



Proposition 57: Credit Earning for Inmates Frequently Asked Questions

(Updated May 1, 2017)

In November, California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 57 (64% to 35%), which gives California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) inmates the ability to earn additional credits for sustained good behavior and for approved rehabilitative or educational achievements. The current credit-earning system is based on the crime committed. This new system will be based on conduct and participation in programs. Under Proposition 57, the department will incentivize inmates to take responsibility for their own rehabilitation; promote public safety by encouraging inmates to pursue educational, vocational, and self-improvement activities; and reduce recidivism by increasing the likelihood that inmates will successfully transition back into our communities.

What are the credits inmates can earn under Proposition 57?

Inmates are expected to work or participate in rehabilitative programs and activities to prepare for their eventual return to society. Under Proposition 57, inmates who comply with the rules, avoid violence, and perform duties assigned to them, are eligible to earn Good Conduct Credits. Inmates who participate in approved rehabilitative programs and activities shall be eligible to earn Milestone Completion Credits, Rehabilitative Achievement Credits, or Educational Merit Credits.

Credits earned for good conduct and rehabilitative and educational achievements can advance an inmate's release date if sentenced to a determinate term, or advance an inmate's initial parole hearing date if sentenced to an indeterminate term with the possibility of parole. (*Note: A determinate term is a sentence of specified length. An indeterminate term is a sentence of unspecified length which ends only when the inmate is granted parole by the Board of Parole Hearings.*) Inmates who violate prison rules will have credits revoked.

Who is eligible?

All inmates other than condemned inmates and those serving sentences of life without the possibility of parole can be eligible to earn Good Conduct Credit, Milestone Completion Credit, Rehabilitative Achievement Credit, and Educational Merit Credit.

What are Good Conduct Credits under Proposition 57?

Most inmates currently receive some form of Good Conduct Credits. These credits are awarded to eligible inmates who comply with all the rules within a prison and perform the duties as assigned on a regular basis. Effective May 1, 2017, Good Conduct Credits will be awarded according to the following table:



Good Conduct Credits Table (GCC):

Inmates Eligible	Prior GCC Credits	GCC Credit Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violent offenders serving determinate sentences or indeterminate life sentences 	Zero to 15%	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-violent second- and third-strikers 	Zero to 33.3%	33.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-for-day offenders 	50%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offenders with violent offenses serving in fire camps 	15%	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-for-day minimum-custody offenders Non-violent offenders serving in fire camps 	33.3% to 66.6%	66.6%

CDCR will process Release Date Change Notices (RDCN) in release date order, so that inmates with the closest release date will receive their notices first. *(Note: Release dates already within 60 days of May 1, 2017 will not change.)*

What are Milestone Completion Credits?

The Milestone Completion Credits are those that give inmates productive work and skill development opportunities to better prepare them to find employment upon release and thereby reduce recidivism. Milestone Completion Credits will be awarded for achievement of a distinct objective in approved rehabilitative programs, including academic, vocational, and significant self-help program. Milestone Credits are currently capped at a maximum of six weeks in a 12-month consecutive period. The proposed regulations will expand the Milestone Credits to 12 weeks in a 12-month consecutive period, starting on August 1, 2017.

What are Rehabilitative Achievement Credits?

Hundreds of self-help and volunteer public service activities offered in California prisons are intended to provide meaningful rehabilitative programming to our inmate population. Currently, there is no credit-earning attached to self-help activities. Proposition 57 changes that, and subtracts up to one month per year from an inmate’s sentence for participating in up to 208 hours of eligible self-help programs. The department is currently evaluating the various self-help activities to determine which will qualify for the credits.

What are Education Merit Credits?

Education Merit Credits will recognize the achievements of inmates who earn a high school diploma or GED, higher education degrees, such as an AA or a BA, and the offender mentor certification program that’s available at several of our prisons.



Offenders must earn at least 50 percent or more of the degree or diploma during their current term in order to receive Education Merit Credits. Because it can take years to earn a college degree, inmates who achieve that goal will be given three-to-six month one-time reductions. These credits will take effect in August 2017, but will be applied retroactively.

Can an inmate lose credits?

CDCR can revoke Good Conduct Credits, Milestone Completion Credits, and Rehabilitative Achievement Credits as a result of disciplinary infractions and rules violations. Educational Merit Credits are not subject to forfeiture for disciplinary reasons.

Why are the credits being implemented incrementally?

The changes proposed in the Proposition 57 regulations require CDCR to properly provide training to staff, as well as update information technology systems, and revise credit calculations systems.