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**SASKATCHEWAN ACCESS TO
LEGAL INFORMATION PROJECT**

Resource on Detecting Legal Problems & Legal Information Sources in Saskatchewan



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Detecting Legal Problems & Legal Information Sources in Saskatchewan

Helping people detect their legal problems is important. When you make a person aware of their legal problem, they can then look for legal information and get legal help. Knowing what the legal problems are will also help you point them to the right information and give them useful referrals to resources in their community.

Detecting issues that can evolve into legal problems is also helpful. Being aware of potential legal problems can help people avoid a legal problem or help them deal with one before it gets more serious. The following questions may help give you a sense of whether someone has a legal problem or a problem that may evolve into a legal problem.

Do they describe a life event?

When people come to you for help, do they mention a life event? A life event is something big that happens in a person's life that changes their situation. For example, getting married, separating from a spouse or partner, having children, losing a job, starting to get income support from the government, or being evicted from a home, are life events. Life events sometimes trigger legal problems.

Did they bring legal documents or legal forms?

When people come to you for help, do they bring or tell you about legal documents or letters they received, or forms they filled in or need to fill in? This kind of paperwork may tell you that their problem has a legal aspect.

Do their statements flag a legal problem?

When people come to you for help, do they say things that make you think this could be a legal problem? The following statements, for example, flag a legal problem: "My ex-partner has stopped paying child support as he's starting a new family." "My employer is always commenting on my appearance." "Are there any shelters close by?" "I have bedbugs and my landlord said he has no money to fix the problem."

If you aren't sure whether a problem is a legal one, check out one of the Public Legal Education Association's websites plea.org, familylaw.plea.org or newli.plea.org. The Public Legal Education Association is a non-profit organization that develops plain-language legal resources to help the public understand the law in their lives. On plea.org you can browse topics such as debts, criminal law or housing, or search for a key word and be directed to resources that have that word. If the problem relates to a family issue like, divorce, support or custody, familylaw.plea.org has comprehensive information about all aspects of family law. If the person you are helping is new to Canada newli.plea.org has lots of information that is relevant for people who are new to Canada, including information on a wide-range of topics from how to get a drivers' licence to how to deal with discrimination in the workplace.

Saskatchewan.ca, the provincial government's website, is also a good place to start. You can look at the different sections, such as health or housing or use the search to find a particular term. If the person has brought forms in you can try searching using the name of the form to find out more about it and what it is used for. If you are searching the name of a form you may want to put Saskatchewan in your search terms since forms with the same name could be used in different provinces.

Here are some examples of life events, sorted by area of law. The first column gives examples of what you might hear someone say. The second column lists related legal forms or documents that a person may bring with them or mention, or that you may want to point them to. The third column gives a link to legal information related to that topic.

Consumer Law – legal problems

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- owing money to someone
- declaring bankruptcy
- paying for a good or service and not being satisfied

'A collection agency has been hassling me about my debt payments'

Demand Letter from a collection agency or lawyer stating that the person must pay by a certain date.

plea.org: [Collection Agents](#) | [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority: Problems with Collection Agencies](#)

'I can't afford my car payments'

Loan Agreement with Financial Institution or Car Company

plea.org : [Debts and Credit](#)

'The repair shop charged me more than they said they would'

Invoice from repair shop; **Flyer** showing rates for repairs

plea.org : [Automobiles - Buying and Selling & Small Claims Court](#) | [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority:- Vehicle Repair Services](#)

'I felt pressured to buy something from a door-to-door salesperson'

plea.org : [Consumer Purchases](#) | [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority: Door to Door Sales Services](#)

'I purchased something and it broke right away.'

[plea.org: Warranties and Guarantees](#) | [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority: Consumer Product Warranties](#)

'I want to cancel my payday loan'

Loan Agreement with payday loan company

[Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority: Your Right to Cancel a Payday Loan](#)

'The bank says I need a credit check before they can process my loan.'

Loan Application that includes a statement that the borrower agrees that the lender can request a credit report.

[plea.org: Consumer Purchases](#) | [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority: The Credit Reporting Act](#)

Employment Law – Legal Problems

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- getting a first job
 - getting a new job
 - being fired
 - being laid off
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'I have been working extra hours but my employer isn't paying me for these hours'

[newli.plea.org: Work Days](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Work Schedules](#)

'I was laid off without notice or extra pay'

Record of Employment

[newli.plea.org: Leaving or Losing Your Job](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Layoffs and Termination](#)

'I have chronic back pain from the heavy lifting I have to do at work. I can't do my job anymore and my boss let me go.'

[plea@plea.org: Human Rights](#) | [Saskatchewan Human Right Commission: Employment Discrimination and the Duty to Accommodate](#)

I feel uncomfortable with the way my employer talks to me. He is always commenting on my appearance.'

plea@plea.org: [Human Rights](#) | saskatchewan.ca: [Bullying and harassment in the Workplace](#)
| [Saskatchewan Human Right Commission: Sexual Harassment](#)

‘I wasn’t hired because of my disability/race/age/gender/other human rights ground.’

plea@plea.org: [Human Rights](#) | [Saskatchewan Human Right Commission: A Guide to Application Forms & Interviews](#)

‘I got hurt at work.’

saskatchewan.ca: [Request help with your Worker’s Compensation claim or appeal](#) | [Saskatchewan Workers’ Compensation Board: File a Worker’s Initial Report of Injury](#)

Family Law – legal problems

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- living with a partner
- getting married
- separating from a spouse or partner
- having and raising children
- experiencing domestic violence

familylaw.plea.org has comprehensive information about family law and a form wizard the public can use to help them complete the forms they need to start or respond to a family law case. The [Family law Information Centre](#) that is part of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice also has help for people dealing with family law issues without a lawyer and self-help kits for starting and responding to family law cases. The [Family Matters](#) program run by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice can help families going through separation or divorce by providing access to information and resources to deal with a changing family situation as well as assistance to resolve urgent and outstanding issues. The [Department of Justice Canada](#) also has a family law section on their website. There are also in-person help sessions in various locations around the province. These are listed on the [Law Society of Saskatchewan](#) website.

‘I need a separation agreement.’

familylaw.plea.org: [Agreements](#) and [Parenting Plans](#) | [Represent Yourself in Family Court: Preparing a Separation Agreement](#) | www.justice.gc.ca: [Parenting Plan Tool](#)

‘I want to get a divorce.’

familylaw.plea.org: [Separation & Divorce Register](#) (to use Form Wizard) | saskatchewan.ca [Represent Yourself in Family Court: Sole Petitioner Uncontested Divorce Kit](#) [Co-Petitioner Uncontested Divorce Kit](#) | [Department of Justice Canada: Divorce and Separation](#)

'I need a custody/child support/spousal support order'

familylaw.plea.org: [Child & Spousal Support Register](#) (to use Form Wizard) | saskatchewan.ca [Represent Yourself in Family Court: Starting a Family Law Proceeding Kit](#) | [Department of Justice Canada: Child Support Table Look-up](#) [About Spousal Support](#) [Spousal Support Advisory Guidelines](#)

'My ex-partner does not allow me the time with the children the court ordered.'

Court Order

familylaw.plea.org: [Register](#) (to use Form Wizard) | saskatchewan.ca [Represent Yourself in Family Court](#)

'My ex-partner is not paying the child support we agreed on.'

Separation Agreement

familylaw.plea.org: [Enforcing A Support or Agreement](#) | saskatchewan.ca: [What if the Payor Does Not Pay](#)

'A paper saying that a family case has been started was served on me'

Petition, Notice of Application, Letter from other party's lawyer

familylaw.plea.org: [Register](#) (to use Form Wizard) | saskatchewan.ca [Represent Yourself in Family Court : Replying to a Court Application](#)

'I have to leave the house because my partner has been abusing me'

familylaw.plea.org: [Leaving an Abusive Relationship](#) | saskatchewan.ca: [Help from Domestic Violence Services Programs](#)

'My partner and I lived together in a house I own and now we are separating does my partner have any rights to my house?'

familylaw.plea.org: [Family Home](#)

Housing law – legal problems

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- moving into or out of an apartment
- moving in with a roommate
- being evicted
- buying or selling a home

The [Office of Residential Tenancies](#) has approved forms, sample leases and other documents as well as information about renting.

‘I’m behind on my rent and my landlord says I have to move out.’

Form 7 – [Immediate Notice to Vacate](#)

[plea.org: Renting a Home](#) | [saskatchewan.ca](#): Eviction for non-payment of rent or utilities

‘My landlord asked me to move out so his/her family can move in.’

Form 8b – [Notice to Vacate so Owner can Occupy](#)

[plea.org: Renting a Home](#) | [saskatchewan.ca](#): Eviction for landlord to occupy unit

My landlord keeps coming into my place to check on things – can a landlord do that?’

[plea.org: Renting a Home](#) | [saskatchewan.ca](#): Landlord’s Right to Enter a Rental Property

‘My landlord is keeping my damage deposit but I left the place in as good as shape as when I moved in.’

[plea.org: Renting a Home](#) | [saskatchewan.ca](#): Cleaning at the End of a Tenancy

‘My landlord has increased my rent and I cannot afford the new amount.’

[plea.org: Renting a Home](#) | [saskatchewan.ca](#): Rent Increases

‘There are bed bugs in my place and my landlord is saying this is my problem and I need to take care of it.’

[saskatchewan.ca: Bed Bugs and other Pests](#)

Power of Attorney & Guardianship

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- dealing with a serious illness
- looking after aging parents
- being physically incapacitated
- wanting someone to deal with some of their affairs

‘The nursing home my mom is moving into says she needs a power of attorney.’

[plea.org: Power of Attorney Life after 60](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Powers of Attorney for Adults](#)

‘I am selling my house but I have already moved away and need someone to deal with the sale.’

[plea.org: Power of Attorney](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Powers of Attorney for Adults](#)

‘My brother has a power of attorney for my parents and I think he is using their money for his own purposes.’

[plea.org: Power of Attorney Abuse of Older Adults Life after 60](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Investigating Financial Abuse](#)

‘My dad had a stroke and now he needs help to deal with his financial affairs.’

[plea.org: Life after 60](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Guardianship and Co-Decision making for Dependent Adults](#)

Wills & Deaths

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- getting married or divorced
- having children or grandchildren
- being named as an Executor in someone’s Will
- being a beneficiary under a Will
- relative passing away without leaving a Will

‘My sister is the Executor under my dad’s Will and she will not let me see the Will.’

[plea.org: Wills & Estates](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Executor or Administrator Duties](#)

‘My mom died without a Will what happens now?’

[plea.org: Wills & Estates](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: When the Deceased does not have Last Will and Testament](#)

‘My aunt told me she was leaving me her house in her Will and now it has been 2 years and I have heard nothing.’

[plea.org: Wills & Estates](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Accounting and Releases](#)

‘How do I get a death certificate?’

[plea.org: Death in the Family](#) | [eHealth Saskatchewan: Order a Death Certificate](#)

‘My family does not agree on funeral arrangements for my grandmother – who gets to decide?’

[plea.org: Death in the Family](#)

Crimes, Tickets & Fines

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- getting a traffic ticket
- being stopped by the police
- being charged with a crime
- being a victim of a crime

‘The police gave me a paper called an appearance notice – what does this mean?’

Appearance Notice

[newli.plea.org: Criminal Charges](#) | [plea.org: Going to Criminal Court](#)

‘The police stopped my car and searched it – can they do that?’

[newli.plea.org: Police Searches](#) | [plea.org: Criminal Law](#)

‘How do I fight a traffic ticket?’

Offence Notice

[saskatchewan.ca: Information on Provincial Violation Tickets](#)

‘I was a victim of a crime – what rights do I have?’

[plea.org : Victims of Crime](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Rights for Victims of Crime](#)

Health

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- facing a serious illness
 - dealing with aging parents
 - receiving medical treatment
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‘What happens if I need medical treatment but I have had a stroke or something and cannot make my own decisions?’

[plea.org: Patients’ Rights; Health care Directives](#)

‘If I go to the United States for part of the year am I still covered by Saskatchewan Health?’

[plea.org: Life after 60](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Health Coverage Outside of Saskatchewan and Canada](#)

‘How can I access my medical records?’

[plea.org: Patients’ Rights](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Your Personal Health Information and Privacy](#)

‘Who can I complain to if I think my doctor is not giving me good medical care?’

[plea.org: Patients’ Rights](#) | [saskatchewan.ca: Resolving Health Care Concerns and Complaints](#)

Taxes

Life events that could result in a legal problem in this areas:

- being audited by the CRA
 - filing a tax return
 - owing money to the CRA
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‘I didn’t make much money last year – do I have to file a tax return?’

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[plea.org: Life & Taxes: The Requirement to File a Tax Return](#) | [canada.ca: Do you have to file a return?](#)

‘My Notice of Assessment says I owe more taxes but I do not think I should have to pay more.’

Notice of Assessment

[plea.org: Life & Taxes: Objecting to an Assessment or Reassessment](#) | [canada.ca: Income tax objections](#)

‘I have been notified by the CRA that they are going to perform an audit – what does this mean?’

[plea.org: Life & Taxes: Surviving an Audit](#) | [canada.ca: The Tax Audit](#)

'I can't pay the full amount of the tax I owe – what will the CRA do?

[plea.org: Life & Taxes: Compliance and Enforcement](#) | [canada.ca: Interest and Penalties](#)

If they need a Lawyer

If someone needs a lawyer they can use the [find a lawyer](#) function on the Law Society of Saskatchewan website. If they cannot afford a lawyer, they are very low income (social assistance level) and it is a family or criminal matter they may qualify for [Legal Aid](#). Low income people who do not qualify for Legal Aid can try to get a pro bono (no cost) lawyer by contacting [Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan](#).

This resource was adapted from the Community Legal Association of Ontario's (CLEO) tip sheet by the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan (PLEA). PLEA gratefully acknowledges CLEO's support in providing the permission to make this adaption possible.