

STEPS TO JUSTICE

GOING TO CRIMINAL COURT

An OJEN workshop demonstrating a CLEO
public legal information resource.



CLEO

Community Legal Education Ontario
Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario



True or false?

1. I'm supposed to go to court next week, but I can't make it. It's okay though, because I hired a lawyer. I'm sure my lawyer will go to court for me.



True or false?

2. I was charged with causing a disturbance in a public place, but I'm not too worried. I'm confident a jury will find me not guilty.



True or false?

3. The Crown withdrew the assault charges against me. What a relief! They can't charge me again later for the same assault.



True or false?

4. I've been charged with theft, but I can't afford a lawyer!
I guess I won't have anyone to help me on my first day
in court.



True or false?

5. I don't understand English or French very well, so I guess I have to pay for an interpreter when I'm in court.

**Going to
criminal
court in
Ontario:**
*What is
covered?*

- Missing court dates
- Types of offenses
- Diversion
- Disclosure of evidence
- Sentencing rules
- Preliminary hearings
- Staying and withdrawing charges
- Language rights in hearings
- Peace bonds



Real Life Legal Problems

Demonstration Scenario

I'm supposed to attend court today, but I'm stuck out of town because my flight was cancelled. I'm worried about what will happen when I don't show up. Is there any way I can miss court without any problems?



Steps to Justice



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Steps to Justice

Step-by-step information about legal problems.
Reliable, practical, and easy to understand.

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Live chat
Mon-Fri 11am-1pm



I'm supposed to attend court today, but I'm stuck out of town because my flight was cancelled. I'm worried about what will happen when I don't show up. Is there any way I can miss court without any problems?

Start on the Steps to Justice topic, "Missing court" with the question, "I have an emergency and can't make it for my court date. What do I do?"

Some questions:

- What will the court do if your absence from court goes unexplained?
- Can you avoid consequences for missing court if you can explain your absence?
- If you don't have a lawyer, who should you call about your absence?
- If you don't have a lawyer, is there any way the court can proceed without you?
- If you were charged with a serious offence, is there any way the court can proceed without you?



**Using the
Steps to Justice
Website**



Group Work

1. Navigate to the Steps to Justice website:
<http://stepstojustice.ca>
2. Read your scenario with your group.
3. Try to identify the main legal issues.
4. Imagine that you are the person in the scenario. Use the Steps to Justice website to answer the questions on your handout.
5. As you browse, try to find out more about how the law would affect the person in your scenario. What does it say? What are their options?
6. Record your answers on the handout.

If you get stuck, ask for help!



Large Group Scenario

FOCUS AREAS:

- 1) Missing court
- 2) Duty Counsel
- 3) Diversion
- 4) Disclosure

A little while ago, I got in a fight, and police arrested me for assault. I was released after my bail hearing and given a court date for September 9. I wrote it down and made a note in my phone of the date.

On September 8, I got in a heated argument with my roommate about rent — he lost his job a few months ago and I've been covering his half of the rent since then. When I told him that he needs a new job or should move out, things got heated. I was so frustrated with him that I forgot about my court date and didn't show up in court. I didn't mean to. It was an honest mistake. But money is tight because I've been covering my roommate's rent and I don't know whether I can afford a lawyer to help me sort this mess out.

I'm also concerned about appearing in court again. I want this to be over as quickly as possible and I don't know whether I can get a lawyer before I got back to court. If I can't hire a lawyer, I'm concerned that I won't know what to do or that I might miss something important again and I want to make sure I can prepare properly for my trial. What should I do?