

# Probation: Babysitter for the Court



**After spending months worrying about the outcome of your criminal case, you finally received a plea offer that allows you to serve a term of probation instead of being sentenced to jail or prison. Unfortunately most attorneys and judges don't really explain what probation truly requires.**

Probation in Georgia can take many forms. The sentencing documents and/or plea agreement will set forth the written terms of probation. If you fail to comply with any of the terms of probation you could be sentenced to serve in jail/prison the remainder of the time you have left on probation. Probation for a misdemeanor offense in Georgia can last for up to 12 months on each charge. Felony convictions can result in probation terms that last for decades!

When you receive probation it is in lieu of a jail or prison sentence. There are many terms and conditions of probation that can be ordered by the judge. You could be ordered to pay fines, perform community service, submit to a search of your person, residence or vehicle at any time, curfew, have no contact with certain individuals, have no alcohol or illegal drugs in your possession, not go to where alcohol is served as the primary source of business income, attend and complete drug/anger/alcohol

treatment or counseling, have limited or no internet access, attend school, have a job, etc., etc.. After the standard conditions of probation the additional or special terms of probation are usually specifically tailored for each Defendant's case.

The more special conditions of probation that the judge requires in your case, the more closely you will be supervised by your probation officer. Failure to comply with the simplest of probation terms can result in a petition to revoke your probation. And, if you are found in violation of ANY condition of probation the judge can order your probation to be revoked and you being incarcerated!

In Domestic Violence cases specialized terms of probation can include mandatory and lengthy counseling and NO direct or indirect contact with the victim. And this can really cause problems with defendants that have child custody issues. Also, you are responsible for any and all costs of counseling.

Sex Offender terms can limit your travel, curfew hours, computer or internet usage, and precludes any contact with any minors.... including your own children. The counseling and treatment costs are not only hefty, but they can also continue for years. The nature of the offense can make you unable to work jobs where children may be present. Also the computer/internet restrictions can affect your employability and even the electronic devices you can use at work.

In effect, Probation is a professional babysitter. If you don't comply with their rules, your probation can be revoked, and you can be incarcerated. There are ways to defend against a probation revocation and in some cases probation can even be terminated early! To maximize your chances, please consult with experienced and knowledgeable counsel!

**I have successfully defended thousands of felony and misdemeanor cases in over 18 years. When you are the target of an investigation or criminal charges, please don't hesitate to call us at (912) 383-7581.**



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