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# MISSION STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL PAROLE BOARD



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National  
Parole Board

Commission nationale des  
libérations conditionnelles

Canada

The National Parole Board,  
as part of the  
Criminal Justice System,



makes independent, quality  
conditional release decisions  
and clemency recommendations.

The Board,

by facilitating the timely  
reintegration  of offenders  
as law-abiding citizens,  
contributes to the protection  
of society.

*December 1986*

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## Notes on the Mission statement

The Mission statement, core values and guiding principles form the constitution of the National Parole Board, and serve to guide and challenge us to improve the ways in which we discharge all our responsibilities within the context of the criminal justice system, and Canadian society.

Our statement that we are part of the criminal justice system means that cooperation and application of recognized justice principles are of great importance.

The National Parole Board has the authority to decide when an offender under its jurisdiction will be released, and under which conditions. The Board is thus a releasing authority: the limits are exclusively determined by the *Parole Act*. In carrying out its corporate responsibilities, the Parole Board is governed by the legislation and policies of the Government of Canada.

The National Parole Board has as its primary objective the protection of society, and as its major strategy quality decisions related to conditional release and clemency. Conditional release facilitates the timely reintegration of offenders by providing them, during the course of their sentences, with opportunities to establish themselves in the community as law-abiding citizens. The Board, in providing opportunities for reintegration, contributes to the protection of society by setting conditions suitable to each individual and, if required, by returning the offender to custody or reducing the constraints imposed. The NPB will strive to ensure that once a specific release program has been approved, the Board will be notified in a timely and professional manner of any significant changes which occur during the release period and respond as required in order to accomplish the Mission. As well, consistent with the protection of society, the Board must refuse conditional release where the community would be subject to undue risk.

While the NPB has conditional release responsibility only until the expiration of sentence, supervised release is viewed as increasing the likelihood of reintegration of the offender, and thus contributing to the long term protection of society.

Crime and recidivism exist as part of societal life. However, we are committed to contributing to the best of our ability to a safe society through the application of the guiding principles. Our contribution to the protection of society encompasses society at large, including victims, local communities, staff and inmates in institutions, offenders and their families. We recognize that protection of society

may mean different things to different segments of society. In the discharge of our responsibilities we will consider the various interests.

We recognize that for victims, offenders and their respective families our decisions are of critical importance. We will therefore strive to exercise the highest degree of sensitivity and respect in our dealings with those primarily affected by our processes and decisions.

The National Parole Board also has the opportunity to acknowledge the reintegration of offenders and to respect the right of society to be protected through its responsibilities for clemency. The decision to recommend the grant of a pardon under the *Criminal Records Act* is an acknowledgement of the reintegration of the offender; that the offender has not returned to criminal activity after serving the sentence. In its role with respect to the Royal Prerogative of Mercy, the NPB makes recommendations concerning extraordinary circumstances which warrant an act of clemency. The exercise of such clemency is essential to provide relief in unique situations, consistent with the protection of society.

The NPB strives to make independent, quality decisions related to conditional release and clemency. The independence of the Board is in relation to the decision making of Board Members in individual cases. The NPB is however, part of the criminal justice system, and thus contributes to the protection of society and reintegration of offenders within the context of the justice system and as an organization within the framework of the Government of Canada.

The NPB will respect the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and act proactively in its application which will assist the Board in making quality decisions. The Board is committed to provide decisions that are fair, impartial, equitable, responsible, rational, consistent and understandable, as well as timely, thorough and well documented. These qualities must also be reflected in the processes and information provided to support decision making.

We will strive to make quality decisions by utilizing appropriate methods of assessment and by consistently applying our policies and amending them when required. Our commitment to quality also challenges us to improve the methods of assessment, operating methods, conditions and circumstances under which decisions are taken and to ensure that the opportunity to be reviewed for conditional release and clemency is available equitably to all eligible offenders. We will be careful in our demands for, and use of, human and financial re-

sources, respecting the public interest in limiting expenses and recognizing that resources might in certain cases better contribute to the protection of society if they were used somewhere else.

### **VALUES AND PRINCIPLES**

The core values are those which will serve to guide the organization in fulfilling the Mission. The principles are the application of our core values to the programs and operations of the Board.

## CORE VALUE



We recognize and respect the inherent dignity of individuals and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of society.

## PRINCIPLES

Recognition and respect for the dignity of the individual demand that the Board be sensitive to and demonstrate respect for the social and cultural differences of individual offenders.

Based on our recognition of the dignity of the individual, the humane, fair, equitable, individualized and impartial assessment of offenders is critical to achieving our Mission. As individuals, offenders are entitled to the protections guaranteed within the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. They must be notified of the information the Board will use in its decision making and have a chance to respond. Offenders are also entitled to an assistant to help them present their case to the Board. We will strive to have our policies and procedures clearly written, available, and easily understood.

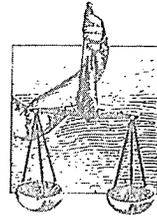
Enabling offenders to be informed participants in the decision-making process contributes to quality decisions.

For substantive decisions, hearings provide opportunities for the assessment of offenders and are essential to fundamental justice. The hearing process is non-judicial; it is a method to assess the case of the offender in a non-adversarial way.

Offenders must have a method of redress, through a formal appeal process.

Consistent with our desire to protect society and respect the dignity of the individual, we will strive to render our decisions as promptly as possible.

We must continue to strive to demonstrate our recognition of the dignity of the individual in all our dealings with offenders. This core value will serve to challenge us to provide improved services, and is critical to the achievement of our Mission.



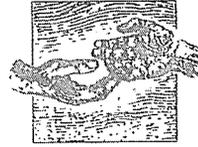
We recognize that the majority of offenders have the potential to function as law-abiding citizens.

The National Parole Board, through conditional release programs must continue to strive to provide an opportunity for individual offenders to reintegrate into society while serving their sentences. Offenders must — often through considerable personal effort — demonstrate that they are prepared for a safe reintegration into society. This may also require the active support and encouragement of others. While under supervision the offender must continue to demonstrate a commitment to a law-abiding life. Accepting that the community is the only environment in which the offender can fully demonstrate the ability to function as a law-abiding citizen, gradual release to the community, and quality community supervision and support are essential to achieve our Mission of protecting society by facilitating the timely reintegration of offenders.

We must acknowledge that there is a level of risk associated with conditional release. Within the decision-making process we must strive to minimize this risk through release, at an appropriate time, with necessary conditions, and timely review of those cases referred back to the National Parole Board when levels of risk have altered. To respond to the change in levels of risk, the conditions of release may need to be increased or relaxed to protect society and to assist in the reintegration of the offender.

Individuals must be entitled to be freed from the stigma of their criminal record once they have demonstrated over time their reintegration through law-abiding behaviour in the community. The granting of a pardon is an acknowledgement of the law-abiding behaviour of the individual.

## CORE VALUE



It is the responsibility of all individuals within the National Parole Board to create and sustain an environment characterized by mutual trust and respect.

We will strive to ensure that individuals with an understanding of social justice and with abilities to apply our principles are selected to assist in accomplishing our Mission.

We will strive to clearly articulate and communicate the corporate values, guiding principles and expected results. Given this direction, we trust individuals to carry out their responsibilities and hold them accountable to do so.

We will encourage and facilitate initiative and flexibility in achieving our Mission, while ensuring equitable and fair delivery of our programs. Policies and procedures must define the areas which are vital to the effective achievement of the Mission. They will be kept to a minimum and should provide the framework for exercising discretion.

We must provide an environment which is healthy, secure and conducive to the achievement of the Mission. This milieu must be characterized by open and honest communication, where one can express ideas and concerns. To achieve our Mission we must be open to change and continually strive to improve. Individuals must be supported and encouraged in the exercise of their responsibilities, and be recognized for their accomplishments. Training and development opportunities will be provided consistent with the individual's needs and with the achievement of the Mission.

The delegation of authority, as close as possible to the impact of the decisions, will demonstrate our trust and respect for the individual and foster creativity in the achievement of our Mission. Our management processes of planning, organizing, implementing, controlling and evaluating must be accomplished within an environment in which individually and collectively we participate in and contribute to the achievement of our Mission and strive for improvement.

As an organization, we are responsible to strive to ensure that we have adequate resources to meet our objectives and to utilize resources effectively. To do this we must strive to clearly identify and order our priorities and establish individual and organizational accountability for their fulfillment. There must be a willingness to change the structures and the responsibilities within the organization when doing so will facilitate the achievement of the Mission. Those affected must have an opportunity to participate in discussions of such changes, be informed of any decisions and be provided with the reasons why such decisions are being taken.

The National Parole Board recognizes that information is a major resource required to achieve our Mission and that it is essential to effectively manage this resource.

We require relevant, accurate, and timely information to support decision making processes, to ensure responsible program delivery, and to permit individuals to fulfill their responsibilities. We must encourage and support research and evaluation efforts which will contribute to the continued development of our knowledge and information base.

Both the environment and structure of the National Parole Board must facilitate and support the effective and efficient collection, analysis, synthesis, storage and dissemination of this resource.

We must be informed of the economic, social and political environment in which we operate. We must strive to ensure that the information which is essential to support and permit improvement of our operations is readily available to individuals throughout the Board and is obtained economically.

We will foster an active exchange of information with our colleagues throughout the criminal justice system, nationally and internationally, and with agencies and individuals who share common interests in social justice issues.

We will strive to be open and accountable to the public for our activities while respecting the individual's right to privacy and protection. We will also strive to enhance public understanding and acceptance of our role through active, responsive and honest communication with the public.

We will strive to be responsive to our environment and to the needs of the individuals. It is through respecting these principles that we will demonstrate our trust in and respect of the individual.