

Clues to reliable legal information



CLEO (Community Legal Education Ontario/ Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario)

It can be hard to tell what legal information you can rely on. When looking online, ask:

1. Am I getting the information from a trustworthy source?

- **Does the organization have the appropriate expertise?**
It's important that legal information is reviewed regularly by an experienced lawyer. Government, legal aid, and community legal clinics all have lawyers on staff. If you find legal information online and you're not sure if a lawyer was involved, check the "About us" page or contact the organization to find out.
- **Are contact details given?**
Reliable legal information providers tell you how to contact them, usually by giving an email address and a phone number, and sometimes a mailing address.

2. Am I getting complete and unbiased legal information?

- **Is the information from a free source?**
Commercial businesses are trying to sell services. Their information can be incomplete or biased as a way of encouraging you to buy their services.
- **Does the website or legal information have ads?**
Most organizations that present complete, unbiased information, such as government, legal clinics, and non-profits, don't have paid ads on their websites.

3. Does the legal information apply to my location?

- **Does the information apply to Ontario?**
Always check to make sure that the law applies to Ontario. Some information may apply to Ontario but be produced by the federal government.

4. Is the legal information up-to-date?

- **Does the information tell you when it was produced or most recently reviewed?**
Laws change and legal information needs to be reviewed regularly for accuracy. Check when the information was produced or last reviewed by someone with legal expertise.

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