Pardon, will a criminal record check show that I have a criminal record?

That depends on the type of Criminal Record Check that is done. If you have a pardon and someone does a criminal record check, then a Regular criminal record check will not show that you have a criminal record.

However, if you want to work with vulnerable people (children, the aged, people with disabilities), you need a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Record Check. If you have been convicted of certain sexual offences, and you get a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Record Check, CPIC will show your name as flagged, even if you have been pardoned. You will then be asked to let employers see your record.

If I get a pardon, does a ban still apply to me?

Yes. If the judge added any ancillary orders to your sentence (for example, a 10 year ban on driving), this order is still in place, even if you are granted a pardon.

Will a pardon get me in to the United States?

No. The US will not recognize your pardon. If you are likely to be denied entry to the United States because of your criminal record, you can apply for a Waiver (I-192, Application for Advance Permission to Enter as Nonimmigrant). Further information is available on US Customs and Border Protection website.

Online: https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/760

When can I apply for a pardon?

Before you can apply for a pardon:

- You must complete all of your sentences (Pay all fines, surcharges, costs, restitution, compensation in full), and reach your Warrant Expiry Date or satisfy your probation order
- You must complete the waiting period after your sentences, crime free⁶

Can a pardon be revoked?

Yes. You may lose your pardon if you are later convicted of another offence, or if you made false statements on your application.

Anything else I should know?

You *don't* need a lawyer or a pardon agency to apply for a pardon and having someone else submit your

application won't improve your chances of getting a pardon.

You *do* need to fill in the application form fully, accurately and honestly. If your application isn't complete, your application will be returned to you.

How do I apply for a pardon?

Fill in the application form at the back of a Pardon Application Guide and send it in with all required information and the fee (\$631). The guide includes both the form and step-by-step instructions.

Who do I contact for more information or to get a form?

- **Parole Board of Canada**
Phone Helpline: 1-800-874-2652 (call no charge)
Online: pbc-clcc.gc.ca/prdons/servic-eng.shtml

Walking Away from the Life

When you first got in, the gang gave you the family you wished you had. And you just couldn't say no to all that easy money. And the lifestyle felt great – like being a king. But times change and people change. Maybe now you have a young family of your own and your kids are wondering what you do for a living. Maybe the industry didn't deliver the financial stability you were expecting and you're tired of living one bad drug deal away from bankruptcy. Or maybe you're just tired of always looking over your shoulder. At first, it was great to be notorious. Now you just want to live in peace – to eat lunch without worrying every time someone walks towards your table, to sit in a coffee shop reading the news without being asked to leave.

But whatever your reason, if you've decided to walk away from the life, there's something you should know - it's easy to leave. Even biker gangs have an exit procedure, and no, it doesn't require the untimely death of the exiting member.

So move. Start a new life somewhere where nobody knows you. Get a job. Learn to live a good life, not a grand one. Find a new family at your support group, at

your house of worship, at your MMA gym. Let your kids be proud to have a Dad who's a Roofer or a Mechanic.

It may mean leaving all your friends behind, and even some of your family, but at least you can stop looking over your shoulder. Then, by the time your kids are grown, everyone will have forgotten about your crew and about what you did back in the day. After all, have *you* ever heard of the Clark Parkers or the Riley Park Gang?

If you need help with this, the Gang Task Force can provide you with genuine help and advice – no strings attached. You don't have to rat anyone out. Preventing crime – like your untimely death – is the only thing they want. You can contact them any time.

- **Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (Gang Task Force)** 604-777-7800

Some Straight Talk

For much of life, having to make a choice is difficult because the choices you have don't seem all that different from each other. So it's easy to choose the wrong path. But sometimes, the choice is clear. It's easy to see where each path will take you – especially if you've just been down one of them and you hated it. If you're at such a crossroads, here's a plan to do things differently this time.

1. **Survive.** Learn to survive being a law-abiding citizen. Survive means meeting your needs (food, shelter, clothing, medical care) not your wants. Using the resources listed in this booklet, you can survive as a law-abiding citizen. Then you can move on to the next step – escaping from just surviving.
2. **Get a Job.** Escape from just surviving by getting and keeping a job. A job is an important tool in being law-abiding citizen because it gives you the income you need to both meet your needs and some of your wants. Using the resources listed in this booklet, you can become an employed, law-abiding citizen. Then you can move on to the next step – getting a better job.

3. **Get a Good Job.** With work experience and maybe more education, you'll be in a position to get a better job, and have the income you need to have a good life. You can not only pay your bills, but also buy a car, save for retirement and put something in the bank for those times when you're unemployed.
4. **Move on.** Now that you have a good job, some financial security and a social life, you look just like any other law-abiding citizen. That's because you are one. Get a pardon and get on with enjoying the good life.

Don't kid yourself. This plan will be sabotaged by a substance abuse problem or other addiction issue. There's no room in the survival budget for substance abuse, because substance abuse costs too much. It's just not reasonable to expect yourself to be able to support both you and your habit on a limited income. And you can't keep a job if you're too wrecked to work. It's just not reasonable to expect your employer to pay you if you can't do the work or show up when you're supposed to. This will lose you that job, sending you back to just surviving. So, deal with your substance abuse issue first.

Seriously, don't kid yourself. Pretending to be a law-abiding citizen is not the same as being one. Yes, you might get lucky. You might be that guy who lives in the nice house next door, sends his kids to a private school and drives a nice car, all financed by his "business". Maybe you can fool the neighbours about what you do for a living. Maybe your spouse will pretend she doesn't know. But sooner or later, your kids will figure it out.

And yes, if you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting. Decide for yourself how you feel about that.

But, whatever path you choose, we're here to help.
Just call the Community Services Office,
or put in a request to see us.

The John Howard Society would like to thank all the staff, volunteers, clients, organizations and criminal justice staff who contributed to this booklet. To order more copies of this booklet or to report any errors or omissions, please contact:
The Community Services Office
(604-872-5471 ext. 222)
or put in a request to see us

More Resources

Resources In Prison

- Many outside agencies bring services in to prisons/jails in BC. They're usually listed in your Inmate Handbook. Here are some of them:
 - Alcoholics Anonymous
 - John Howard Society
 - M2/W2 (Inmate Visiting program)
 - Native Prison Liaison Worker
 - Salvation Army
 - POP (for persons with HIV/AIDS)
 - Religious programs from a variety of faith groups
- There is a list of phone calls you can make for free, posted at every prison phone. (You can phone The John Howard Society for free. The local number is always posted.)
- You can mail 7 letters per week within Canada from Provincial Prisons for free. This is a good way to get in touch if you can't afford to phone.

Community Resources

John Howard Society

John Howard - Lower Mainland 604-872-5471
..... ext. 222
752 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC V5V 3C1
Online: www.jhslmbc.ca

John Howard - Fraser Valley 604-852-1226
1 - 1653 Salton Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 7P2
Online: www.jhsfv.com

John Howard - Victoria 250-386-3428
2675 Bridge Street, Victoria, BC V8T 4Y4
Online: www.johnhoward.victoria.bc.ca

Other John Howard Offices in BC

Campbell River: 250-286-0611
Kamloops: 250-434-1700
Kelowna: 250-763-1331
Nanaimo: 250-754-1266
Prince George: 250-561-7343
Vernon: 250-542-4041
Online: www.johnhowardbc.ca/regional/

Help Right NOW

- BC211 (Info on All Services, 24/7).....211
 Online: redbookonline.bc211.ca
- Crisis Line
 Greater Vancouver:604-872-3311
 BC: (call no charge).....1-800-SUICIDE
1-800-784-2433
- Police, Fire, Ambulance.....911

Addictions

- Alcohol and Drug Information Line
 Metro Vancouver:604-660-9382
 BC: (call no charge).....1-800-663-1441
 Online: redbookonline.bc211.ca
- Alcoholics Anonymous
 Metro Vancouver:604-434-3933
 Victoria:250-383-0415
 Rest of BC: www.bcyukonaa.org
- Narcotics Anonymous
 Metro Vancouver: (call no charge)1-866-683-6819
 Rest of BC: www.bcna.ca
- Problem Gambling Help Line:1-888-795-6111

First Nations Resources

- Cwenengitel Aboriginal Society604-588-5561
 Online: www.cwenabso.com
- First Nations Employment Centre.....604-605-8901
 Online: www.fnes.ca
- Hey-Way'-Noqu' Healing Centre for Addictions Society
604-874-1831
- Kekinow Native Housing Society
 Metro Vancouver:604-591-5299
 Toll Free:1-877-591-5299
 Online: www.kekinow.ca
- Native Courtworker & Counselling Association
 Metro Vancouver:604-985-5355
 Toll Free:1-877-811-1190
 Online: www.nccabc.ca
- United Native Nations Society.....604-688-1821
- Vancouver Native Housing Society604-320-3312
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre604-251-4844
 Online: www.vafcs.org

- Healing Our Spirit Society (BC Aboriginal HIV/AIDS)
604-879-8884
 Online: www.healingourspirit.org
- Vancouver Native Health Society604-255-9766

Food

- Food Bank604-876-3601
- to find Free Meals phone
 The Shelter and Street Help Line211

Government

- Canada Revenue Agency (Income Tax).....1-800-959-8281
 Online: www.cra-arc.gc.ca
- Employment Insurance (EI)1-800-206-7218
 Online: www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/sc/ei/index.shtml
- Enquiry BC (All BC Government Services)
 Victoria:250-387-6121
 Metro Vancouver:.....604-660-2421
 BC:(call no charge)1-800-663-7867
- GST Credit1-800-959-1953
 Online: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/gstst/menu-eng.html
- Reference Canada (All Federal Government Services)
 Canada:(call no charge)1-800-622-6232

Health

- AIDS Vancouver:604-893-2001
 BC: (call no charge).....1-800-555-8222
 Online: www.aidsvancouver.org
- BC Coalition of People with Disabilities
 Metro Vancouver:604-872-1278
 BC: (call no charge).....1-800-663-1278
 Online: www.bccpd.bc.ca/advocacydb.htm
- HealthLinkBC (health related information) .. 811
 Online: www.healthlinkbc.ca
- Positive Living Society of BC (HIV/AIDs)
 Metro Vancouver:604-893-2200
 Rest of BC: (call no charge)1-800-994-2437
 Online: www.positivelivingbc.org

Housing

- Residential Tenancy Office
 Metro Vancouver:604-660-1020
 Victoria.....250-387-1602
 BC: (call no charge).....1-800-665-8779
 Online: www.rto.gov.bc.ca

Planning for Success – Release Planning

Shelter and Street Help Line	211
TRAC (Tenant Resource and Advocacy Centre)	
Metro Vancouver:	604-255-0546
BC: (call no charge).....	1-800-665-1185
Online: www.tenants.bc.ca	
Triage Shelter.....	604-254-3700
707 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC	

Immigrant

Immigration Services Society of BC.....	604-684-2561
Online: www.issbc.org	
S.U.C.C.E.S.S.	604-684-1628
Online: www.successbc.ca	

Legal

Access Pro Bono	
Metro Vancouver:	604-878-7400
All of BC: (call no charge)	1-877-762-6664
Online: www.accessprobono.ca	
Advice Counsel (Lawyers – Evenings, Weekends, Holidays) (call no charge)	1-866-595-5677
Brydges Line (Legal Advice line for those under arrest) (call no charge, 24/7)	1-866-458-5500
Dial-A-Law	
Metro Vancouver: (24/7)	604-687-4680
Rest of BC: (call no charge, 24/7).....	1-800-565-5297
Online: www.dialalaw.org	
Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (Gang Task Force).....	604-777-7800
Lawyer Referral Service	
Metro Vancouver:	604-687-3221
Rest of BC:	1-800-663-1919
Online: www.cba.org	
The Legal Services Society (Legal Aid)	
Metro Vancouver:	604-408-2172
Rest of BC: (call no charge)	1-866-577-2525
Parole Board of Canada	
Helpline: (call no charge)	1-800-874-2652
Online: pbc-clcc.gc.ca/prdons/servic-eng.shtml	

Mental Health

Crisis Line	
Greater Vancouver:	604-872-3311
BC: (call no charge).....	1-800-SUICIDE
.....	1-800-784-2433

Canadian Mental Health Association	
Greater Vancouver:	604-688-3234
BC: (call no charge).....	1-800-555-8222
Coast Mental Health Outreach.....	604-562-3221
Kettle Friendship Society.....	604-251-2801
Online: www.thekettle.ca	

Transportation

Translink Transit Information.....	604-953-3333
Online: www.translink.ca	

Welfare

Welfare Information	1-866-866-0800
Online: www.gov.bc.ca/hspd/	

Youth

Adolescent Services Unit (ASU)	604-660-9376
Covenant House (16 to 22)	
Greater Vancouver:	604-685-7474
BC: (call no charge).....	1-877-685--7474
Youth Detox Services (13 to 21)	
Greater Vancouver:	604-872-4349
BC: (call no charge).....	1-877-872-4349

Planning on throwing this booklet out? Keep this Page. It has all the phone numbers you need.

1 "Pardon me – a guide to the federal pardon program". CBC News. 2004-01-24.
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/crime/fed-pardon-program.html>.

2 Peter Hanson, *The Joy of Stress* (Islington: Hanson Stress Management Organization, 1986), 47

3 Government of Canada. "Frequently Asked Questions About Hepatitis C." Public Health Agency of Canada. 2009-05-07. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hepc/faq-eng.php#a2>

4 Jon Ferry, "Hundreds find new life behind Last Door," *The Province* [Vancouver], 2009-12-04, <http://www2.canada.com/story.html?id=2301472>

5 Government of Canada. "Fact Sheet – Record Suspensions." Parole Board of Canada. 2012-03-09. <http://www.pbc-clcc.gc.ca/prdons/servic-eng.shtml>.

6 Government of Canada. "Fact Sheet – Record Suspensions."