



# On my own: Youth

A Canadian Bar Association series supporting legal wellness

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Some laws are different depending on the province or territory where you live – make sure you have the right information. Some laws, like the Criminal Code, apply across Canada.

## I'm starting my first job ...

- The minimum wage can depend on your age, experience, and the job.
- The law says you are supposed to get paid for all your work time.
- You can say “no” to work that puts you at risk. Government health and safety officials check into dangerous work situations when asked.

## I want to move in / out ...

- A rental agreement (lease) is a contract that says how much rent to pay, when, and for how long. It should also say who pays for bills like water, heat, and electricity.
- You may only be asked to leave (evicted) when the landlord proves in court that you are behind in rent payments (in arrears) or have caused serious damage or other problems. You must receive notice so you have a chance to defend yourself in court or sort out problems with the landlord.
- Your landlord can only come into your place according to the law, with your permission, or in an emergency. Check your provincial or territorial tenant law.
- Look for free services to help tenants with landlord problems.

## I've been asked to sign ...

- When you sign a contract, you agree to what it says. Read it. Ask questions.
- Sometimes, like when you join a gym or get a phone plan, you are asked to sign a standard contract. Make sure the blanks are filled in correctly.
- If a contract is for something very expensive or important, get legal help **before** you sign.
- If a contract gets broken, you might be able to make things right with the other side. Or, get help from a consumers' group or workers' association, a mediator, or lawyer.

## My phone company is treating me badly ...

- A phone plan is a contract. If you are charged too much or don't get the coverage you expected, call the company.
- Note the names or ID numbers of the people you talk to and what they say. Still not OK? Ask for supervisors, or contact the Commissioner for Complaints for Telecommunications Services (CCTS) or Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

## I'm seeing someone ...

- Having a baby means financial and other responsibilities for **both** parents until the baby grows up. You may be able to get help to establish who the father is, or to set up child support or visits with the child.
- Sex without consent (agreement) is a crime. When someone says “no” or is too drunk or stoned to agree, there is no consent.
- Sometimes people can't legally consent to sex, because they are too young or there is a relationship of trust or authority between the two people. See [www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/clp/faq.html](http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/other-autre/clp/faq.html)
- Sharing sexual or intimate photos online or by phone may result in the police getting involved.

## The police are asking ...

- If stopped on the street, do not give the police a reason to arrest you – be honest about your name;

do not act rude, run away, or lie to police. Legally, you don't need to answer their questions; you'll have to decide what's smart in the situation.

- When driving a car, you need to supply your driver's licence, vehicle registration, and insurance slip if the police stop you. With “reasonable grounds” to believe that you have been drinking, they can demand a breath sample.
- Police need “reasonable grounds” to believe you have committed a crime or may be about to commit a crime before they can search you. If they ask, even indirectly, to see what's in your backpack or pockets, and you agree, you consent to the search and may make it legal. Unless a crime is in progress, the police need a search warrant to search your home.
- If arrested, you can talk to a lawyer **before** the police question you. Ask for the Yellow Pages and keep calling until you reach a lawyer. If you are under 18, you can also have your parents with you.

### Sources of help

- Free reliable legal information is available online; search for Public Legal Education, Legal Aid, Community Legal Clinics, Government Legal Information, Courthouse Information, or Law School Clinics
- Lawyer Referral Services offer free short first meetings with a lawyer; look in the Yellow Pages at [canada411.ca](http://canada411.ca), or call 411
- Ask friends, coworkers, or family for suggestions

**Tip** Ask how much – lawyers usually charge by time spent, so get your questions organized before you go. If you're upset, talk it out with someone first – save your lawyer's time for legal questions.

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Put contact information here.