

Accountability Letter Bank

A Writing Guide



When Writing Your Accountability Letter

You are taking a positive step toward accepting responsibility for your actions. Please consider these questions when writing your letter.

- Are you ready?** Writing an accountability letter is voluntary. You have nothing to gain except personal growth and insight. The victim may never request to read the letter. Submitting this letter will not affect your custody level, parole eligibility, release date, or conditions of supervision. Before you write the letter consider whether you have accepted full responsibility for your crime and the cause effects. The process of writing this letter may help you become more honest about yourself and your intentions.
- Are you remorseful?** Are you truly sorry for the harm you caused or do you feel sorry for yourself because you are being held accountable?
- Do you expect the victim to forgive you?** If you expect forgiveness, you are writing the letter for your own benefit, not the victim's. Do not ask the victim to forgive you, as it places the responsibility on the victim to meet your needs.
- Do you make excuses for your actions?** If you make excuses you have not fully accepted responsibility for your actions.
- Do you blame the victim, others or your circumstances for the crime?** If so, you are not ready to submit a letter.
- What have you done to change your life?** The victim may want to hear about programs or activities in which you have participated to help positively impact your attitudes and behaviors.

Helpful Hints for Writing Your Letter

- Make sure that your handwriting is legible.** If your handwriting is difficult to read, consider typing the letter.
- Avoid long rambling letters.** It is best to be clear and to the point.
- Do not preach your religious beliefs.** It may be appropriate to tell the victim that your faith is helping you to change your life, but it is not appropriate to try to force your beliefs on the victim.
- Ask for help with writing your letter.** If you are struggling, ask a trusted friend, chaplain or corrections staff person to assist.
- Put your draft letter aside for a while.** When you come back to it later, you may want to make changes.