

The Department of Justice Victim Notification System



A Service Provided by:

1. The Federal Bureau of Investigation,
2. The United States Attorneys' Offices,
3. The Federal Bureau of Prisons, and
4. The Office for Victims of Crime

Introduction

The Department of Justice is committed to ensuring that victims of federal crime are treated fairly as their case moves through the criminal justice system .

In order to provide victims with information on case events, the Department of Justice has developed the **Victim Notification System (VNS)**. This brochure will provide you with information about VNS.

Victim Notification System (VNS)

VNS is a cooperative effort between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Attorneys' offices, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

This free, computer-based system provides two important services to victims: information and notification. This information is available in English and Spanish.

VNS can inform you of:

- Information on scheduled court hearings.
- An offender's custody status, such as placement in community corrections centers, furlough, release, or death.

VNS Information

Registration:

You will receive a **Victim Identification Number (VIN)** and a **Personal Identification Number (PIN)** that will allow you to access the system.

If you have chosen to participate in VNS, but have not received these numbers, please contact either the FBI or U.S. Attorney's office Handling your case.

- ☞ Your VIN and PIN numbers are both **required** when receiving information.

The VNS Call Center:

- ☎ You may call **1-866-365-4968** for current defendant custody and court information. You will be required to enter your VIN and your PIN.
- ☎ By following the prompts, VNS will provide custody information and notice of upcoming court events.

VNS Notification:

Aside from the VNS Call Center, you may receive information on case events by telephone, E-mail, numeric pager, or fax.

Please note that in some instances, VNS may first contact you by phone.

Common Questions

Below are some common questions about VNS. If at any time you have a question about VNS that is not answered here, please feel free to contact your local FBI or U.S. Attorney's office.

1. What if I forget my PIN?

If you cannot remember your VIN or PIN numbers, please contact the person indicated on your initial notification letter or the Victim-Witness Coordinator at your local U.S. Attorney's office.

2. What if I am not at home or my phone is busy when VNS calls?

If you are not at home or if your telephone line is busy, the Call Center will continue calling you every 30 minutes. If the call is answered, but is not confirmed with your PIN number, VNS will continue to call every 2 hours.

3. When can I call VNS?

Monday - Friday 6:00 a.m. - 3:00 a.m.
Saturday 6:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

(Eastern Time)

1-866-DOJ-4YOU
(1-866-365-4968)

Common Questions (continued)

4. Does the Victim Notification System ensure my safety?

No. Do not depend on VNS to ensure your safety. If you feel that you are being threatened, **immediately** notify law enforcement.

5. What should I do if my contact information changes?

If your address or phone number changes, please contact the person indicated on your initial notification letter or the Victim-Witness Coordinator at your local U.S. Attorney's office.

6. Must I receive notification?

You must notify the person indicated on your initial notification letter or the Victim-Witness Coordinator at your local U.S. Attorney's office if you do not wish to receive notification.

INFORMATION CARD

Victim Identification Number (VIN)

Personal Identification Number (PIN)

Not all relevant information regarding a case will be contained within VNS. Victims may contact the respective agency staff for additional information.

Participating Agencies

Investigation: FBI

The FBI's Victim Specialist will be in contact with you during the investigation stage of the case. Notifications which may be provided include the arrest of a suspect, whether the case is declined for prosecution, or whether the case is being referred to state or local authorities.

Prosecution: United States Attorneys' offices

Once criminal charges are filed by the U.S. Attorney's office, a Victim-Witness Coordinator will be in contact with you. Notifications which the U.S. Attorney's office may provide include the filing of charges, the scheduling of court proceedings, and the sentencing.

Incarceration: Bureau of Prisons

If a defendant is incarcerated at a federal prison, you will be able to receive information through the Federal Bureau of Prison's Victim Notification program on release-related activities including community corrections center placement, furlough, parole hearings, escape, and death.