

# I HAVE CRIMINAL CHARGES AND I HAVE TO GO TO COURT...



**YOUR FIRST TIME  
IN COURT**



**AFTER YOUR FIRST  
TIME IN COURT**



**I WAS CONVICTED  
AND SENTENCED.  
NOW WHAT?**



**I AM IN JAIL AND...**



**FIXING THE HARM**

# YOUR FIRST TIME IN COURT



## **Your first court date.**

When you were arrested, or sometime afterwards, the police gave you a date for your first appearance on your charges. Usually, you will have to appear in the community in which you were arrested. It is important that you get in touch with a lawyer before your first court date. Call legal aid and they will give you the name and telephone number of the lawyer who will be in court with you. Make sure you call that lawyer before your first court date.

If you are in jail, the staff will make arrangements to get you to court for your first appearance.

If you are not going to be able to get to court for any reason, make sure the lawyer and courtworker know. Sometimes the lawyer or courtworker can appear for you and tell the court that you want an adjournment. You should have a good reason for not attending. It is your responsibility to find out your next court date and to be there.

The lawyer or courtworker will help you when you go to court. Usually your charges will be put over to another week so that you and the lawyer have some time to review the materials provided by the prosecutor and so that you can decide how you want to deal with your charges. When the judge adjourns your matter to another time, make sure you know when the next court date is. If you're not sure, ask the lawyer or the courtworker. Stay in touch with the lawyer so that you can decide how to handle your charges.

You are still bound by the conditions imposed on you when you were released by either the police or the justice. Remember that if you breach any of those conditions, you can be arrested again.

## **How do I get an interpreter?**

Talk to your lawyer or court worker and let them know that you will need assistance from an interpreter. Your lawyer can arrange for an interpreter to assist you when you talk to the lawyer. The lawyer will let the court know if you need an interpreter in court.

## **My courtworker said I could have a diversion. What does that mean?**

A diversion is sometimes called “going before the justice committee”. It means that your community will work out a way for you to help to fix the problems your crime caused. It is a different way of dealing with a case than going to court. It means there is enough evidence for the prosecutor to take you to court, but that the prosecutor, RCMP and your lawyer agree that it is best for your case to be diverted.

You have to accept responsibility for your crime before you can have a diversion. You will talk to the committee and agree to do whatever the committee decides is best.

A diversion is serious. You will have to work to find a way to fix the problems you’ve caused, and you’ll have to have a plan to keep from hurting people again.

# AFTER YOUR FIRST TIME IN COURT

## **My lawyer and I decided that I should plead guilty**

You or your lawyer will enter your guilty pleas and arrange a time for sentencing with the court. After hearing from the prosecutor and your lawyer, the court will impose a sentence on you.

## **My lawyer and I decided that I should plead not guilty**

Your lawyer will arrange for a date for your trial to be held and you will appear in court with your lawyer when the judge adjourns your matter to a trial date. You must stay in touch with your lawyer so that you can prepare for your trial. You are still bound by the conditions imposed on you when you were released by either the police or the justice. Remember that if you breach any of those conditions, you can be arrested again. It is very important that you show up for your trial. Sometimes the court will proceed with a trial without you. You can also be arrested if you do not show up for your trial.

Make sure you mark all of your court dates on your calendar. If you miss court, you can be arrested and charged with failing to appear in court.



## **What if I don't think my lawyer's doing a good job?**

It is always best to try to work out your problems with the lawyer directly. Talk about why you think things aren't going well, and what could be done to fix the problem.

If you're still not happy, and your lawyer is a Legal Aid lawyer, you can call the main office at 873-7450. If you hired your lawyer privately, you can hire another lawyer.

Changing lawyers is very serious. It delays your case and often doesn't help you to feel better about the way things are going. Your lawyer will look at all of the evidence and give you advice about how similar cases have been decided. It is a good idea to think seriously about everything your lawyer says, so you can make good decisions about what to do next.

# I WAS CONVICTED AND SENTENCED. NOW WHAT?



Talk to your lawyer or courtworker about what happened in court. They will be able to tell you if you have to meet with a probation officer or follow any special rules. There are a few things that can happen once you have been found guilty:

## **I have to pay a fine. How do I do that?**

You'll need your original paperwork to pay the fine, because it has numbers that the court clerk will use to track the payment.

The easiest way is to pay a fine is by phone using a Visa or MasterCard. Call the toll-free numbers below and tell the court clerk that you want to pay a fine.

You can send a cheque or money order to any of the NWT's court registries:

Yellowknife Courthouse  
PO Box 550  
Yellowknife NT X1A 2N4  
1-866-822-5864

Hay River Courthouse  
201, 8 Capital Drive  
Hay River NT X0E 1G2  
1-866-885-2535

Inuvik Courthouse  
151 Mackenzie Road  
Inuvik NT X0E 0T0  
1-866-344-3940

You can get a money order by going to a bank or post office near your home.

You can also pay your fine in person at a court registry. You can pay with cash, a cheque, money order, Visa/MasterCard, or debit card.

- Yellowknife: 3rd Floor, 4903-49th Street
- Inuvik: 3rd Floor Mack Travel Building (151 Mackenzie Road)
- Hay River: 2nd Floor Suite 201, 8 Capital Drive

## **The Judge put me on probation. What does that mean?**

The justice may tell you that you don't have to go to jail, but you have to report to a probation officer and do other things in your community. That means that you will meet with a probation officer for as long as the justice decides. The probation officer's job is to make sure you follow the judge's order, so you will talk about what you are doing and make plans to deal with any problems.

## **What does a probation officer do?**

Your probation officer's job is to make sure you follow the judge's orders. For example, you might be told to stay at home after a certain time at night, and your probation officer would check to make sure you were at home.

Your probation officer sometimes does research to help the judge with sentencing. He or she will talk to your family to find out what help you need, and whether it's available in your community.

You should always be honest with your probation officer. If you are having trouble following the judge's orders, your probation officer can help you to make a plan that you can follow.

The number to the local probation office is:

- Inuvik region: 866-777-9034
- Tuktoyaktuk: 977-2506
- Fort McPherson: 877-952-2017
- Norman Wells region: 877-587-4142
- Yellowknife region: 877-873-1747
- Behchoko: 392-6258
- Hay River region: 874-6272
- Fort Smith: 872-6570
- Fort Simpson: 695-2230
- Fort Liard: 770-3082
- Fort Providence: 699-4998
- Fort Resolution: 394-3080

## **The judge sent me to jail after my sentencing.**

The police will usually bring you to one of the NWT's correctional centres:

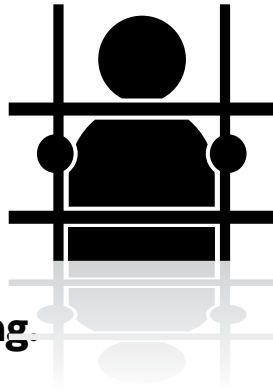
- For adult men: Yellowknife
- For adult women: Fort Smith
- For boys aged 12-17: Yellowknife
- For girls aged 12-17: Inuvik

The correctional centres are designed for long stays. You will be there as long as the judge tells you to stay. You'll have a case manager who can help you to work out problems at home.

## **I was released from court in a different community. How do I get home?**

Make sure your lawyer and courtworker know that you don't live in the community where court is being held. They can tell the judge that you'll need help to get home. If you want to go home after court, tell your courtworker or probation officer. They can put you in touch with people who can help you to get home.

# I AM IN JAIL AND...



## **I'm in government housing. Who should I call?**

If the judge says that you have to stay in jail until your trial, call your Local Housing Organization (LHO). If a family member or other person is named on the lease as a valid tenant, nothing will change, but you still have to let the LHO know what happened. If you are the only valid tenant on the lease, your LHO will hold the unit for you for up to three months. If you are going to be in jail longer than that, you will have to re-apply for public housing after you are released from jail.

## **I'm an Income Assistance client. Who should I call?**

Call your client services officer and tell him or her what happened. If you can't reach your client services officer, call the main office: 1-866-973-7252. There may be a change in the benefits you receive. If you're overpaid, you'll have to pay that money back.

## **What about my job?**

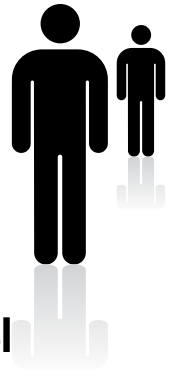
If you can't get to work because you're in jail, call your boss. If you can't do your job because of something that the judge ordered, you need to be honest about that. For example, if you work as a truck driver and your license has been suspended, your boss needs to know.

## **I'm a student, and I get funding from ECE. Who do I call?**

If you get SFA (student financial assistance), call your student case officer: 1-800-661-0793. If you get another type of funding, call your local ECE service centre:

- Yellowknife: 766-5100
- Hay River: 874-5050
- Fort Resolution: 394-4335
- Fort Simpson: 695-7338
- Fort Smith: 872-7425
- Inuvik: 777-7365
- Norman Wells: 587-7161

# FIXING THE HARM



## **I hurt a family member, and I feel terrible about it. How can I change the way I act?**

Hurting family members is very serious. You can choose not to be violent. If you are in jail, you should talk to your case manager about how to make better choices. If you have been released from jail, talk to your local wellness worker or mental health worker.

You can do things to be helpful to your family while you're in jail. For example, you can make sure that your family has enough money and can stay in the home.

## **How can I show the person I hurt that I'm sorry?**

You can respect the person you hurt, and take responsibility for what you did. It is not the victim's fault.

Remember that the person you hurt needs to be safe. Sometimes it's best to leave the person alone. You also have to do everything the judge ordered you to do. That means that if you were ordered to stay away from your victim, you have to do that.

You can talk to your case manager in jail or people in your community about how to make better choices.

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If you would like this information in another official language,  
contact us at 867-920-3130.  
Si vous voulez ces informations dans une autre langue officielle,  
téléphonez-nous au 867-920-3130.

