

Legal Information vs. Legal Advice: What is the difference?

Legal information explains the law and the legal system in general terms. The information is not tailored to a specific case.

Legal advice applies the law, including statute and case law and legal principles to a particular situation. It provides recommendations about what course of action would best suit the facts of the case and what the person wants to achieve.

This tip sheet explains some of the main differences between legal information and legal advice.

Legal Information	Legal Advice
<p>Legal definitions: what the words mean</p> <p>Matrimonial property actions are civil claims that will divide the property obtained during a marriage between divorcing spouses.</p>	<p>Legal interpretations: how the statutes and case law apply in a specific case</p> <p>When we go over your list of assets I can explain which would be considered matrimonial property and which would not.</p>
<p>Procedural definitions, such as who the people are in court and what steps take place</p> <p>There are different reasons why you, and/or the other party may want to adjourn the application. Some of these are...</p>	<p>Procedural recommendations, such as what type of application to make or which level of court to use</p> <p>At the next court appearance we should ask for an adjournment because...</p>
<p>How to find legislation, court rules and cases, as well as other online and print resources or workshops that explain the law</p> <p>This booklet explains the guidelines for child support.</p>	<p>Research of legislation, court rules and cases; applying the law to the facts of a given situation</p> <p>There are a number of cases that would support your claim of \$X for damages for personal injuries.</p>
<p>Providing samples of court forms and instructions; telling you if required sections of a form have been filled out</p> <p>I have marked the three places on this form where you have not yet filled in the required information.</p>	<p>Filling out forms or telling you to put in a form, e.g. specific people against whom to file pleadings or types or amount of damages to seek</p> <p>In this section of the form we will ask for...</p>

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<p>Descriptions of alternatives to court such as mediation</p> <p>You may want to consider working with a mediator. They use an informal, confidential and structured process to resolve disputes so both parties have input into the solution. You can learn more about it from ...</p>	<p>Recommendations about whether or not to bring a case to court or what alternative would be the best choice for your situation</p> <p>Let's try mediation first. It could be a faster cheaper way to resolve your problem.</p>
<p>General referrals</p>	<p>Specific referrals</p>
<p>A legal clinic may provide free advice if you qualify. Here is a list of clinics that you could call to ask about it.</p> <p>Options for dealing with a legal problem</p> <p>I can describe four different ways that you could deal with this and then you can choose.</p>	<p>I recommend that you work with Mr. Bean to get your financial documents in order before we go further.</p> <p>Opinions on whether to follow a particular course of action; predicting the outcome of a case or course of action</p> <p>I would say that you have a good case.</p>
<p>Explanations about court etiquette and the order in which parties can speak in court</p> <p>When it is your turn to speak, you can summarize the facts set out in your court documents and make your arguments.</p>	<p>Guidance about what to say in court or at a hearing; talking to a judge on your behalf</p> <p>Today we will go over what questions you may be asked at your trial.</p>
<p>Can be provided by many different people including lawyers</p> <p>I am a court clerk. I am a library technician. I work in the Office of the Public Guardian.</p>	<p>Can only be provided by a lawyer (or in some jurisdictions specially-trained advocates or paralegals)</p> <p>I am John Doe, LLB.</p>

Both information and advice are useful. You don't always need advice. Sometimes all you need is information, and sometimes that information can help you decide if you need to get advice.

Where can you go for legal information or legal advice?

There are many sources of good legal information. Some provide general information; some deal with specific issues. For a comprehensive categorized list see LawCentral Alberta at: <http://lawcentralalberta.ca/en/help>

You may get legal advice from lawyers at Legal Aid, low-cost legal clinics or private law firms. For help in finding a lawyer see LawCentral Alberta at: <http://lawcentralalberta.ca/en/help/finding-lawyer>

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