



STEPS TO JUSTICE

GOING TO CRIMINAL COURT

An OJEN workshop demonstrating a CLEO public legal information resource.





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.



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.



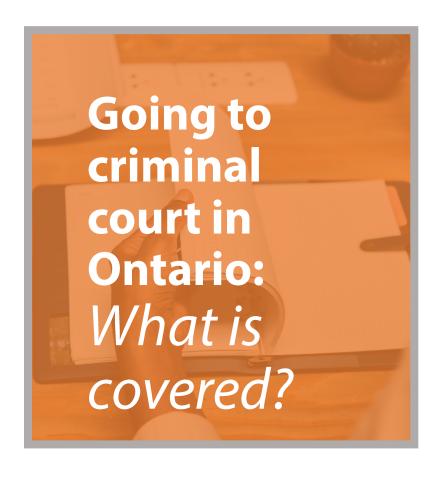
3. The Crown withdrew the assault charges against me. What a relief! They can't charge me again later for the same assault.



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.



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.



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



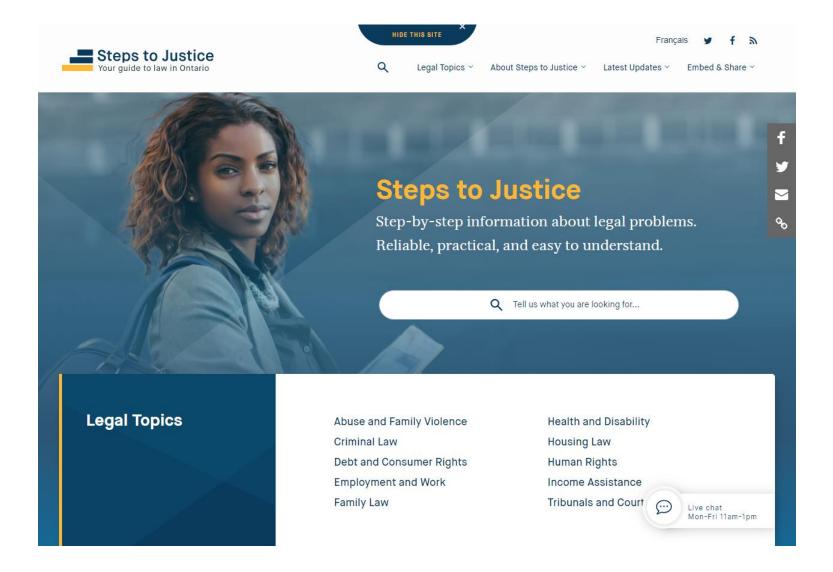
Real Life Legal Problems

Demonstration Scenario

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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?



- I. 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?