

# Record Sealing and Expungement in Ohio

A guide for adult convictions - **UPDATED: October 2023**



## STEP 1: WHAT OFFENSES CANNOT BE SEALED OR EXPUNGED?

Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 2953.32 to 2953.34 do not apply to any of the following:

- 1st or 2nd degree felonies
- A 3rd degree felony if applicant has (2) or more felonies of any degree
- A 3rd degree felony if applicant has exactly (2) 3rd degree felonies + (2) misdemeanors + any other convictions
- Traffic convictions
- Felony offenses of violence that are not sexually oriented offenses
- Sexually oriented offenses when the applicant is subject to the requirements of Chapter 2950 of R.C. (sex offender registry)
- Offenses in which the victim of the offense was less than 13 years old (Note: this does not apply to nonsupport of dependents.)
- Domestic Violence convictions (**Note: 4th degree misdemeanor sealing is allowed.**)
- Violating Protection Order convictions

### Offenses of Violence (per R.C. 2901.01)

- 2905.02 Abduction
- 2909.02 Aggravated arson
- 2903.12 Aggravated assault
- 2911.11 Aggravated burglary
- 2903.21 Aggravated menacing
- 2903.01 Aggravated murder
- 2917.02 Aggravated riot
- 2911.01 Aggravated robbery
- 2909.03 Arson
- 2903.13 Assault
- 2911.12 (A)(1), (2), or (3) Burglary
- 2919.25 Domestic violence
- 2919.22(B)(1), (2), (3), or (4) Endangering children
- 2921.34 Escape
- 2905.11 Extortion
- 2903.11 Felonious assault
- 2907.12 (former) Felonious sexual penetration
- 2907.05 Gross sexual imposition
- 2923.161 Improperly discharging firearm
- 2917.01 Inciting to violence
- 2917.31 Inducing panic
- 2921.03 Intimidation
- 2921.04 Intimidation of attorney, victim, or witness
- 2903.04 Involuntary Manslaughter
- 2905.01 Kidnapping
- 2903.22 Menacing
- 2903.211 Menacing by stalking
- 2903.02 Murder
- 2903.34(A)(1) Patient Abuse or Neglect
- 2903.15 Permitting child abuse
- 2907.02 Rape
- 2917.03 Riot
- 2911.02 Robbery
- 2907.03 Sexual battery
- 2903.18 Strangulation or suffocation
- 2917.321 Swatting
- 2909.24 Terrorism
- 2905.32 Trafficking in Persons
- 2903.03 Voluntary Manslaughter

### Sexually Oriented Offenses (per R.C. 2950.01)

2905.02(B)	Abduction	2907.321	Pandering obscenity involving a minor or impaired person
2903.01	Aggravated murder*	2907.322	Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor or impaired person
2907.21	Compelling prostitution	2907.22	Promoting prostitution
2905.05(B)	Criminal child enticement	2907.09	Public indecency*
2919.22(B)(5)	Endangering children	2907.02	Rape
2903.11	Felonious assault*	2907.03	Sexual battery
2907.05	Gross sexual imposition	2907.06	Sexual imposition
2907.323	Illegal use of minor in nudity-oriented material or performance	2905.32	Trafficking in persons*
2907.07	Importuning	2905.03(B)	Unlawful restraint
2903.04(A)	Involuntary manslaughter*	2907.04	Unlawful sexual conduct with minor*
2905.01	Kidnapping*	2903.03(B)	Voluntary manslaughter
2903.211(A)(3)	Menacing by stalking	2907.08	Voyeurism
2903.02	Murder*		
2907.32	Pandering obscenity		

**\*Check R.C. 2950.01 for extended definition.**

## STEP 2: HAVE YOU SATISFIED THE WAITING PERIOD?

### SEALING WAITING PERIODS:

- If applying to seal a **minor misdemeanor** → Wait six months after discharge.
- If applying to seal a **misdemeanor** → Wait one year after the misdemeanor\* is discharged.
- If applying to seal a **fourth or fifth degree felony** → Wait one year after the fourth or fifth degree felony\* is discharged.
- If applying to seal one or two **third degree felonies** → Wait three years after the third degree felony\* is discharged.
- If applicant subject to Chapter 2950 (**sex offender registry**) → Wait five years after requirements have ended.

\*So long as none of the offenses is a violation of R.C. 2921.43. If the record includes a violation of R.C. 2921.43, applicant must wait seven years.

### EXPUNGEMENT WAITING PERIODS:

- If applying to expunge a **minor misdemeanor** → Wait six months after discharge.
- If applying to expunge a **misdemeanor** → Wait one year after the misdemeanor is discharged.
- If applying to expunge a **fourth or fifth degree felony** → Wait eleven years after fourth or fifth degree felony is discharged.
- If applying to expunge one or two **third degree felonies** → Wait thirteen years after the third degree felony is discharged.

A case is "discharged" when a person has fully completed any jail or prison sentence, any terms of probation or parole, and all payments of fines or fees that were a penalty for the conviction. Court costs are not part of a sentence, and unpaid court costs should not block an application.

### STEP 3: WHEN CAN A PERSON APPLY?

Are there pending criminal charges? The court will not seal or expunge any record if the applicant is facing pending charges. Applicants should wait until any pending cases have resolved. Depending on where in Ohio their records are, that could include completing requirements like probation.

Is the applicant unlikely to re-offend? Applicants must be able to show that they have been “rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the court.” Applicants must also show that their interest in sealing a record is greater than any legitimate government needs to maintain those records.

### STEP 4: HOW DOES A PERSON APPLY?

For each offense, complete an application in each court where there is a case to be sealed or expunged. **The filing fee may be between \$50-100 per court, not per case number.**

Every court has its own application forms and processes, so contact the Clerk of Courts to find out what documents to file and how to file them.

A person can ask the court to waive this fee by completing a poverty affidavit (sometimes called an “affidavit of indigence”). If a hearing is scheduled, the applicant must attend.

### STEP 5: WHY SHOULD A PERSON APPLY?

“Sealing” and “expungement” are words that certain jurisdictions sometimes use interchangeably, but they are not the same thing. A granted expungement deletes, destroys, and erases a record—sealing does not do this. Some employers and professional licensing boards may still be able to see sealed conviction records (e.g. nursing, childcare, and security-related employment). Further investigation may be needed to evaluate individual circumstances.

### NOTE: CHANGES TO NON-CONVICTION SEALING/EXPUNGEMENT

As of October 2023, Ohio law was expanded to allow for non-convictions (not guilty, dismissals, no bills) to be sealed AND expunged. Previously, only sealing was available. There are no exceptions to what non-conviction can be sealed, but there are exceptions to what non-conviction can be expunged. Please consult R.C. 2953.33 or an attorney.

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If you have questions about record sealing/expungement, eligibility and other ways to overcome the barriers of a criminal conviction, register to participate in OJPC's Second Chance Legal Clinic at [www.ohiojpc.org](http://www.ohiojpc.org).

Disclaimer: This guide is a general source of information about criminal record sealing. It is not a substitute for individualized legal advice. For answers to specific questions, it is best to consult an attorney.

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OHIO JUSTICE &  
POLICY CENTER



# MIKE KOVACK, CLERK OF COURTS

## MEDINA MUNICIPAL COURT

### The Expungement/Sealing Process

The laws governing expungements/sealing of records are set by the Ohio Revised Code (RC) in Sections 2953.31 through 2953.34. Employees of the Clerk's office cannot give you legal advice. If you are in need of legal advice regarding your expungement or sealing application, please contact an attorney.

- **Filing an application and paying the filing fee does not guarantee the Court will order your matter be sealed or expunged.**
- **There will be a mandatory hearing date, and your absence could result in the denial your sealing or expungement motion**

1. **Who can file?** As it concerns types of cases handled in the Medina Municipal Court, RC 2953.32 to 2953.34 does not apply to any of the following:

- Traffic convictions under RC Chapters 4506, 4507, 4510, 4511, or 4549, or a substantially similar municipal ordinance
- Sexually oriented offenses when the applicant is subject to RC 2950 (registry)
- Offenses in which victim of offense less than 13 years of age
- Domestic Violence convictions (4<sup>th</sup> degree misdemeanor DV sealings permitted)
- Violating Protection Order convictions

2. **When can the application be filed?**

- If applying to seal a minor misdemeanor – six months after final discharge
- If applying to seal a misdemeanor – one year after final discharge
- If applying to seal conviction under RC2921.43 – seven years after final discharge
- If applying to expunge a minor misdemeanor – six months after final discharge
- If applying to expunge a misdemeanor – one year after discharge
- Final discharge (FD) means completing of probation, and any sentenced programming. All fines must be paid in full prior to filing.

If you were found not guilty or your case was dismissed you may file at any time.

You cannot have any pending charges or unpaid tickets in any court.

3. **What is the filing fee?** There is a \$50.00 **non-refundable** filing fee for applications to seal or expunge records of conviction. There is no filing fee applications to seal or expunge dismissal/not-guilty findings.

**4. Are there any convictions that can never be sealed?** Yes. You are not eligible to have your criminal record sealed if the conviction is for any of the following offenses:

- An offense that is a felony of the first or second degree
- Three or more third degree felonies
- Any felony offenses of violence that are not sexually oriented offenses.
- Sexually oriented offenses when the applicant is subject to RC 2950 (registry)
- Any case in which the victim of the offense was under 13 years of age.
- All driver's license violations
- All motor vehicle violations unless offense is in connection with the same act as the criminal offenses.
- Domestic Violence convictions (fourth degree misdemeanor DV cases are permitted).
- Violating a Protection Order convictions.

**5. What if my case was a felony?** If the case was completely dismissed by this court, and/or reduced to a misdemeanor, you can file to have the case sealed. If the case was a felony and transferred to the Medina County Common Pleas Court, an eligible offender may apply to the Court of Common Pleas. You may contact the Court of Common Pleas at 330-725-9722.

**6. What happens after the application is filed?**

- You will need to go to the Probation Department to answer a brief set of questions. The Probation Department is located within the court offices at 135 N. Elmwood Avenue, Medina, Ohio.
- If you live out of state and file your application by mail you must provide your social security number, maiden name and/or name at the time of conviction, current address and telephone number with your application. The Probation Department completes a thorough background report for all applicants.
- The Court will notify you of the mandatory hearing date on your motion. Your absence could result in the denial your sealing or expungement motion

**7. It is up to the municipal court judge to either grant or deny your application.** If the applicant meets the requirements to have a case sealed, it is for the court to determine whether interests of the applicant in having the records pertaining to the applicant's conviction sealed or expunged outweighs the legitimate needs, if any, of the government to maintain those records. In some circumstances the prosecutor and or victim may file an objection to the application.

After the background check is completed, and if your application is approved, a copy of the judge's entry granting the sealing and/or expungement will be sent to you and any agencies connected to the case.

Please note the sealing order applies only to governmental agencies, not private databases – it is still possible for your record to appear on private background company records for a period of time. In addition, governmental agencies do have the right to inspect sealed records for various purposes including licensing and employment. Sealed records may be released to potential employers if you apply for a job working with children (Senate Bill 38) or the elderly (House Bill 160).

**PLEASE CONTACT THE MEDINA CLERK OF COURTS OFFICE BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 8:00 TO 4:00 PM MONDAY – FRIDAY AT (330) 723-3287 WITH QUESTIONS.**

[www.medinamunicipalcourt.org](http://www.medinamunicipalcourt.org)

**IN THE MEDINA MUNICIPAL COURT  
MEDINA COUNTY, OHIO**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Plaintiff,**

v.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Defendant.**

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**PETITION TO SEAL OR  
EXPUNGE RECORDS**

1. I am the Plaintiff/Defendant (circle one) in the case(s) listed above.
2. I am requesting that the records in the case(s) listed above be (check one):  
 Sealed.  
 Expunged.
3. I have filed with this petition the required \$50.00 filing fee.
4. I have complied with Local Rule 51 governing petitions filed to seal or expunge records.
5. I have attached to this petition all information required to support my request.

Wherefore, Petitioner requests that the relief requested herein be granted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Attorney/*Pro Se* Petitioner/Appellant

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address, Phone Number, Email

**A filing fee** must be submitted with this form when it is filed.