A Guide to Preparing Your Affidavit

This Guidebook describes the steps you take to prepare your affidavit. We use affidavits to present evidence to the court. Sometimes, courts hear evidence from witnesses who give their evidence in person, orally. However, for evidence without a witness – like receipts, photographs, or personal accounts of facts in the case – you must present your evidence by affidavits.

What is an Affidavit?

An affidavit is a written statement that contains important facts you want the judge or the master to know about. You swear it under an oath (or affirm) before a registry clerk or a lawyer. "To swear" means you promise that the information contained in the affidavit is true.

- The affidavit may have letters or other important documents attached to it. These are often referred to as exhibits to the affidavit.
- The affidavit is filed in the court registry.
- Copies of the affidavit have to be given to the other persons named in the lawsuit.
- The first rule about preparing an affidavit is that you should tell the truth in your affidavit.

In the Supreme Court of BC, there is a form you must fill out for your affidavit. It is called Form 109. See Resource D: Sample Affidavit and Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit

Express Lane

If you are pressed for time, use the express lane. Here's what you do:

- Read the second, third and fourth sections of this Guidebook.
- Make an appointment with a lawyer – see Resource A. Take this guide with you when you go.
- Ask the lawyer what you need to put in the affidavit – see Resource B.
- Ask the lawyer to fill out the front page of the sample affidavit – see Resource D.
- Follow section 3 to make sure the technical pieces are filled out.
- Follow section 4 to fill out the body of affidavit.
- Take the completed affidavit back to a lawyer. The lawyer should read it over and have it sworn for you.

This Guidebook provides general information about civil, non-family claims in the Supreme Court of BC. It does not explain the law. Legal advice must come from a lawyer, who can tell you why you should do something in your lawsuit or whether you should take certain actions. Anyone else, such as court registry staff, non-lawyer advocates, other helpers, and this guidebook can only give you legal information about how to do something, such as following certain court procedures.

Standards are in effect for the filing of all Supreme Court civil and Supreme Court family documents, except divorce and probate. When you submit your completed documents, registry staff will check to make sure they meet the minimum standards before accepting them for filing. It is your responsibility to include all other information required by the court and ensure it is correct.

For information about how to get help with your case, see the last page of this document.

What's in this Guidebook?

This Guidebook has five sections:

1. Get a general idea of what you put in affidavits
2. Review the structure of an affidavit
3. Find out how to fill in the technical parts
4. Find out how to fill out the main part
5. Resources
   - Where to get legal advice
   - Questions to ask the lawyer
   - Checklist
   - Sample affidavit
   - Sample of a completed affidavit

If you're doing it yourself, get some legal advice

If you are going to represent yourself, get some advice from a lawyer. Do this before you start. Look at Resource A to find out where to get free legal advice if you're on a low income. Look at Resource B for questions you can take to a lawyer. A lawyer can tell you what special information about your case you should include in your affidavit.

There are two important things to remember about affidavits: what you put in must be relevant, and it must be fact, not opinion.

What you put in your affidavit must be relevant to your case

The statement you make in the affidavit and documents attached to the affidavit must be relevant to the matter before the court. This is the key to having a good affidavit.

- What are the important facts that have to be put in the affidavit? A lawyer can answer that question.
- The preparation of the affidavit must be done in the context of the whole case. What are your strategies for the court case? Your affidavit should be drafted in that context. Again, get legal advice.

Your affidavit sets out facts, not opinions

Affidavits contain facts, not opinions.

Fact: You saw something happen and you have personal knowledge of it.
Example: I saw Tom Smith hit Harry Jones on the nose on February 7, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. This occurred outside the home of Harry Jones at 123 Main Street, Vancouver, BC.

Opinion: What you think or believe:
Example: I think Tom Smith is a bad person.

Sometimes, opinions are important. For instance, doctors and other experts can give their opinion in court. However, lay people present facts in an affidavit, not opinions.

Get a general idea of what goes in affidavits

Look at Resource D: Sample Affidavit and Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit in the Resources section of this Guidebook. An affidavit has seven parts. We will look at each them in turn.

1. Style of proceeding
2. Deponent's statement ("deponent' is the person making the affidavit)
3. Knowledge statement
4. Body of the affidavit (this is the most important part of the affidavit)
5. Ending of the affidavit
6. Exhibits
7. Backing sheet

Most parts of the affidavit are technical. Section 3 explains how to fill them out. The body of the affidavit is where you explain your story to the judge. Follow the steps in section 4 to fill it out correctly.

Important: Read both section 3 and section 4 before you start work on your affidavit.

Review the structure of an affidavit

As you go through each part of this section, look at the sample affidavit and the sample completed affidavit. They are located in the Resources section of this Guidebook.

1. Style of Proceeding

- A style of proceeding appears on the first page of all court documents. It states who is suing whom and also gives the file number and court registry name. See sample affidavit and the sample completed affidavit.
- The style of proceeding remains unchanged throughout the life of the court case unless the judge orders otherwise.
- The style of proceeding enables the court registry staff to put the document in the right court file.

There are three things you have to do. In the top right hand corner of the style of proceeding you must write:

- the number of the affidavit (you may have made more than one)
- your name (you are the deponent);
- the date on which you made the affidavit.

Example: *This is the 3rd affidavit of Mary Smith in this case and was made on 01/06/2010*

This goes in the right-hand corner so the judge can easily identify the affidavit. The number 3 indicates it is the third affidavit sworn by Mary Smith.

You need to "swear" the affidavit. This means you swear under oath (to God) OR you affirm that you are telling the truth in the affidavit. You do one or the other, not both. Cross out or delete the one that does not apply to you. See Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit.

Note: On the form you may see a part that deals with interpreters (not included in our samples). If you speak English, cross all this out. It does not apply to you. If you do not speak English, arrange to talk to a lawyer.

2. Deponent's Statement

A deponent is the person who is making the affidavit. You have to identify yourself as the person who is making the statements in the affidavit.

Example: *I, Tom Jones, of 132 Main Street, in the City of Vancouver, Province of British Columbia, electrician, MAKE OATH AND SAY THAT:*

This deponent's statement has to be put at the beginning of each affidavit. It identifies who you are and what your occupation is. If you are retired, you would put in "retired" or "old age pensioner."

3. Knowledge Statement

The knowledge statement does two things.

- You state whether you are the plaintiff, defendant, petitioner, or respondent.
- You state that you have personal knowledge of the information and facts that you are putting in the affidavit.

Find out how to fill in the technical parts

An affidavit should not contain information told by another person unless the other person is a party to the court case. This rule about having personal knowledge does not apply if the judge is being asked to make a temporary order (called an "interlocutory order"). In these situations you can make an affidavit based on information and belief. You should get legal advice before you do this. A lawyer can advise you if you can use information and belief in your affidavit, and can tell you how to phrase the sentences.

Here is an example of what you would put in:
I am the plaintiff in this matter and have personal knowledge of the matters herein referred to.

Usually the following paragraph is put in if you are able to have an affidavit on information and belief:
I have personal knowledge of the facts and matters herein referred to by me except where indicated to be on information and belief, and where so stated I verily believe them to be true.

You have to indicate the specific person you are relying on for the information and belief. You also have to add a statement to the effect that you believe it to be true. For example, you would probably have to say something like:
On or about August 30, 2009 John Smith (her husband) told me that Mary Smith had not gone to work the day before and I believe this to be true.

4. Body of the Affidavit
This is the most important part. It is covered in the next section of this Guidebook.

5. Ending of the Affidavit

- You must swear your affidavit in front of a lawyer or a commissioner for taking affidavits. A court official such as a registry clerk is a commissioner for taking affidavits. (Registry staff will charge you $31 for this service.)

- You both sign the affidavit in each other's presence at the time you swear the affidavit (promise you are telling the truth).

- It is a serious offence to make a false or misleading affidavit.

- The lawyer or court official must also print his/her name below his/her signature. Check to see if a lawyer or court official has printed the name. Ink stamps bearing the name of the lawyer or court official are acceptable.

6. Exhibits
You may attach letters or other important documents you want the judge to consider. These are exhibits to the affidavit. Here is an example of what you can say in the body of the affidavit:

Letter as Exhibit
On July 30, 2010, I received by mail a letter from Mary Smith. That letter is attached to this affidavit as Exhibit "A."

If you have any exhibits, arrange them in alphabetical order (i.e., Exhibit "A", Exhibit "B" etc.). Each page of the exhibits has to be numbered consecutively. Therefore, if you have exhibits "A" to "G" totaling 40 pages, one exhibit may contain 2 pages and another 8 pages. You start numbering with exhibit "A" at page 1 and you finish with exhibit "G" at page 40. You print in the number for each page of the exhibits. It is best to put this number in the middle of the page.

Most law firms have stamps that you can put on the documents. Exhibit stamps go on the first page of each document and they read as follows:

This is Exhibit "....." referred to in the affidavit of ..... sworn (affirmed) before me at ..... this ..... day of ..... 200.....
A Commissioner for taking Affidavits for British Columbia.

Do not put a stamp on the documents until you have run things by the lawyer who is giving you advice. It may be necessary to add or delete documents.

7. Backing Sheet
A backing sheet is part of an affidavit. This document is attached to the back of all court documents with the type facing out. See Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit.

The backing sheet consists of three parts on one page:

1. The first part is the style of proceedings that we have already described.
2. The second part is the description of the document set between two lines i.e., affidavit, etc.

3. In the third part you put in your name, address and phone number. Also put in your fax number and e-mail address, if you have these. A backing sheet helps the court staff to file the document in the correct court file. A backing sheet is not a necessity. Registry staff will let you file your affidavit without a backing sheet. However, a backing sheet is considered more professional.

Find out how to fill out the main part of the affidavit

As you go through this each part of this section, look at the sample of a completed affidavit.

Follow the S.O.S. Principle

One of the keys to success is to follow the S.O.S. principle:

- Simple
- Organized
- Short

Simple

Try to make your affidavit as simple as possible. Use simple words and sentences. Many people think that if they make things complicated and sophisticated they will impress the judge. The judge will see through this. Judges are more impressed with a simple affidavit. Also, a simple affidavit is easier for you to prepare and to present to the court. Remember: judges prefer people to use ordinary language.

Organized

The second principle is that your affidavit should be organized. This is the most important rule. If your affidavit is organized, it is easier for the judge to understand what is going on. Remember: Judges like to see facts, not broad general statements. Here are some tips for being organized:

1. In most cases it is best to tell what happened in chronological order (date wise). Do not jump all over the place from one time period to another. Tell your story in a straight line.

2. Try as much as possible to give specific dates (i.e., July 13, 2010, or, the middle of July, 2010).

3. When you refer to people it is best to use their names, such as John Smith. Try to avoid using "him" or "her." It can get confusing. You can organize your affidavit in a different way depending on the nature of the case. For instance, in a custody dispute, you would probably want to organize it on the basis of what the court considers in making custody orders. This is set out in the Family Relations Act. Get legal advice on the best way to organize your affidavit.

Short

The third principle is to keep your affidavit short. It is more effective. First, decide what is necessary to put in your affidavit. Put that in the affidavit. Don't fall into the trap that more means better. The same is true of paragraphs and sentences. Keep them short. Sentences should be less than 10 words. If you can make sentences shorter, then do it. Edit your affidavit and break the long sentences into short sentences. This does not mean you ignore important matters. However, if your affidavit is short it allows both you and the judge to focus on the important matters. Remember: Judges want you to focus on the important matters.

Put in the relevant facts

The body of the affidavit should contain the relevant facts. Look Resource D: Sample Affidavit and Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit. You will see that the paragraphs are numbered. Look at # 2. This is where you begin to put in your information and number your paragraphs in order. You can use headings, like in the sample completed affidavit. Usually it's best to draft an affidavit in the first person.

Example: *I went to the appeal hearing on March 23, 2010.*

Here are some useful tips:

1. The affidavit should be done on white paper (8.5 x 11").
2. The font size and spacing should be the same as Resource D: Sample Affidavit of Mary Smith in this Guidebook.
3. Consider putting headings in the affidavit to make it easier to organize. See Resource D: Sample Affidavit.
4. Each page should be numbered.
5. Each paragraph should be numbered.
6. If at all possible, type the affidavit. Although in theory you can provide a handwritten affidavit, try to avoid it.

Avoid vague statements
Affidavits should avoid vague statements. The following is an example of a vague statement:
I met the defendant contractor John Smith on several occasions. I walked away from these meetings with the impression that he would not charge me for the extra paint put on the porch.

A better statement to put into the affidavit would be as follows:
I had a meeting with the defendant contractor John Smith on April 3, 2010 at my home in the late afternoon. He specifically stated to me "I will not charge you for the extra paint on the porch." I relied on this statement that he would not charge me for this extra paint.

Take your time
Draft the affidavit over several days to give yourself enough time to think about what needs to be done. It's not a good idea to draft an affidavit in a hurry. That won't give you the time you need to think about it.

Use the checklist
Look at Resource C, Checklist. Use this checklist to make sure you have completed all the steps and done everything right.

Check for consistency
Check to make sure your affidavit is consistent throughout. Make sure it does not say one thing in one place, and something that contradicts it in another place. Also check the affidavit for consistency with your other documents, including any other affidavits you have made.

Read it over
Have a friend check your affidavit to make sure there are no typing errors and the language is clear. Then revisit the checklist to make sure everything has been completed.

What do judges look for in an affidavit?
People who are representing themselves often ask: What do judges look for in an affidavit? Judges assess credibility of an affidavit based on the following factors:

- Are there internal inconsistencies in the affidavit? For instance, does the person making the affidavit state one thing in one part of the affidavit and in another part of the affidavit state the opposite?

- Are statements made in the affidavit inconsistent with other statements made in other affidavits or documents outside the affidavit? Sometimes, in a rush, you may carelessly make statements in an affidavit that are at odds with your other affidavits or documents. This could hurt your case.

- Is the statement inherently unbelievable? If a person is late for work and his excuse is his car ran out of gas, that is believable. However, if his excuse is that he was beamed up to the Starship Enterprise to have dinner with Captain Kirk, that is probably unbelievable.

- Is the person biased in making the affidavit? Do the statements in the affidavit show an obvious bias?

There are additional factors judges may consider in determining the credibility in affidavits.

- Is there a statement of conclusion with no details to back up the statement? Remember, judges like to see facts, not broad general statements.

- Are there statements in the affidavit that are evasive? In other words, does the person making the affidavit attempt to avoid an issue or statement? An example would be that one affidavit in the case says you and another person had a conversation on a certain day. But you state in your affidavit that you never met that person on that day. That is true, except for the fact that you did have a telephone conversation with that person. This is an example of artful drafting. You should avoid this.

- Does the person use language that one would not expect a normal person to use? Judges prefer people to use their ordinary language.

- Is the second-best evidence used instead of the first source? Even if you are allowed to make an affidavit on information and belief, it may be in your interest to get the person who had the original information to swear an affidavit. This is more effective than relying on hearsay (information and belief). Please note that not all court proceedings allow hearsay.

- Is there a lack of precision in the affidavit? Does the person making the affidavit use imprecise dates or imprecise information?

- Are there mistakes that indicate the person making the affidavit has not read it? This would include typing and grammatical errors.

- Are important facts left out? If important facts are left out, this may indicate the person making the affidavit is hiding something.

Resources

This section has resources you can use to help you prepare your affidavit.

A. Where to get legal advice
B. Questions to ask the lawyer
C. Checklist to make sure you've done everything right
D. Sample affidavit
E. Sample of a completed affidavit

Resource A: Where to get legal advice

Here are some places where you can get some free legal advice. You have to have low income to qualify for these services. Phone the place listed and they will tell you if you qualify financially.

Community Legal Assistance Society

The Community Legal Assistance Society runs legal clinics for BC Supreme Court for civil matters. There is financial qualification. Phone 604-685-3425. Their web site is: www.clasbc.net

Salvation Army's Pro Bono Lawyer Consultant Program

This program runs free legal advice clinics. There is a financial qualification. The phone number is 604-872-7681. Some of the clinics are run out of courthouses. See their web page: www.probono.ca/

Access Pro Bono Society of British Columbia

This program also runs free legal advice clinics. There is a financial qualification. The phone number is 604-878-7400. Some of the clinics are run out of courthouses. See their web page: www.accessprobono.ca/

Useful tips about seeing a lawyer

Seeing a lawyer for the first time can be a bit intimidating. Here are some useful tips.

- Bring a friend with you for moral support. Depending on the nature of the problem the friend can sit through the interview with you and the lawyer. Some types of legal problems do not lend themselves to having a friend sitting in on the interview. But at least a friend can provide you with moral support before or after the interview. Ask the lawyer at the clinic if your friend can sit in on the interview.

- Organize all the documents in chronological order. The documents would include letters, court documents, etc. The best way is to put the documents in a three-ring binder with an index page. Tabs separating the documents in the binder are also very helpful. Remember, you do not have to be a lawyer to organize documents.

- Take the sample affidavit from this Guidebook with you. Ask the lawyer to fill it out.

- Briefly write out your story. It is best to type, but clear handwriting is acceptable. This story should be no more than a page or two. Really try to condense your story to a page or two.

- Next, write out in a page or two the questions you have for the lawyer. If you don't, you will probably forget some important questions. Also, do not be afraid to ask what you might think are "simple questions." Sometimes, they are the most important questions. Use Resource 2: Questions to ask a lawyer. Add to that list.

- The Law Student Legal Advice Program has a free legal information manual online that covers many areas of the law. This might give you an overview of the legal problem you have. You can refer to this after you have completed your top three priorities, which are to (a) organize your documents; (b) write your story; and (c) write out the questions you have for the lawyer. See the Law Students Legal Advice Program website: www.lslap.bc.ca/.

Resource B: Questions to ask a lawyer

Here are some basic questions you should ask a lawyer before you draft your affidavit. Use these and add your own questions about your case.

- What is the style of the proceeding?
- What are the important facts that I should put in my affidavit?
- In what order should I organize my affidavit?
- Who should I get an affidavit from?
- Can this affidavit be based on information and belief?
- Should documents be attached to the affidavit as exhibits? If so, which documents should be attached?
- When does this affidavit have to be filed in court?
- Who do I have to give copies to, and what is the time limit for doing this?

Resource C: Checklist

#	Remember	Check
1	Have you obtained legal advice from a lawyer?	
2	Have you put the equivalent of the following at the top right hand corner of the style of proceeding? *This is the 3rd affidavit of Mary Smith in this case and was made on 01/06/2010*	
3	Have you entered your name, address and occupation?	
4	Have you decided to swear under an oath or affirm and adjusted the affidavit accordingly? (Crossed out or delete the option you are not using?)	
5	Have you put in the affidavit whether you are the plaintiff, defendant, petitioner, or respondent?	
6	Have you put in a paragraph stating that you have personal knowledge of the matters?	
7	Have you determined whether you can put information and belief in your affidavit?	
8	Have you put in a paragraph stating that it is based on information and belief?	
9	Have you drafted the affidavit in the first person (i.e. *"I went to the court house on Jan. 5, 2010"*)?	
10	Have you put in facts and not opinions?	
11	Have you put in exact dates?	
12	Have you typed in paragraphs that are numbered?	
13	Have you kept your paragraphs short?	
14	Have you kept your sentences short?	
15	Have you broken long sentences into short sentences?	
16	Have you used simple language?	
17	Have you considered putting headings in your affidavit?	
18	Have you determined whether it is best to organize your affidavit in chronological order or in some other way?	
19	If you have exhibits, have you numbered them (i.e. "A", "B") etc.? Have you numbered the exhibit pages?	
20	Have you attached the exhibits to the affidavit and ensured there are exhibit stamps on the exhibits?	
21	Have you attached as the last page, face side up, the backing sheet?	
22	Have you had the affidavit signed and sworn in front of a lawyer, notary or registry staff?	
23	Has the lawyer or court official printed as well as signed his/her name? (A stamp is OK.)	
24	Have you determined how many copies of the affidavit you need to have?	
25	Have you filed the affidavit in the court registry on time?	
26	Have you served copies of the affidavit on the proper persons on time?	

Resource D: Sample Affidavit

This is the .....[*1st/2nd/3rd/etc.*]..... affidavit

of .....[*name*]..... in this case

and was made on .....[*dd/mmm/yyyy*]

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BETWEEN:

_____

[name]

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER

AND:

_____

[name]

DEFENDANT/RESPONDENTS

AFFIDAVIT

I, _____,_____
[name] [occupation]
of _____, in the City of _____
[street address] [city]

in the Province of British Columbia, SWEAR (OR AFFIRM) THAT :

I am the _____ in this matter and as such have personal
[plaintiff/petitioner etc.]
knowledge of the matters herein referred to.

OR

I am _____ in this matter and have personal
[plaintiff/petitioner etc.]
knowledge of the facts and matters referred to by me except where indicated to be on information and belief and where so stated I verily believe them to be true.

SWORN (OR AFFIRMED) BEFORE ME)
at the City of _____, in the Province)
of British Columbia, on _____[date]____) _____
) [name]
_____)
A Commissioner for Taking Affidavits)
in the Province of British Columbia)
_____)
[print name or affix stamp of commissioner]

Resource E: Sample Completed Affidavit

This is the 3rd affidavit of
Mary Smith in this case
and it was made on 03/04/2010
No: _____
Vancouver Registry

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Re: Judicial Review Procedure Act,
Employment and Assistance Act and
Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act

BETWEEN:

MARY SMITH

PETITIONER

AND:

EMPLOYMENT AND ASSISTANCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL
MINISTER OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RESPONDENTS

AFFIDAVIT OF MARY SMITH

I, **MARY SMITH**, of 124 Main Street, in the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, welfare recipient, AFFIRM) THAT:

1. I am the Petitioner in this matter and have personal knowledge of the matters herein referred to.

Background

2. I am 46 years of age.
3. I have been on welfare since 1999 when I had a motor vehicle accident.
4. I have three disabilities which are diabetes, depression and a back injury (described below).

Application for Disability Benefits

5. On or about, January 23, 2010, I sent in an application to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development requesting a disability allowance. The application was filled out by myself and my family doctor, Dr. Kildare. A copy of that application is attached to this affidavit as an Exhibit "A".
6. On our about March 26, 2010, I received a letter from the Ministry of Housing and Social Development stating that my application for disability benefits was turned down. A copy of that letter is attached to my affidavit as Exhibit "B".

Reconsideration Review

7. On our about March 10, 2010, I filed an application for reconsideration with the Ministry of Housing and Social Development. A copy of that request for reconsideration is attached to my affidavit as Exhibit "C".
8. Along with the request for reconsideration I also attached a letter from my doctor, Dr. Kildare, a copy of that letter dated March 7, 2010, is attached to my affidavit as Exhibit "D".
9. On March 18, 2010, the Ministry of Housing and Social Development reconsideration was received by me. This reconsideration turned my appeal down. A copy of that reconsideration is attached to my affidavit as Exhibit "E".

Employment & Assistance Appeal Tribunal

10. On or about March 19, 2010, I sent an appeal into the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal. A copy of that appeal is now attached to my affidavit as Exhibit "F".

11. On March 26, 2010, the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal was convened to hear my appeal which I attended. The hearing started and I introduced my advocate, John Jones, who was going to represent me at the hearing. The Chairperson refused to let John Jones be my advocate on the grounds he was not a lawyer and he ordered Mr. Jones out of the hearing room. It was important for my case that Mr. Jones be present to represent me.
12. On the same day, on March 26, 2010, the Employment and Assistance Appeal Tribunal issued a decision. A copy of that decision is attached to my affidavit at Exhibit "G". I lost my appeal.

AFFIRMED BEFORE ME)
at the City of Vancouver, in the Province)
of British Columbia, on 02/04/2010)
) _____
) MARY SMITH
_____)
A Commissioner for Taking Affidavits)
in the Province of British Columbia)
_____)
[print name or affix stamp of commissioner]

Backing Sheet

No: _____
Vancouver Registry

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Re: Judicial Review Procedure Act,
Employment and Assistance Act and
Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act

BETWEEN:

MARY SMITH

PETITIONER

AND:

EMPLOYMENT AND ASSISTANCE TRIBUNAL
MINISTER OF HOUSING AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

RESPONDENT

AFFIDAVIT OF MARY SMITH

Mary Smith
124 Main Street
Vancouver, BC
V6L 3L9
Tel: (604) 666-5555

Get Help With Your Case

Before you start your claim, you should think about resolving your case without going to court (see the guidebook, Alternatives to Going to Court). If you do not have a lawyer, you will have to learn about the court system, the law that relates to your case, what you and the other side need to prove, and the possible legal arguments for your case. You will also need to know about the court rules and the court forms that must be used when you bring a dispute to court.

Legal Information Online

All *Guidebooks for Representing Yourself in BC Supreme Court Civil Matters*, along with additional information, videos and resources for Supreme Court family and civil cases are available on the Justice Education Society website: www.SupremeCourtBC.ca.

Clicklaw gives you information about many areas of law and free services to help you solve your legal problems: www.Clicklaw.bc.ca.

The Supreme Court of BC's website has information for people who are representing themselves in court: www.Courts.gov.bc.ca/supreme_court/self-represented_litigants/

Legal information services

The Vancouver Justice Access Centre's, Self-help and Information Services includes legal information, education and referral services for Supreme Court family and civil cases. It is located at 290 - 800 Hornby Street in Vancouver (open Monday to Friday): www.SupremeCourtSelfHelp.bc.ca.

For information about other Justice Access Centre services in Vancouver and Nanaimo, see: www.JusticeAccessCentre.bc.ca.

Legal advice

You may be eligible for free (pro bono) legal advice. Access ProBono Society of BC's website gives you information about the legal assistance that is available to you: www.AccessProBono.ca.

Legislation

BC Legislation (statutes), regulations, and Rules of Court can be found at: www.BCLaws.ca.

Court rules and forms

Supreme Court forms can be completed in 3 ways:

1. Completed online and filed at: www.CourtServicesOnline.gov.bc.ca
2. Completed online, printed and filed at the registry
3. Printed, completed manually and filed at the registry

Court forms that can be completed online are available at: www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/other/supreme/2010SupRules/info/index_civil.htm
Printable court forms are available at: www.SupremeCourtBC.ca/civil/forms

Common legal terms

You can find out the meaning of legal terms at: www.SupremeCourtBC.ca/glossary

Family law

For information about family law claims, see: www.FamilyLaw.LSS.bc.ca.

This guidebook is part of a series:

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THE LAW FOUNDATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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