



Conducting legal research

Legal advice from a lawyer will tell you how legal principles apply to your specific case so consulting a lawyer is the best way to ensure that you are fully informed about the law that applies to your specific situation.

Finding reliable legal information online

Many sources of legal information are available online; however, not all of this information will apply to your legal issue and some of it may not be relevant or reliable. Here are some tips that may help you to find reliable online information.

Check the country and province it applies to

Legal information from other countries will not usually apply to Canada. Legal information from other Canadian provinces also might not apply in BC. This may be because it relates to laws that don't apply in BC, or because courts in different provinces may decide issues differently. Generally speaking, it is best to use court decisions from BC.

Check the source

Many BC organizations work hard to present accurate, current information online, such as websites from the BC courts, the BC Ministry of the Attorney General, Legal Aid BC, Justice Education Society, Courthouse Libraries BC, and People's Law School (to name a few). Watch out for information sources that are based on opinions rather than facts and the law.

Check the author

If an author is listed, check their online footprint. Their biographical information and social media posts can reveal a lot to help you decide whether they are qualified to provide legal information, and whether they are offering accurate information.

Check the date

Canadian case law is constantly changing. Judges' decisions can be overturned on appeal, or affected by later decisions. It is important to know when legal information was written or published so you can make sure it is still accurate.

Information to avoid

Ignore websites that say Canadian laws do not apply unless you consent to them or that you do not have to pay taxes. These arguments have been put forward by people seeking to make a profit and by groups calling themselves "Freemen", "Detaxers" or "Sovereign Citizens" and other names. There are no reported decisions where these arguments have been accepted in a Canadian court.

Courthouse Libraries BC

Courthouse Libraries BC (CLBC) operates law libraries in 30 courthouses around BC. They have computers with legal databases for public use. Eight libraries in larger communities have full-time staff to help with information requests. You can also use a 1-800 number or email to ask a librarian a legal information question.

[Courthouse Libraries BC](#)

[Clicklaw](#)

[Clicklaw Wikibooks plain language legal publications](#)

Finding legislation and case law

[CanLII](#)

[Finding Provincial Court judgments](#)

[BC Laws \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Justice Laws \(Government of Canada\)](#)

Legal research guides

[The CanLII Primer: Legal Research Principles and CanLII Navigation for Self-Represented Litigants \(CanLII PDF\)](#)

[The Canadian Legal Research and Writing Guide](#)

[Legal Research for Journalists \(BC Courthouse Libraries webinar\)](#)

[Learn how to use digital research tools \(Courthouse Libraries BC\)](#)

[Self-Represented Litigants Resources \(National Self-Represented Litigants Project\)](#)

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