

Methods of Execution

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Authorized Methods of Execution by Method

(click the state to get specific information about the methods authorized)

Method	# of executions by method since 1976	# of states authorizing method	Jurisdictions that Authorize
Lethal Injection	767	37* states + U.S. Military and U.S. Gov't	Alabama , Arizona , Arkansas , California , Colorado , Connecticut , Delaware , Florida , Georgia , Idaho , Illinois , Indiana , Kansas , Kentucky , Louisiana , Maryland , Mississippi , Missouri , Montana , Nevada , New Hampshire , New Jersey , New Mexico , New York *, North Carolina , Ohio , Oklahoma , Oregon , Pennsylvania , South Carolina , South Dakota , Tennessee , Texas , Utah , Virginia , Washington , Wyoming , U.S. Military , U.S. Government * New York's death penalty was declared unconstitutional on June 24, 2004.
Electrocution	152	10 states (Nebraska is the only state that requires electrocution)	Alabama , Arkansas , Florida , [Illinois] , Kentucky , Nebraska , [Oklahoma] , South Carolina , Tennessee , Virginia
Gas Chamber	11	5 states (all have lethal injection as an alternative method)	Arizona , California , Maryland , Missouri , [Wyoming]
Hanging	3	2 states (all have lethal injection as an alternative method)	New Hampshire , Washington
Firing Squad	2	2* states (all have lethal injection as an alternative method)	Idaho , [Oklahoma] , Utah ** ** Utah offers the firing squad only for inmates who chose this method prior to its elimination as an option.

NOTE: states in [brackets] authorize the listed method only if a current method is found unconstitutional (see state description, below, for more information).

Authorized Methods of Execution by State

Alabama	Effective 7/1/02, lethal injection will be administered unless the inmate requests electrocution.
Arizona	Authorizes lethal injection for persons sentenced after 11/15/92; those sentenced before that date may select lethal injection or lethal gas.
Arkansas	Authorizes lethal injection for persons committing a capital offense after 7/4/83; those who committed the offense before that date may select lethal injection or electrocution.
California	Provides that lethal injection be administered unless the inmate requests lethal gas.
Colorado	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Connecticut	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Delaware	Lethal Injection is the sole method. Hanging was an alternative for those whose offense occurred prior to 6/13/86, but as of July 2003 no inmates on death row were eligible to choose this alternative and Delaware dismantled its gallows.
Florida	Allows prisoners to choose between lethal injection and electrocution
Georgia	Lethal injection is the sole method. (On October 5, 2001, the Georgia Supreme Court held that the electric chair was cruel and unusual punishment and struck down the state's use of the method)
Idaho	Authorizes firing squad only if lethal injection is "impractical".
Illinois	Lethal injection is the state's method. However, it authorizes electrocution if lethal injection is ever held to be unconstitutional.
Indiana	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Kansas	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Kentucky	Authorizes lethal injection for those convicted after March 31, 1998; those who committed the offense before that date may select lethal injection or electrocution
Louisiana	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Maryland	Authorizes lethal injection for those whose capital offenses occurred on or after 3/25/94; those who committed the offense before that date may select lethal injection or lethal gas.
Mississippi	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Missouri	Authorizes lethal injection or lethal gas; the statute leaves unclear who decides what method to use, the inmate or the Director of the Missouri Department of Corrections.
Montana	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Nebraska	Electrocution is the sole method.
Nevada	Lethal injection is the sole method.
New Hampshire	Authorizes hanging only if lethal injection cannot be given.

New Jersey	Lethal injection is the sole method.
New Mexico	Lethal injection is the sole method.
New York	Lethal injection is the sole method.
North Carolina	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Ohio	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Oklahoma	Authorizes electrocution if lethal injection is ever held to be unconstitutional and firing squad if both lethal injection and electrocution are held unconstitutional.
Oregon	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Pennsylvania	Lethal injection is the sole method.
South Carolina	Allows prisoners to choose between lethal injection and electrocution
South Dakota	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Tennessee	Authorizes lethal injection for those sentenced after Jan. 1, 1999; others choose between the electric chair and lethal injection.
Texas	Lethal injection is the sole method.
Utah	Lethal Injection is the sole method of execution. Firing squad was chosen by some inmates prior to the passage of legislation banning the practice, and is only available for those inmates.
Virginia	Allows prisoners to choose between lethal injection and electrocution
Washington	Provides that lethal injection be administered unless the inmate requests hanging.
Wyoming	Authorizes lethal gas if lethal injection is ever held to be unconstitutional.
U.S. Military	Lethal injection is the sole method
U.S. Government	The method of execution of Federal prisoners for offenses under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 is that of the state in which the conviction took place, pursuant to 18 USC 3596. If the state has no death penalty, the judge may chose the method of another state. For offenses under the 1988 Drug Kingpin Law, the method of executions is lethal injection, pursuant to 28 CFR, Part 26.

(Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Capital Punishment 1996 Bulletin, Table 2 (Dec. 1997); updated by DPIC)