

§2.18 Granting of parole.

The granting of parole to an eligible prisoner rests in the discretion of the U.S. Parole Commission. As prerequisites to a grant of parole, the Commission must determine that the prisoner has substantially observed the rules of the institution or institutions in which he has been confined; and upon consideration of the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the prisoner, must determine that release would not depreciate the seriousness of his offense or promote disrespect for the law, and that release would not jeopardize the public welfare (i.e., that there is a reasonable probability that, if released, the prisoner would live and remain at liberty without violating the law or the conditions of his parole).

§2.19 Information considered.

(a) In making a parole or reparole determination the Commission shall consider, if available and relevant:

(1) Reports and recommendations which the staff of the facility in which such prisoner is confined may make;

(2) Official reports of the prisoner's prior criminal record, including a report or record of earlier probation and parole experiences;

(3) Pre-sentence investigation reports;

(4) Recommendations regarding the prisoner's parole made at the time of sentencing by the sentencing judge and prosecuting attorney;

(5) Reports of physical, mental, or psychiatric examination of the offender; and

(6) A statement, which may be presented orally or otherwise, by any victim of the offense for which the prisoner is imprisoned about the financial, social, psychological, and emotional harm done to, or loss suffered by such victim.

(b)(1) There shall also be taken into consideration such additional relevant information concerning the prisoner (including information submitted by the prisoner) as may be reasonably available (18 U.S.C. 4207). The Commission encourages the submission of relevant information concerning an eligible prisoner by interested persons.

(2) To permit adequate review of information concerning the prisoner, materials submitted to the Commission should be received by the Commission no later than the first day of the month preceding the month of the scheduled hearing docket.

(3) If material of more than six (6), double-spaced, letter-sized pages is first submitted at the time of the hearing (or preliminary interview) and the hearing panel (or person conducting the hearing or preliminary interview) concludes that it is not feasible to read all the material at that time, the person submitting the material will be permitted to summarize it briefly at the hearing (or preliminary interview). All of the material submitted will become part of the record to be considered by the Commission in its review of the proceedings.

(4) The Commission will normally consider only verbal and written evidence at hearings. Recorded audio and visual material will be reviewed at hearings only if there is no adequate substitute to permit a finding under paragraph (c) of this section. Otherwise, recorded audio and visual material should be submitted prior to the hearing for review and summarization, pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(c) The Commission may take into account any substantial information available to it in establishing the prisoner's offense severity rating, salient factor score, and any aggravating or mitigating circumstances, provided the prisoner is apprised of the information and afforded an opportunity to respond. If the prisoner disputes the accuracy of the information presented, the Commission shall resolve such dispute by the preponderance of the evidence standard; that is, the Commission shall rely upon such information only to the extent that it represents the explanation of the facts that best accords with reason and probability. If the Commission is given evidence of criminal behavior that has been the subject of an acquittal in a federal, state, or local court, the Commission may consider that evidence if:

(1) The Commission finds that it cannot adequately determine the prisoner's suitability for release on parole,

§ 2.20

28 CFR Ch. I (7-1-08 Edition)

or to remain on parole, unless the evidence is taken into account;

(2) The Commission is satisfied that the record before it is adequate notwithstanding the acquittal;

(3) The prisoner has been given the opportunity to respond to the evidence before the Commission; and

(4) The evidence before the Commission meets the preponderance standard.

In any other case, the Commission shall defer to the trial jury. Offense behavior in Category 5 or above shall presumptively support a finding under paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(d) Recommendations and information from sentencing judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, and other interested parties are welcomed by the Commission. In evaluating a recommendation concerning parole, the Commission must consider the degree to which such recommendation provides the Commission with specific facts and reasoning relevant to the statutory criteria for parole (18 U.S.C. 4206) and the application of the Commission's guidelines (including reasons for departure therefrom). Thus, to be most helpful, a recommendation should state its underlying factual basis and reasoning. However, no recommendation (including a prosecutorial recommendation pursuant to a plea agreement) may be considered as binding upon the Commission's discretionary authority to grant or deny parole.

[42 FR 39809, Aug. 5, 1977, as amended at 44 FR 26550, May 4, 1979; 44 FR 27658, May 11, 1979; 44 FR 31638, June 1, 1979; 49 FR 34207, Aug. 29, 1984; 49 FR 44098, Nov. 2, 1984; 50 FR 36423, Sept. 6, 1985; 51 FR 7064, Feb. 28, 1986; 56 FR 16270, Apr. 22, 1991; 56 FR 30868, July 8, 1991; 58 FR 16612, Mar. 30, 1993]

§ 2.20 Paroling policy guidelines: Statement of general policy.

(a) To establish a national paroling policy, promote a more consistent exercise of discretion, and enable fairer and more equitable decision-making without removing individual case consideration, the U.S. Parole Commission has adopted guidelines for parole release consideration.

(b) These guidelines indicate the customary range of time to be served before release for various combinations of offense (severity) and offender (pa-

role prognosis) characteristics. The time ranges specified by the guidelines are established specifically for cases with good institutional adjustment and program progress.

(c) These time ranges are merely guidelines. Where the circumstances warrant, decisions outside of the guidelines (either above or below) may be rendered.

(d) The guidelines contain instructions for the rating of certain offense behaviors. However, especially mitigating or aggravating circumstances in a particular case may justify a decision or a severity rating different from that listed.

(e) An evaluation sheet containing a "salient factor score" serves as an aid in determining the parole prognosis (potential risk of parole violation). However, where circumstances warrant, clinical evaluation of risk may override this predictive aid.

(f) Guidelines for reparole consideration are set forth at § 2.21.

(g) The Commission shall review the guidelines, including the salient factor score, periodically and may revise or modify them at any time as deemed appropriate.

(h) If an offender was less than 18 years of age at the time of the current offense, such youthfulness shall, in itself, be considered as a mitigating factor.

(i) For criminal behavior committed while in confinement see § 2.36 (Rescission Guidelines).

(j)(1) In probation revocation cases, the original federal offense behavior and any new criminal conduct on probation (federal or otherwise) is considered in assessing offense severity. The original federal conviction is also counted in the salient factor score as a prior conviction. Credit is given toward the guidelines for any time spent in confinement on any offense considered in assessing offense severity.

(2) Exception: Where probation has been revoked on a complex sentence (i.e., a committed sentence of more than six months on one count or more of an indictment or information followed by a probation term on other count(s) of an indictment or information), the case shall be considered for