

SEALING AND EXPUNGEMENT OF RECORDS ORC §2151.355; §2151.356; §2151.357 and §2151.358

Because you were charged with an offense as juvenile, Ohio law allows you to have your juvenile record sealed or expunged. “Sealing” means removing the record from the main files and securing it in separate files that only the juvenile court can access. “Expungement” means to destroy, delete and erase a record so that it is physically destroyed and permanently irretrievable. A record must be sealed before it is expunged.

Procedure for Sealing of Records

You may ask for your juvenile court record to be sealed if you were adjudicated as follows:

1. Delinquent for committing an act other than aggravated murder, murder or rape;
2. Unruly
3. Juvenile traffic offender

If you are not yet 18, you may apply to seal your record if six months have passed since you completed all court orders and you have no other open cases. This includes completing probation and paying all your fines and costs. If you are 18 or older, you may apply to seal your records as soon as all orders of the court have been completed as long as no other cases are open.

To apply for sealing of records, you must file the following in each case number:

1. An Application to Seal Record
2. A Sealing and Records Information Sheet. This information will be used for the court to determine if you have been rehabilitated to a satisfactory degree. Factors the court will consider include your age, education and employment history, the nature of the offense, the cessation or continuation of delinquent, unruly or criminal behavior and any other circumstance that may relate to your rehabilitation.

When your application is submitted, the court will notify the prosecutor of your request. If the court has questions regarding the application, or if the prosecutor objects to the sealing, the court may schedule a hearing. You should bring any witnesses or evidence to the hearing that may assist the court in making its determination that the applicant has been rehabilitated to a satisfactory degree.

Once a record is sealed, you may properly say that you do not have a juvenile record, and the Court will also say that no record exists.

Procedure for Expungement of Records

After a record is sealed, the record will be automatically be expunged 5 years after sealing or when you turns 23, whichever is first. If you are already 23 when your record is sealed, the record will automatically be expunged. If you want to have the record expunged sooner, you may file an application to expunge records. The expungement process is identical to the sealing process. Once a record is expunged, all versions of the record will be destroyed.