

## Introduction

The Department of Justice and the United States Postal Inspection Service are 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 provides information about VNS.

## Victim Notification System (VNS)

VNS is a cooperative effort between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), the United States Attorneys' Offices, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

This free, automated system provides important information to victims. In many cases, you will receive letters generated through VNS containing information about the events pertaining to your case and/or any defendants in the case.


This information is available in English or Spanish on the Internet and through a toll-free telephone number (Call Center). In cases with many victims, you may receive only one letter and then be directed to the Internet or Call Center for further information.

## VNS Information

### Registration:

You will receive a Victim Identification Number (VIN) and a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that will allow you to access VNS on the Internet and using your telephone. Those numbers are contained on all correspondence and you may also write them on the attached tear-off card to keep with you.

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

 **Your VIN and PIN numbers are both required any time you contact the Call Center or when accessing VNS on the Internet.**

### VNS Internet Access:

- You may access information about the case via the Internet at: <http://www.Notify.USDOJ.Gov>. You will be required to enter your VIN and your PIN.
- The Web site, in some instances, may provide additional information that is not available through the Call Center.

(Refer to **Common Questions**, numbers 4, 5 & 6 below, for more information regarding the Internet.)

### The VNS Call Center:

You may call 1-866-DOJ-4YOU (1-866-365-4968) for current information. You will be required to enter your VIN and your PIN.

By following the prompts, VNS will provide custody information and notice of future court events.

The Call Center will include options to hear:

**Upcoming Events** - information on future court hearings

**Historical Court Events** - information on past court hearings

**Information on Each Defendant** - information regarding criminal charges filed, the outcome of the charges, and the sentence imposed by the Court; if the defendant is in the custody of BOP, the custody location, projected date of release from custody and other release information. For more detailed information, contact the responsible agency representative.

### VNS Notification:

You may also receive information about case events by letter, email, or fax. Please note that in some rare instances, VNS may contact you by phone which will require use of your PIN. See question #3.

Not all relevant information regarding a case will be contained within VNS. Changes, especially with court events, can occur on very short notice. If you are planning on attending a scheduled event or you need additional information, you may always contact the respective agency staff for assistance.

## 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, USPIS, or U.S. Attorney's Office.

### **1. When can I call the VNS Call Center or access VNS on the Internet?**

(Eastern Time)

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.

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

**International Callers:**

**1-502-213-2767**

**<http://www.Notify.USDOJ.Gov>**

You must keep your contact information current (see Common Questions number 8). If an agency is unable to contact you due to outdated contact information, you will be removed from the notification program.

### **2. What if I forget my PIN?**

Each VNS notification will restate your VIN & PIN. If you do not have this correspondence, please contact the agency (FBI/USPIS/U.S. Attorney's Office) involved with your case.

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

While this is unusual, 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 two (2) hours.

## **Victim Notification System**

### **4. How do I access the VNS Internet site?**

- Enter <http://www.Notify.USDOJ.Gov> in your Web browser.
- If you are a new user, click "First Time Users Click Here".
  - Enter your VIN.
  - Enter your PIN.
  - Complete the remaining information as requested on the Web site to include creating a new VNS Login ID.
- Your VNS Login ID must be used in conjunction with your VIN during any subsequent access of the VNS Web site.

## 5. What information is available on the VNS Internet Web site?

The information available will include:

- A. **Case Activities Detail** - information about events in your case.
- B. **Downloads/Links** - supplemental information about your case.
- C. **My Information** - allows you to view and/or update your mailing address, phone number, and email address.
- D. **Stop Receiving Notifications** - allows you to stop receiving further notifications. You can later re-enroll using your VIN and VNS Login ID.

## 6. How often is information on the Internet updated?

The VNS Web site is updated daily, Monday through Friday.

## 7. 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.

## 8. What should I do if my contact information changes?

If your address, email or phone number changes, you should update your contact information using one of the following methods: (1) VNS on the Internet\* (<http://www.Notify.USDOJ.gov>); (2) VNS Call Center\* (**1-866-365-4968**) (\* You will need your VNS VIN & PIN/Web Login ID); (3) the person indicated on your initial notification letter, or; (4) the Victim-Witness Staff at your local U.S. Attorney's Office.

## 9. Must I receive notification?

If you do not wish to receive notification you may contact: (1) the VNS Call Center (1-866-365-4968, provide your VNS VIN & PIN, Select "Opt Out" option); (2) access the VNS Web site and select the "Stop Receiving Notifications" link; (3) the person indicated on your initial notification letter; or (4) the Victim-Witness Staff at your local U.S. Attorney's Office.

### INFORMATION CARD

Victim Identification Number (VIN)

Personal Identification Number (PIN)

VNS Internet Login Identification

Agency Contact Name and Phone Number

### Overview - VNS Information

Information - Activity	Internet	Call Center
Investigative Status (Under Investigation or Prosecution Declined)	✓	✓
Filing of Criminal Charges, Outcome of the Charges and Sentencing data	✓	✓
Future & Past Court Hearings	✓	✓
BOP Custody Status & location, projected release date	✓	✓
Other available information	✓	
Links to other Internet Web resources	✓	
Update address, email, telephone number	✓	✓
Opt out from access to VNS, including the Internet & Call Center	✓	✓

# The Department of Justice Victim Notification System



## A Service Provided by:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation,
- The United States Attorneys' Offices,
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons, and
- The Office for Victims of Crime

## In Cooperation with:

- The United States Postal Inspection Service

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