

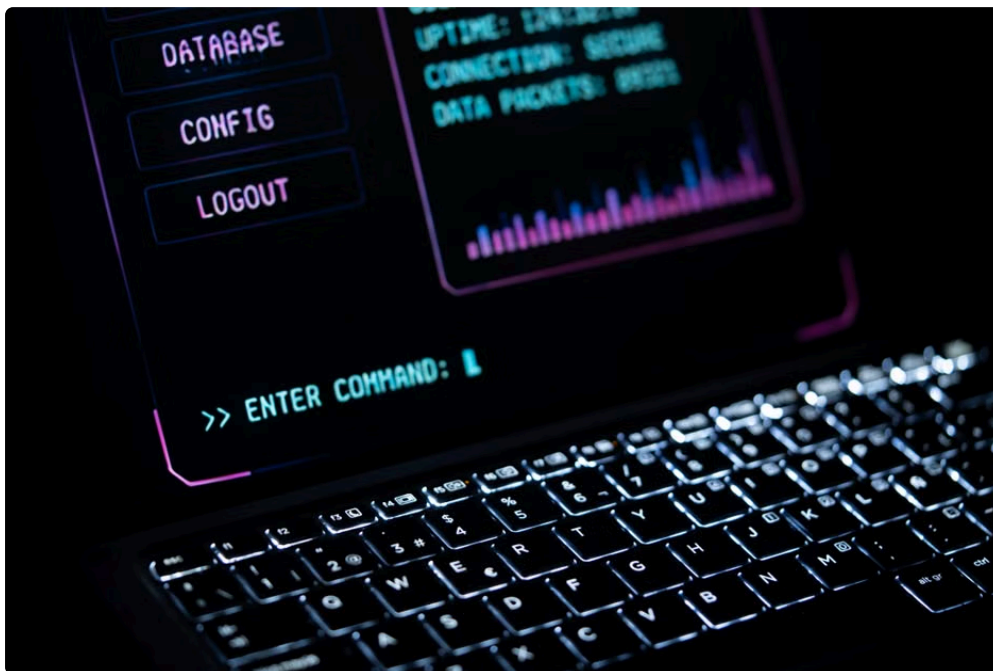
If you are facing sentencing in Queensland, you may be trying to understand whether you could receive probation, community service, or another penalty. These are different court orders with different requirements. Neither is automatic, and the court decides what is appropriate after considering the offence, your circumstances and the law.

This guide explains the basics of a **probation order in Queensland** and a **community service order in Queensland**, how court proceedings generally work, and what to consider when choosing a Brisbane criminal lawyer. It is general information, not legal advice about a particular case.

What is a probation order in Queensland?

A probation order is a community-based sentence. Instead of serving a prison sentence, the person must follow the order's conditions for a set period. In Queensland, a probation order can generally run for between six months and three years.

The order may require you to report to, and follow lawful directions from, Queensland Corrective Services. Depending on the case, the court may also impose extra conditions—for example, attending a program or getting treatment. The conditions depend on the order and the circumstances; they are not the same for everyone.



Probation is not simply a warning. You need to understand what you must do, keep in contact with your supervising officer, attend appointments, and tell them if your circumstances make compliance difficult. If you are unsure what a condition means, ask your supervising officer or get legal advice rather than guessing.

What happens if you breach probation?

If you do not comply, Queensland Corrective Services may take steps that lead to the matter going back to court. The court will consider the alleged breach and can respond in different ways, including changing the order or imposing a more serious penalty. The outcome depends on the facts and the law. Missing one appointment does not automatically mean the same result in every case, but ignoring contact from your officer can make matters worse.

- **Checklist:** Read every condition carefully.

- Keep appointment details and messages in one place.
- Contact your supervising officer promptly if you cannot attend.
- Get legal advice quickly if you receive notice of a breach or court date.

What is a community service order in Queensland?

A community service order (CSO) requires a person to complete unpaid work for an approved organisation or project. The work is arranged and supervised through Queensland Corrective Services. A CSO is a sentence, not a voluntary activity you can choose to do instead of following the court's order.

Queensland legislation sets limits on the number of hours and the time allowed to complete them. The court considers what is available under the law and what is suitable for the individual case. A CSO may be imposed on its own or alongside another order where the law allows. The exact conditions and deadlines should be confirmed from the written order and with your supervising officer.

Practical matters can affect whether community work is manageable: your work roster, caring responsibilities, transport, health, and where the approved work is located. Tell your lawyer about these before sentencing. Be realistic: saying you can complete hours when your schedule makes that unlikely may create problems later.

What if you do not complete the hours?

Failing to attend, refusing suitable work or not completing the required hours may be treated as a breach. The matter can return to court, where further penalties may be considered. If illness, a change in work, transport problems or another serious issue affects your ability to comply, contact your supervising officer promptly and keep evidence where possible.

- **Checklist:** Confirm your reporting and work arrangements.
- Keep a record of hours, absences and communications.
- Raise genuine difficulties early rather than waiting until the deadline.
- Ask for advice if you are accused of breaching the order.

Probation or community service: what is the difference?

Order What it usually involves Key practical point Probation order Supervision and compliance with the order's conditions over a set period. You must stay in contact and follow the conditions throughout the order.

Community service order Completing a set amount of unpaid work through approved arrangements. You need to attend and complete the required hours within the applicable timeframe.

People sometimes use "probation" to mean any sentence served in the community. In court, however, the type of order matters. There may be other **sentencing options in Brisbane**, such as a fine, a good behaviour order or imprisonment. Which options are legally available depends on the charge, the court's powers and the circumstances.

How does the Queensland court process work?

Many criminal matters begin in the Magistrates Court. The first appearance is often called a mention. It is usually a short court date for the court to confirm the charge, check whether you have a lawyer, and work out what needs to happen next. It may not be the day your case fantasticlawyers.com is finally decided.

Some matters are dealt with in the Magistrates Court. More serious charges may need to go through further steps and be heard in a higher court, such as the District Court. The process depends on the charge and whether it is dealt with summarily or proceeds on indictment.

Before a plea or sentencing hearing, your lawyer may need to obtain the prosecution material, explain the options, and gather information relevant to your case. If you plead guilty, the court will decide the sentence after hearing submissions and considering relevant material. If you plead not guilty, the case may be set down for a hearing or trial.



The Queensland Courts website is a useful source for court locations, general court information and some forms. It cannot tell you what plea to enter or predict the result of your case. Check the website for current details before travelling to a courthouse, including directions and listing information. For example, Brisbane matters may be listed at the Brisbane Magistrates Court in the city, but your notice will state where you need to attend.

Getting ready for a first mention

- Read your notice and confirm the courthouse, date and time.
- Bring any paperwork you have been given, including bail documents.
- Arrive early and allow time for security and finding the courtroom.
- Ask a lawyer what is likely to happen before you enter a plea.
- Tell your lawyer about deadlines, prior orders and any practical concerns.

Bail and urgent applications

Bail is permission to remain in the community while a criminal charge is before the court, subject to conditions. Bail is separate from probation and community service: those are sentencing matters, while bail applies before the case is finished. Conditions can include reporting to police, living at a stated address, or not contacting certain people.

If you are arrested or held in custody, or police are seeking to change or cancel your bail, get legal help urgently. A lawyer can explain the next court step and what information may be relevant to a bail application. Do not breach a condition because it seems unreasonable or difficult. Ask about the proper process for seeking a change.

Urgent applications can also arise if you have missed a court date, face an alleged breach, or cannot comply with an existing order. Contact a lawyer promptly and keep any documents that explain the problem, such as medical records, work rosters or travel information. If a court date is approaching, do not assume that contacting the registry alone changes your obligation to attend.

Choosing a Brisbane criminal lawyer

Look for a lawyer who regularly handles criminal matters in Queensland and can explain the process in plain language. You can ask friends or family for recommendations, and you may use Google reviews as one source of information. Reviews can reflect individual experiences, but they do not prove that a lawyer is right for your case or guarantee an outcome.

Check the lawyer's practising details and ask who will actually handle your matter. A useful first conversation should leave you clearer about the next step, likely costs and what information is needed—not with promises that a particular sentence is guaranteed.

Questions to ask at the first consultation

- Have you handled cases like this in Queensland courts?
- What is likely to happen at my next court date?
- What information or documents should I gather?
- What are the possible pleas and consequences, and when must I decide?
- What are your fees, what do they include, and could there be extra costs?
- Who will attend court and who should I contact with updates?
- If bail or an urgent application is needed, how quickly can it be addressed?

Bring the charge documents, police paperwork, bail conditions and any court notices you have. Be honest about previous convictions, missed appointments and other matters that may affect the case. Your lawyer needs accurate information to advise you.

What may matter at sentencing?

The court must apply Queensland sentencing law and assess the case as a whole. The offence and its seriousness matter, as do factors such as your personal circumstances, criminal history, plea, and steps you have taken since the offence. Depending on the case, references, treatment information or evidence of work and caring responsibilities may help explain your situation. Your lawyer can advise what is relevant and how it should be presented.

Do not assume that asking for probation or community service means the court must grant it. The court decides the sentence. A lawyer can explain which options may be legally available, what information could assist, and the risks of different approaches—but nobody can promise the result.

Before your next step

1. Write down your court date, location and any bail or order conditions.
2. Get legal advice before entering a plea or making admissions.
3. Gather documents about work, health, caring duties and practical barriers.
4. For urgent bail, missed-court or breach issues, seek help without delay.

5. Use the Queensland Courts website for general court information and Google reviews only as one part of checking a lawyer's suitability.

A probation order and a community service order both require active compliance. If either is being considered in your case, make sure you understand the conditions, deadlines and possible consequences before you leave court.