

Section 2953.32 | Sealing or expungement of record of conviction record or bail forfeiture; exceptions.

Ohio Revised Code / Title 29 Crimes-Procedure /
Chapter 2953 Appeals; Other Postconviction Remedies

Effective: October 3, 2023 Latest Legislation: House Bill 33 - 135th General Assembly

(A)(1) Sections [2953.32](#) to [2953.34](#) of the Revised Code do not apply to any of the following:

- (a) Convictions under Chapter 4506., 4507., 4510., 4511., or 4549. of the Revised Code, or a conviction for a violation of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to any section contained in any of those chapters;
- (b) Convictions of a felony offense of violence that is not a sexually oriented offense;
- (c) Convictions of a sexually oriented offense when the offender is subject to the requirements of Chapter 2950. of the Revised Code or Chapter 2950. of the Revised Code as it existed prior to January 1, 2008;
- (d) Convictions of an offense in circumstances in which the victim of the offense was less than thirteen years of age, except for convictions under section [2919.21](#) of the Revised Code;
- (e) Convictions of a felony of the first or second degree;
- (f) Except as provided in division (A)(2) of this section, convictions for a violation of section [2919.25](#) or [2919.27](#) of the Revised Code or a conviction for a violation of a municipal ordinance that is substantially similar to either section;
- (g) Convictions of a felony of the third degree if the offender has more than one other conviction of any felony or, if the person has exactly two convictions of a felony of the third degree, has more convictions in total than those two third degree felony convictions and two misdemeanor convictions.

(2) Sections [2953.32](#) to [2953.34](#) of the Revised Code apply to a conviction for a violation of section [2919.25](#) of the Revised Code that is a misdemeanor of the fourth degree for purposes of sealing, but not for purposes of expungement of the record of the case.

(B)(1) Except as provided in section [2953.61](#) of the Revised Code or as otherwise provided in division (B)(1)(a)(iii) of this section, an eligible offender may apply to the sentencing court if convicted in this state, or to a court of common pleas if convicted in another state or in a federal court, for the sealing or expungement of the record of the case that pertains to the conviction, except for convictions listed in division (A)(1) of this section. Application may be made at whichever of the following times is applicable regarding the offense:

(a) An application for sealing under this section may be made at whichever of the following times is applicable regarding the offense:

(i) Except as otherwise provided in division (B)(1)(a)(iv) of this section, at the expiration of three years after the offender's final discharge if convicted of one or two felonies of the third degree, so long as none of the offenses is a violation of section [2921.43](#) of the Revised Code;

(ii) Except as otherwise provided in division (B)(1)(a)(iv) of this section, at the expiration of one year after the offender's final discharge if convicted of one or more felonies of the fourth or fifth degree or one or more misdemeanors, so long as none of the offenses is a violation of section [2921.43](#) of the Revised Code or a felony offense of violence;

(iii) At the expiration of seven years after the offender's final discharge if the record includes one or more convictions of soliciting improper compensation in violation of section [2921.43](#) of the Revised Code;

(iv) If the offender was subject to the requirements of Chapter 2950. of the Revised Code or Chapter 2950. of the Revised Code as it existed prior to January 1, 2008, at the expiration of five years after the requirements have ended under section [2950.07](#) of the Revised Code or

section [2950.07](#) of the Revised Code as it existed prior to January 1, 2008, or are terminated under section [2950.15](#) or [2950.151](#) of the Revised Code;

(v) At the expiration of six months after the offender's final discharge if convicted of a minor misdemeanor.

(b) An application for expungement under this section may be made at whichever of the following times is applicable regarding the offense:

(i) Except as otherwise provided in division (B)(1)(b)(ii) of this section, if the offense is a misdemeanor, at the expiration of one year after the offender's final discharge;

(ii) If the offense is a minor misdemeanor, at the expiration of six months after the offender's final discharge;

(iii) If the offense is a felony, at the expiration of ten years after the time specified in division (B)(1)(a) of this section at which the person may file an application for sealing with respect to that felony offense.

(2) Any person who has been arrested for any misdemeanor offense and who has effected a bail forfeiture for the offense charged may apply to the court in which the misdemeanor criminal case was pending when bail was forfeited for the sealing or expungement of the record of the case that pertains to the charge. Except as provided in section [2953.61](#) of the Revised Code, the application may be filed at whichever of the following times is applicable regarding the offense:

(a) An application for sealing under this section may be made at any time after the date on which the bail forfeiture was entered upon the minutes of the court or the journal, whichever entry occurs first.

(b) An application for expungement under this section may be made at whichever of the following times is applicable regarding the offense:

(i) Except as provided in division (B)(2)(b)(ii) of this section, at any time after the expiration of one year from the date on which the bail forfeiture was entered upon the minutes of the court or the journal, whichever entry occurs first;

(ii) If the offense is a minor misdemeanor, at any time after the expiration of six months from the date on which the bail forfeiture was entered upon the minutes of the court or the journal, whichever entry occurs first.

(C) Upon the filing of an application under this section, the court shall set a date for a hearing and shall notify the prosecutor for the case of the hearing on the application not less than sixty days prior to the hearing. Pursuant to the Ohio Constitution, the prosecutor shall provide timely notice of the application and the date and time of the hearing to a victim and victim's representative, if applicable, if the victim or victim's representative requested notice of the proceedings in the underlying case. The court shall hold the hearing not less than forty-five days and not more than ninety days from the date of the filing of the application. The prosecutor may object to the granting of the application by filing a written objection with the court not later than thirty days prior to the date set for the hearing. The prosecutor shall specify in the objection the reasons for believing a denial of the application is justified. The victim, victim's representative, and victim's attorney, if applicable, may be present and heard orally, in writing, or both at any hearing under this section. The court shall direct its regular probation officer, a state probation officer, or the department of probation of the county in which the applicant resides to make inquiries and written reports as the court requires concerning the applicant. The probation officer or county department of probation that the court directs to make inquiries and written reports as the court requires concerning the applicant shall determine whether or not the applicant was fingerprinted at the time of arrest or under section [109.60](#) of the Revised Code. If the applicant was so fingerprinted, the probation officer or county department of probation shall include with the written report a record of the applicant's fingerprints. If the applicant was convicted of or pleaded guilty to a violation of division (A)(2) or (B) of section [2213.24](#)

of the Revised Code, the probation officer or county department of probation that the court directed to make inquiries concerning the applicant shall contact the child support enforcement agency enforcing the applicant's obligations under the child support order to inquire about the offender's compliance with the child support order.

(D)(1) At the hearing held under division (C) of this section, the court shall do each of the following:

(a) Determine whether the applicant is pursuing sealing or expunging a conviction of an offense that is prohibited under division (A) of this section or whether the forfeiture of bail was agreed to by the applicant and the prosecutor in the case, and determine whether the application was made at the time specified in division (B)(1)(a) or (b) or division (B)(2)(a) or (b) of this section that is applicable with respect to the application and the subject offense;

(b) Determine whether criminal proceedings are pending against the applicant;

(c) Determine whether the applicant has been rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the court;

(d) If the prosecutor has filed an objection in accordance with division (C) of this section, consider the reasons against granting the application specified by the prosecutor in the objection;

(e) If the victim objected, pursuant to the Ohio Constitution, consider the reasons against granting the application specified by the victim in the objection;

(f) Weigh the interests of the applicant in having the records pertaining to the applicant's conviction or bail forfeiture sealed or expunged against the legitimate needs, if any, of the government to maintain those records;

(g) Consider the oral or written statement of any victim, victim's representative, and victim's attorney, if applicable;

(h) If the applicant was an eligible offender of the type described in division (A)(3) of section [2953.36](#) of the Revised Code as it existed prior to the effective date of this amendment, determine whether the offender has been rehabilitated to a satisfactory degree. In making the determination, the court may consider all of the following:

(i) The age of the offender;

(ii) The facts and circumstances of the offense;

(iii) The cessation or continuation of criminal behavior;

(iv) The education and employment of the offender;

(v) Any other circumstances that may relate to the offender's rehabilitation.

(2) If the court determines, after complying with division (D)(1) of this section, that the offender is not pursuing sealing or expunging a conviction of an offense that is prohibited under division (A) of this section or that the forfeiture of bail was agreed to by the applicant and the prosecutor in the case, that the application was made at the time specified in division (B)(1)(a) or (b) or division (B)(2)(a) or (b) of this section that is applicable with respect to the application and the subject offense, that no criminal proceeding is pending against the applicant, that the interests of the applicant in having the records pertaining to the applicant's conviction or bail forfeiture sealed or expunged are not outweighed by any legitimate governmental needs to maintain those records, and that the rehabilitation of the applicant has been attained to the satisfaction of the court, both of the following apply:

(a) The court, except as provided in division (D)(4) or (5) of this section or division (D), (F), or (G) of section [2953.34](#) of the Revised Code, shall order all official records of the case that pertain to the conviction or bail forfeiture sealed if the application was for sealing or expunged if the application was for expungement and, except as provided in division (C) of section [2953.34](#) of the Revised Code, all index references to the case that pertain to

conviction or bail forfeiture deleted and, in the case of bail forfeitures, shall dismiss the charges in the case.

(b) The proceedings in the case that pertain to the conviction or bail forfeiture shall be considered not to have occurred and the conviction or bail forfeiture of the person who is the subject of the proceedings shall be sealed if the application was for sealing or expunged if the application was for expungement, except that upon conviction of a subsequent offense, a sealed record of prior conviction or bail forfeiture may be considered by the court in determining the sentence or other appropriate disposition, including the relief provided for in sections [2953.31](#), [2953.32](#), and [2953.34](#) of the Revised Code.

(3) An applicant may request the sealing or expungement of the records of more than one case in a single application under this section. Upon the filing of an application under this section, the applicant, unless the applicant presents a poverty affidavit showing that the applicant is indigent, shall pay an application fee of fifty dollars and may pay a local court fee of not more than fifty dollars, regardless of the number of records the application requests to have sealed or expunged. If the applicant pays a fee, the court shall pay three-fifths of the fee collected into the state treasury, with half of that amount credited to the attorney general reimbursement fund created by section [109.11](#) of the Revised Code. If the applicant pays a fee, the court shall pay two-fifths of the fee collected into the county general revenue fund if the sealed or expunged conviction or bail forfeiture was pursuant to a state statute, or into the general revenue fund of the municipal corporation involved if the sealed or expunged conviction or bail forfeiture was pursuant to a municipal ordinance.

(4) If the court orders the official records pertaining to the case sealed or expunged, the court shall do one of the following:

(a) If the applicant was fingerprinted at the time of arrest or under section [109.60](#) of the Revised Code and the record of the applicant's fingerprints was provided to the court under division (C) of this section, forward a copy of the sealing or expungement order and

record of the applicant's fingerprints to the bureau of criminal identification and investigation.

(b) If the applicant was not fingerprinted at the time of arrest or under section [109.60](#) of the Revised Code, or the record of the applicant's fingerprints was not provided to the court under division (C) of this section, but fingerprinting was required for the offense, order the applicant to appear before a sheriff to have the applicant's fingerprints taken according to the fingerprint system of identification on the forms furnished by the superintendent of the bureau of criminal identification and investigation. The sheriff shall forward the applicant's fingerprints to the court. The court shall forward the applicant's fingerprints and a copy of the sealing or expungement order to the bureau of criminal identification and investigation.

Failure of the court to order fingerprints at the time of sealing or expungement does not constitute a reversible error.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of the Revised Code to the contrary, when the bureau of criminal identification and investigation receives notice from a court that the record of a conviction or bail forfeiture has been expunged under this section, the bureau of criminal identification and investigation shall maintain a record of the expunged conviction record for the limited purpose of determining an individual's qualification or disqualification for employment in law enforcement. The bureau of criminal identification and investigation shall not be compelled by the court to destroy, delete, or erase those records so that the records are permanently irretrievable. These records may only be disclosed or provided to law enforcement for the limited purpose of determining an individual's qualification or disqualification for employment in law enforcement.

When any other entity other than the bureau of criminal identification and investigation receives notice from a court that the record of a conviction or bail forfeiture has been expunged under this section, the entity shall destroy, delete, and erase the record as

appropriate for the record's physical or electronic form or characteristic so that the record is permanently irretrievable.

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Available Versions of this Section

September 19, 2014 – Senate Bill 143 - 130th General Assembly

April 6, 2017 – Senate Bill 227 - 131st General Assembly

September 29, 2017 – House Bill 49 - 132nd General Assembly

October 29, 2018 – Amended by Senate Bill 66 - 132nd General Assembly

April 8, 2019 – Amended by House Bill 425 - 132nd General Assembly

April 12, 2021 – Amended by House Bill 1, Senate Bill 10, House Bill 431 - 133rd General Assembly

April 6, 2023 – Amended by Senate Bill 288 (GA 134), House Bill 343 (GA 134)

October 3, 2023 – Amended by House Bill 33 - 135th General Assembly