

# Legal Information vs. Legal Advice

## What's the difference?

**Legal information** is general information about the law and legal processes.

**Legal advice** is applying the law to a specific situation.

Differences between legal information and legal advice:



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### Legal Information

- Can be provided by many different people, including lawyers, court clerks, librarians, government workers, etc.
- Showing people how to search for statutes, case law, articles and forms
  - “You can find case law online at ...”
- Pointing someone towards a certain law and explaining what that law says
  - “This law is about ... and it says that ...”
- Outlining possible options for dealing with a legal problem or alternatives to court
  - “Your options are ... but you must decide what to do ...”
  - “There are other processes that you can look at instead of having to go to court. They are ...”
- Explaining court processes and procedures
  - “Usually, this is what happens in court ...”
  - “An adjournment means that ...”

### Legal Advice

- Can only be provided by lawyers (or specially-trained advocates or paralegals in some provinces or territories)
- Researching a point of law in-depth
  - “I’ve researched cases similar to yours and ...”
- Interpreting and explaining how the law applies to someone’s situation
  - “In your case, you are likely entitled to ... based on the law and your situation.”
- Recommending what steps someone should take and why
  - “I would recommend that you ... because ...”
- Representing someone in court or guiding them on what to say
  - “Your honour, I am here as counsel for ...”
  - “You should tell the judge about ...”

[www.cplea.ca](http://www.cplea.ca)

You should **NOT** rely on this booklet for legal advice.  
It provides general information on **Alberta law only**.

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Alberta

## Legal Information

- Explaining common legal words and phrases
  - *“This term means ...”*
- Referring people to resources (websites, brochures, organizations, etc.)
  - *“You can go to this legal clinic for more help ...”*
  - *“This booklet explains more about ...”*
  - *“These forms are used for ...”*
- Telling a person they need to get more help and advice
  - *“You should talk to a lawyer to get advice about your specific problem.”*

## Legal Advice

- Preparing legal documents and explaining how they impact someone
  - *“This document says ... which means you ...”*
- Recommending people to specific professionals or resources
  - *“You need your accountant to provide ...”*
  - *“You should hire an expert witness to prove ...”*
- Giving an opinion on any part of a person’s legal problem, including whether their problem has merit (if their claim will be successful)
  - *“What you are doing is illegal/legal because ...”*
  - *“In my opinion, you have a good case because ...”*

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Both information and advice are useful. You don’t always need advice. Sometimes all you need is good information. And sometimes good information can help you decide if you need to get advice.

### Where can you go for legal information?

There are many sources of good legal information.

For a broad list of legal information sources by category, see LawCentral Alberta at [www.lawcentralalberta.ca](http://www.lawcentralalberta.ca).

### Where can you go for legal advice?

Only lawyers can give legal advice in Alberta.

Depending on your income, there are lawyers at legal clinics or Legal Aid Alberta that provide legal advice for free or at reduced rates. You can also talk to lawyers at private law firms.

For a list of options about where to get legal advice for your problem, see LawCentral Alberta at [www.lawcentralalberta.ca/help](http://www.lawcentralalberta.ca/help).