

# **Chester County Juvenile Probation Restitution**

## ***Why Do I Have to Pay Restitution?***

When you commit a crime, you harm the victim. Under Pennsylvania's Balanced and Restorative Justice mission, you have an obligation to repair the harm you have caused.

One way to do this is to pay your victim back for any financial losses they suffered as a result of your behavior. These losses may include property damage or loss, medical bills, home and/or car repairs, insurance deductibles, etc. Paying restitution is one way of taking responsibility for your actions and trying to make things right.

## ***How is Restitution Determined?***

Victims provide documentation of any medical bills and/or the value of items stolen or damaged and the amount their insurance company has paid if a claim was submitted. The Judge or Hearing Master will determine the amount you owe in court. If your case is being handled out of Court, your Probation Officer will verify the amount you owe.

## ***What if I Disagree with the Amount of Restitution?***

If you disagree with the amount, discuss your concerns with your attorney who will be able to answer your questions. You cannot see the victim's financial statements, but you can be told what is listed on them.

## ***How Long Do I Have to Pay Restitution?***

You should pay your restitution as soon as possible. It must be paid in full before your case can be closed. If you are on Informal Adjustment or a Consent Decree, you have limited time to pay. Your Probation Officer can help you come up with a suitable payment plan if you are unable to pay the full amount immediately. If you do not pay regularly, you could be on probation until you are 21 years old.

## ***Can My Parents Pay Restitution For Me?***

Yes, but you should then reimburse your parents. You are the one who committed the offense and you should take responsibility.

## ***Can I Pay My Victim(s) Directly?***

No. Once restitution is court ordered, your payments MUST come through the Court. Payment will be recorded so that you receive credit for your payment and a check is then mailed to the victim.

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## ***Where Do I Send My Payments?***

Payments may be made by check or money order through the mail. Checks and money orders should be made out to Chief Probation Officer. Please include the word "restitution" on the memo line along with your Docket number(s), which can be found on your supervision contract. Mail your payment to the following address:

Adult Probation and Parole Department  
Chester County Justice Center  
201 West Market Street,  
Suite 2100  
P.O. Box 2746  
West Chester, Pa 19380-0989

You may also make payments in person at the above address in cash or by check, credit card, money order or debit card. Payments are also accepted through Western Union.

- **Make sure you keep a record of all your payments and do not send cash through the mail!**

## ***How Can I Pay Restitution if I Cannot Find a Job?***

If you cannot find a job, talk to your Probation Officer who may be able to assist you in finding employment. Remember that you owe a debt to a victim and you may have to take a job you don't really like in order to pay your debt.

## ***How Can I Pay if I Am Too Young to Work?***

If you are too young to work, check with your parents, grandparents, friends and neighbors. You may be able to do chores or other tasks such as cutting grass, raking leaves, shoveling snow, etc. in order to earn the money you owe.

You may also speak to your Probation Officer about participating in the Juvenile Court Restitution Program.

## ***What Happens if I Do Not Pay?***

Failure to pay your restitution is a violation of your supervision. There are many consequences that could occur if you do not pay restitution. These include, but are limited to:

- Taking money directly from your paycheck (wage attachment).
- Extending your supervision.
- Having your property held or taken away (cell phone, items of value, etc).
- Having a civil law suit filed by the victim against you and/or your family.
- Having a judgment (lien) filed against you by the Court that will prevent you from buying property, a car, etc. until the lien has been satisfied
- Holding a hearing before the Juvenile Court Judge or Master
- Being placed in a weekend or residential program
- Being detained at The Chester County Youth Center