

Using AI for Legal Help

Thinking of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for legal help and information? AI tools can be helpful, if used properly – but they’re not without their risks.

The following six tips can help you avoid common traps when using AI.

1. Use the right AI tools

There are two main types of AI tools: **non-grounded** and **grounded**. Non-grounded ones rely on their training data and do not access real-time information, like the live web. Grounded AI tools draw on external or real-time information sources, and back up their answers with references. Grounded, law-specific AI tools are more reliable for legal help and information. Alberta Law Libraries has AI-powered legal research tools freely available for use.

2. Have someone check the AI output

Do not rely on AI-generated answers or outputs without checking for accuracy. Check the output yourself or have a person familiar with the relevant laws check the AI output for accuracy.

3. Check the jurisdiction

While AI tools can generate a lot of information in seconds, the output is not useful if it references laws from the wrong province or territory (jurisdiction). When using AI tools, limit sources to your jurisdiction to increase the likelihood the output will be accurate. For example, include “limit sources to Alberta only” in your prompt.

How do AI tools work?

Generative AI (GenAI) tools like AI chatbots, assistants, co-pilots, and agents can produce content in many formats. Large Language Models (LLMs) power these tools. AI developers train LLMs on massive amounts of data. When trained, these LLMs put words in order of statistical probabilities in a way that sounds human-like. GenAI tools can hallucinate and make things up to please you.

4. Check the references and citations

AI tools can generate fake legal cases with nonexistent names, citations, details and even excerpts. They can also generate real cases unrelated to your legal topic or issue. Check where the AI tool is drawing the information from by checking the references or citations listed.

When checking individual references or citations, ask yourself:

- ◆ Does the reference or citation exist?
- ◆ Is the reference or citation made up?
- ◆ Is it about the right legal issue or topic?
- ◆ Is it for the right jurisdiction?
- ◆ Is the information current?

Be sure to cross-check the AI output with two or three other **official or authoritative sources** to verify the information is correct.

Official or authoritative sources include:

- ✓ Official court websites
- ✓ Trusted legal publishers (get access to some through [Alberta Law Libraries](#))
- ✓ Well-established public services (such as [CanLII](#))



Do NOT rely on the AI output if you can't verify the information in an official or authoritative source.

Tip: You can check AI output with resources from free, trustworthy legal information providers like CPLEA.

5. Remain skeptical

AI tools can make the law or court processes sound easy or straightforward, even when they are not. Watch out for the following red flags in AI output:

- ▶ Convincing you your court case will be successful
- ▶ Making a court process sound simple
- ▶ Making a complicated legal issue (for example, a Charter issue) sound easy to deal with
- ▶ Generating court forms or documents



If the AI output sounds too good to be true, stop using it.

Tip: Do not rely on AI to explain the law or how court processes work. Check and review the actual law, regulation or court decision, not just the AI summary of it. Review the official court rules, such as the Alberta Rules of Court, to understand the rules that apply to you.

6. Get legal help

Using AI does not replace getting real [legal help](#). Community legal clinics and student legal clinics offer free legal support. You can also pay for legal services from a legal coach, mediator, arbitrator or lawyer. Visit your local law library if you need help with legal research or navigating legal information and resources.



There are consequences for irresponsibly using AI in court, such as by filing AI-generated documents or relying on AI-generated false information or hallucinated cases. Canadian judges can order lawyers and litigants to pay costs for doing so.

Not all information is good information.

The following are not good sources of legal information:

- ✗ social media
- ✗ Reddit
- ✗ friends and family who are not lawyers
- ✗ blogs written by people who are not lawyers
- ✗ AI chatbots or AI overviews in search engines (without properly verifying the information)

Good legal information is accurate, up to date and specific to Alberta. For good legal information, refer to www.cplea.ca.

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