

All services of the Probation and Mediation
Service
are free of charge.

Address of our workplace:

Community Service Sentence

Guidebook for Offenders

Offender integration
Victim participation
Community protection

What is Community Service?

Community Service is an alternative sentence that can be imposed by the court in the extent of 50-300 hours (adults), and 50-150 hours (youth) for committing an offence. By an offence is understood a negligent crime, and also an intentional crime, for which the Criminal Code imposes prison sentences of up to five years. Community Service sentences are carried out in favour of municipalities, or government or other public interest institutions.

As soon as the community service sentence is served or the rest of the sentence pardoned with final force, the offender on whom the sentence was imposed is deemed to have not been convicted, i.e. the court annuls the conviction (deletes the record of community service sentence from the criminal register).

What are the offender's rights in the course of the community service?

- The right to participate in the selection of organization for which the community service will be served. The location is determined by the court based on the Probation and Mediation Service officer's proposal.
- The right to participate in creating the work schedule.
- The right to request that the community service sentence be interrupted/deferred due to offender's health, or other serious reasons.
- The right to ask the PMS for help in case of need, for example in case of disputes at the stipulated workplace, in case of difficulties with repaying the damages, in case of demand for mediation etc.

What are the offender's obligations in the course of the community service?

- Community service must be served personally, free of charge, in free time, at the latest within two years from the date the court ordered the sentence.
- In the course of serving the community service it is necessary to lead a proper life and adhere the proper restrictions and obligations imposed by the court. The community service sentence serving is checked by the PMS.
- If the court ruling stipulated compensation for damages, it is necessary to reimburse it. It is possible to mediate the amount and frequency of payments for example in the form of payment schedule compiled in offender's cooperation with the PMS. In this context the PMS also contacts the victim.
- In the course of the community service it is necessary to be in contact with and cooperate with the PMS. It means the obligation to notify the PMS of any changes regarding carrying out the community service – for example notification of sick leave, change of place of residence, change of job etc.

What must be done after being notified of the ruling of community service?

Within 14 days, it is necessary to report to the PMS centre in the district, where the sentence of community service is to be performed. The PMS will discuss the conditions of enforcement of the sentence with the offender, and will answer any possible questions. Then, a date will be appointed to the offender on which he is required to arrive at the address of the organization in which the sentence of community service is to be performed. There will be negotiated binding time schedule for the work in the context of the sentence of community service, and written agreement on work performance will be signed, and the offender will be instructed on the rules of safety at work.

What should I do, if I am temporarily unable to perform the community service sentence?

In case of emergency, for example, health problems requiring medical treatment or hospitalization, it is necessary to immediately notify the organization (by phone, email or in person), where the sentence of community service is performed, and continuously inform the organization about when I will be able to continue serving the community sentence. Furthermore, it is necessary to report to the PMS with a document certifying inability to work, or other serious reasons for interruption of the sentence (for example child care or death in the family).

What happens if I breach the terms and conditions of the community service sentence?

If the conditions of the imposed sentence are intentionally breached, especially due to:

- repeated breach of the set work schedule (without documentation of serious reasons),
- failure to perform work in a pre-agreed quality,
- serving the sentence under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances,
- repeated avoiding of serving the sentence,

the organization may terminate the community service agreement. This fact is considered as breach of conditions of sentence performance, and it will be reported to the court by the PMS. The court may rule to change the community service sentence to home detention or pecuniary punishment. The court can even rule to change the community service sentence to unconditional punishment, with each hour of the community service sentence not served, equalling one day of unconditional imprisonment. Exceptionally, the court may prolong the period of the community service sentence, eventually to rule to impose other obligations – for example to impose supervision of the PMS. In duly justified cases.

What are the advantages of the community service?

Community service allows to serve an alternative custodial sentence, which brings benefits such as:

- avoid adverse impacts of imprisonment on life, family and work,
- greater chance to succeed in the labour market due to deletion of criminal records after the performance of the sentence.