

TEXAS REENTRY CENTER

Record Clearing, Expungement & Nondisclosure Guide

INTRODUCTION

If you've ever tried to "clear" your record in Texas, you already know: the information online is confusing, outdated, or flat-out wrong.

This guide breaks down exactly **what you can clear, what you cannot, and how the process works**—in language that doesn't make you want to fight the air.

Texas has two main ways to clean up a record:

1. **Expunction (EXPUNCTION)** – wipes the record clean
2. **Order of Nondisclosure** – hides the record from the public but NOT law enforcement

Both serve different purposes.

Read this guide before wasting money on consultants or shady "record-clearing services."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. What “Clearing a Record” Actually Means
2. Expungement vs Nondisclosure (Simple Chart)
3. What Cases Qualify for Expungement
4. What Cases Qualify for Nondisclosure
5. Waiting Periods (By Offense)
6. How to Get Your Criminal History
7. How to Check Case Status Online (All Texas Counties)
8. Filing an Expunction (Step-by-Step)
9. Filing a Nondisclosure (Step-by-Step)
10. Fees, Waivers & Free Options
11. Domestic Violence, Sex Offenses & Restrictions
12. Common Mistakes
13. Scams to Avoid
14. When to Use the Chatbot
15. Resource Links & County Tools

WHAT “CLEARING A RECORD” ACTUALLY MEANS

Most people think “expungement” means:

“You erase the case.”

Not always.

Here are the **two types of record clearing in Texas**:

A. Expunction (Expungement)

Record is **deleted**.

It is destroyed.

You can legally say the arrest “never happened.”

B. Order of Nondisclosure

Record is **sealed from the public**, but:

- Law enforcement still sees it
- Licensing boards still see it
- Federal agencies still see it

It only hides the record from:

- employers
- landlords
- the general public
- background check companies

EXPUNCTION VS NONDISCLOSURE (SIMPLE CHART)

Situation	Expunction	Nondisclosure
Charges dismissed	YES	YES
Acquitted at trial	YES	NO NEED
Wrong arrest / identity theft	YES	NO

Completed deferred adjudication	NO	YES (most cases)
Conviction	NO	Rarely (only certain misdemeanors)
Family violence	NO	NO (for nondisclosure)
Sex offenses	NO	NO (for nondisclosure)
Completed pretrial diversion	YES	SOMETIMES

WHAT QUALIFIES FOR EXPUNGEMENT

You can get an **expunction** if:

✓ Your case was dismissed

No conviction, no probation, no guilty plea.

✓ You were acquitted

Jury trial or bench trial.

✓ You completed pretrial diversion

Most counties allow this.

✓ The arrest was a mistake

Wrong person, bad info, mistaken identity.

✓ The statute of limitations expired

Case never filed by the DA.

✓ Certain Class C misdemeanors after deferred disposition

WHAT QUALIFIES FOR NONDISCLOSURE

You can get an **order of nondisclosure** if:

Texas Reentry Center
 Record Clearing Guide for Texans Rebuilding Their Lives
www.TexasReentryCenter.com

✓ You completed deferred adjudication successfully

This is the #1 way Texans clear their records.

✓ You completed jail time or probation for certain misdemeanors

(A new law expanded this—the “criminal justice reform nondisclosure.”)

✓ You completed specialty court programs

- Drug court
- Veterans court
- Mental health court

You CANNOT get nondisclosure for:

- Family violence
- Sex offenses
- Stalking
- Human trafficking
- Murder
- Aggravated kidnapping

WAITING PERIODS (EXPUNCTION)

From the date charges were dropped or you were arrested:

- **Class C misdemeanor:** immediate or after 180 days
- **Class B/A misdemeanor:** 1 year
- **Felony:** 3 years

(Some counties allow early expunction by agreement with the DA.)

WAITING PERIODS (NONDISCLOSURE)

After completing deferred adjudication:

- **Most misdemeanors:** immediate eligibility
- **Serious misdemeanors (A/B):** 2 years
- **Felonies deferred:** 5 years

HOW TO GET YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY (FREE OR CHEAP)

Texas DPS Criminal History Search

<https://publicsite.dps.texas.gov/ConvictionNameSearch/>

FBI Background Check (Identity History Summary)

<https://www.edo.cjis.gov>

Local Clerk's Offices

Most counties allow free online case lookup.

HOW TO CHECK YOUR CASE STATUS ONLINE

Here are lookup sites for major counties:

Harris County:

<https://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/edocs/public/search.aspx>

Dallas County:

<https://www.dallascounty.org/services/record-search/>

Tarrant County:

<https://odyssey.tarrantcounty.com/portal/>

Bexar County:

<https://apps.bexar.org/Search/CrimSearch.aspx>

Travis County:

<https://odysseypa.traviscountytexas.gov/portal/>

Texas Reentry Center
Record Clearing Guide for Texans Rebuilding Their Lives
www.TexasReentryCenter.com

El Paso County:

<https://casesearch.epcounty.com/>

Lubbock County:

<https://odysseyportal.lubbockcounty.gov/portal/>

Williamson County:

<https://judicialrecords.wilco.org/Portal/>

HOW TO FILE AN EXPUNCTION (STEP-BY-STEP)

1. Pull your criminal history
2. Get your case disposition
3. Download the expunction petition
4. File it in district court
5. Pay the filing fee (or request fee waiver)
6. Attend the hearing if required
7. Wait for agencies to destroy the records (30–180 days)

HOW TO FILE A NONDISCLOSURE (STEP-BY-STEP)

1. Get your case disposition
2. Make sure you meet waiting periods
3. Download nondisclosure forms
4. File in the county where you completed the case

5. Pay the fee
6. Judge signs the order
7. DPS seals the record from public view

FEES, WAIVERS & FREE OPTIONS

Typical costs:

- Filing fees: \$280–\$350
- Certified copies: \$20–\$50
- Attorney (optional): \$500–\$2500

You may qualify for:

- Indigency fee waivers
- Local legal aid
- Law school expunction clinics
- County expunction expos

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEX OFFENSE RESTRICTIONS

These offenses **cannot** be sealed by nondisclosure in Texas:

- Family violence
- Stalking
- Sex assault
- Trafficking
- Aggravated kidnapping

COMMON MISTAKES

- Trying to clear a conviction
- Filing before waiting periods
- Filing in wrong county
- Not including all arresting agencies
- Using paid “expungement websites”
- Not checking for unpaid court costs

Texas Reentry Center
Record Clearing Guide for Texans Rebuilding Their Lives
www.TexasReentryCenter.com

SCAMS TO AVOID

- ✗ **Any site that charges monthly fees**
- ✗ “Instant expungement services”
- ✗ Any company claiming they can clear convictions
- ✗ Consultants who aren’t attorneys
- ✗ Fake “state expunction registries”

WHEN TO USE THE CHATBOT

Ask the chatbot:

- “Am I eligible for expunction?”
 - “Am I eligible for nondisclosure?”
 - “Where do I file in my county?”
 - “What are my waiting periods?”
 - “Where do I get my disposition?”
-

RESOURCE LINKS

Texas DPS Criminal Search:

<https://publicsite.dps.texas.gov/ConvictionNameSearch/>

Texas Nondisclosure Info (OCA):

<https://www.txcourts.gov/rules-forms/orders-of-nondisclosure/>

Texas Reentry Center

Record Clearing Guide for Texans Rebuilding Their Lives

www.TexasReentryCenter.com

Texas Law Help (Expunction Guide):

<https://texaslawhelp.org/article/expunctions-and-nondisclosures>

Expunction/Nondisclosure Forms:

<https://www.txcourts.gov/rules-forms/forms/>