

Easy-to-Understand Guide to Outpatient Competency Restoration (OCR) in Ohio

Understanding Key Terms

What Does Incompetent to Stand Trial (IST) Mean?

- Being IST means the Court thinks you might struggle to take part in your case because you need to learn more about court procedures, or perhaps mental health symptoms might make it hard for you to work with your lawyer.

What Is Outpatient Competency Restoration (OCR)?

- OCR is a program where the Court asks you to attend sessions (in person or online) to learn about court processes, which helps you handle your legal issues.
- If you aren't connected already, you might need to connect with mental health or developmental disability services. Also, a Release of Information form will require your signature to let your service providers talk with the OCR program and the Court.
- If you have mental health-related medications, taking them as directed or discussing any issues with the prescriber is required.

Process Insights

How Will My OCR Sessions Happen?

- Sessions can happen face-to-face or through telehealth, depending on your needs.
- The OCR provider will talk about these options with you, call to set an initial (intake) session, plan further sessions, and communicate with the Court about your progress.
- Eventually, a forensic examiner will reassess your competency for the Court, sending them a written opinion.

What If I Miss an OCR Session?

- Missing one appointment will prompt the OCR provider to try to reschedule with you.
- If they can't reach you or more than one session is missed, the judge and your defense attorney are notified. Then, the judge might decide to keep you in OCR with your bond intact, move you to inpatient restoration, or, in some places, provide restoration in jail. Keeping you in OCR is the least restrictive option.

Clarifying Expectations

Can OCR Providers Dismiss My Legal Case?

- No, OCR providers can't get you out of your legal case. While you're working with them, your case is paused. They only help prepare you to return to Court and work with your attorney to resolve your case.

Accommodating Needs

What if I Have Special Communication Needs?

- If you're deaf or hard of hearing, or if English isn't your primary language, OCR providers will make sure an interpreter is available during your sessions to help with communication and learning.

