



## Provincial Court of British Columbia

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The Provincial Court deals with charges against adults for most crimes. It does not conduct trials for adults charged with murder and a few other rare crimes like piracy. Those trials are held in the BC Supreme Court.

In youth court the Provincial Court deals with charges against young people aged 12 to 17 for all crimes.

[Youth criminal court](#)

**Over 95% of all criminal cases in BC are heard in Provincial Court.**

## Laws in criminal court

Two federal statutes apply to most criminal matters. The *Criminal Code of Canada* sets out criminal offences and procedure and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* contains criminal offences specific to illegal drugs and the substances used to produce them.

[Criminal Code of Canada](#)

[Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#)

## Methods of appearance in criminal cases

Criminal cases involve different stages and different types of court appearances. In-person attendance is required for some appearances at the Court. For others, remote attendance is required, or there may be a choice as to whether to attend in-person or remotely.

The Court's *Notice 28* describes the default method of how different kinds of cases are heard in the Appendix.

[Notice 28 Current Court Operations](#)

[Attending a court case](#)

## Terms used in criminal cases

You may see or hear unfamiliar legal words and abbreviations in criminal court documents and proceedings. Many of these are explained on our "Glossary and court jargon" page. This page also contains links to other helpful glossaries and guides.

[Glossary and court jargon](#)

[Criminal justice terms explained \(Government of BC\)](#)

## If your first language is not English

In Canada people may ask to have their criminal trial or preliminary inquiry in English or French (or if circumstances warrant in both official languages). The right to apply for a trial in either official language (or a bilingual trial) is found in the *Criminal Code* section 530.

If you do not understand or speak English or French you may request a court interpreter.

[French language criminal and traffic trials](#)

[Interpreters](#)

## Criminal court lists and letter codes

Criminal court lists, which show scheduled criminal cases, can be accessed from the provincial government website.

Court lists use specific letter codes to record the purpose of court appearances and their outcome. The letter codes are the same as the ones used in JUSTIN, which is the database used to manage criminal cases in BC. To find the meaning of a letter code on a court list download the JUSTIN code table.

[Criminal court lists \(Government of BC\)](#)

[JUSTIN code table \(Government of BC\)](#)

## Practice Directions and *Criminal Caseflow Management Rules*

The *Criminal Caseflow Management Rules* apply to criminal cases in Provincial Court. They are intended to reduce the number of court appearances that accused persons make before trial. They give specific instructions on certain aspects of criminal cases.

The Chief Judge has also issued Practice Directions to provide clarification and guidance about procedural matters in criminal cases.

[Criminal Caseflow Management Rules](#)

[Criminal practice directions](#)

## **Information and services for victims and witnesses**

Testimonial accommodations are processes that may be taken to support victims or witnesses of crime during their testimony. While an accused has the right to hear the evidence of anyone testifying against them, counsel or a witness may make a request to a judge for testimonial accommodation. A few examples of accommodations are having a support person nearby, testifying from another courtroom or location, and testifying from behind a screen. Further information about testimonial accommodations and services for victims and witnesses can be found below.

[Court Support \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Victims and Witnesses of Crime and Violence \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Victims of Crime \(Government of Canada\)](#)

[National Office for Victims \(Government of Canada\)](#)

[Justice BC - Criminal Justice \(Government of BC\)](#)

## **Publication bans**

People may access information from court files or hear information when watching court proceedings that may be subject to a publication ban. This means they are prevented from publishing, transmitting or broadcasting that information. The Court's BAN-1 Bans on Publication policy provides some examples of publication bans.

[BAN-1 Bans on Publication](#)

[CRIM 19 Procedure for Applications to Vary or Revoke a Publication Ban under s. 486.51 of the](#)

## Notices, policies, practice directions

Find notices (including Notice 28 Current Court Operations), policies and criminal and youth court practice directions.



## Finding a lawyer or getting legal advice

Information about getting a lawyer, what duty counsel do, how to get legal advice and legal assistance.



## Criminal Court Forms

Criminal forms and information about criminal court. (Government of BC)



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