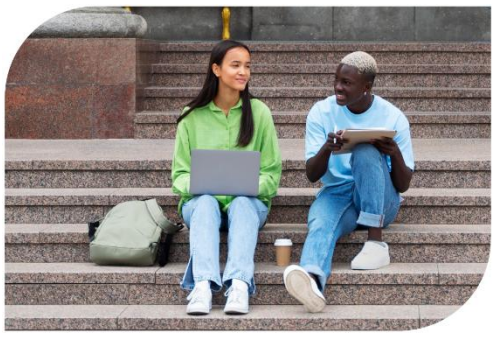
CRIMINAL LAW IN CANADA

GOING TO COURT: MAKE A PLAN



- **Arrange for an interpreter** - You can request a free interpreter through your lawyer or court staff. Make this request as soon as possible.

- **Plan how to get there** - An appearance notice or summons will say the date, time, and location of your court date. You must be there on time. If you can't go to court because of work, illness, or a family responsibility, tell the court as soon as possible. Ask for the court date to be rescheduled.

- **Bring a support person** - You can bring a support person to court for emotional support, help organizing documents, or to take notes. They cannot speak for you. When your name is called, tell the judge you have a support person, their name, and how they are related to you. For example: "I have a support person, [Name], who is a family friend."

- **Bring paperwork** - Bring any forms or other documents you have received relating to the charges against you.

- **Practice what to say** - Stand up when you speak to the judge or when the judge speaks to you. Speak clearly and loud enough for the judge to hear you. In Provincial Court, when you speak to the judge, you call the judge "Your Honour."

- **Talk to duty counsel** - Duty counsel is a lawyer who works for Nova Scotia Legal Aid and gives free, basic legal advice at court. You can ask court staff where to find them.

- **Take notes and ask questions** - If you do not understand something the judge, Crown Attorney, or court staff says, you can ask them to repeat it or say it in a different way. Take notes about any new court dates or information you must provide to the courts.

NOTES:

The Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia can answer questions about the law.
You can ask questions by email, live chat, text, or phone.
They can help you understand your options and what the law says.
They cannot give legal advice or go to court with you.