

Is it Reliable?

7 Clues to Good Legal Information Online



Watch the video @ www.youtube.com/cplealberta

1

Where does this information apply?



Laws are different in different places. This is known as “jurisdiction”. Canadian laws are different than laws in other countries.

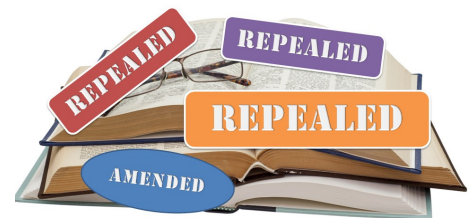
Within Canada, laws can vary. Federal laws apply across the entire country. Provincial laws only apply within that province. Municipalities can make or enforce laws (usually called by-laws) specific to their region.

2

Is the information up-to-date?

Laws change often. Judges and the courts can also change how laws are applied as cases are decided.

If you can easily see when the information was prepared or last updated you can determine if it is current enough for your topic.



3

Who is the information from and why are they providing it?



A reliable source is more likely to provide reliable information. Government departments, courts, universities, and libraries are likely to be trustworthy sources.

If the main purpose of the site is to promote the provider’s services or sell you something, the information may not be complete or maybe biased. Check the “About Us” page for credentials, mission statements, and information about partners and funders.

4

Is complete contact information for the website given?



Look for a mailing address, phone number, and email address.

Contact information is a clue about how reputable the providers are. It also makes it possible to check up on the information if you wish.

5

Does advertising influence the content or usability of the



If the main purpose is advertising, the providers may not be focused on the quality of the information.

If you have to work your way around advertising, you may not be able to understand what is presented or to determine the reliability of the information.

6

How good are the links to more information?

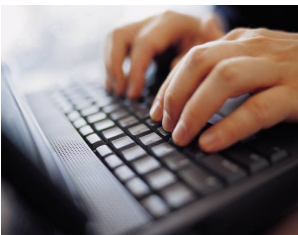


Good information can be verified with other authorities. A good site points you to other credible source to help you explore the topic further.

A reputable provider maintains their links so they work.

7

Is there a clear privacy policy if you must register?



If you have to register or provide personal information, you want to be comfortable with how your information will be used.

Legal problems can be personal. You should not have to give up your privacy to get good information.