



STEPS TO JUSTICE

HOUSING LAW

An OJEN workshop demonstrating a CLEO
public legal information resource.



CLEO

Community Legal Education Ontario
Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario



True or false?

1. As a landlord, I can increase the rent whenever I want!

It's my property!

TRUE OR FALSE: Landlords are entitled to increase rent on their properties whenever they see fit.



True or false?

2. My roommate and I are fighting – it's a good thing I can report them to the Landlord & Tenant Board!

TRUE OR FALSE: You can report your roommate to the Landlord & Tenant Board when you have a disagreement with them.



True or false?

3. I'm looking for a new apartment. My potential landlord wants to know where I work before he will rent to me, but it's none of his business! I don't think he has any right to that information.

TRUE OR FALSE: You do not have to answer any questions asked by a potential landlord related to your employment.



True or false?

4. I'm going to rent a place for \$1100/month, but my landlord wants an additional rent deposit for \$1000. I don't really want to pay, but it's totally legal.

TRUE OR FALSE: It is legal to charge additional rent deposits when entering into a lease agreement with a tenant.



True or false?

5. My bedroom window is broken. I should call my landlord, since he has to repair it for me.

TRUE OR FALSE: Landlords must repair broken windows and/or other parts of the house upon request by the tenants.

Human Rights in Ontario



Charter of Rights and Freedoms vs. Ontario Human Rights Code

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- All human rights legislation must align with the *Charter*
- Can only be used to challenge **governmental** decisions, actions or laws
 - i.e. cannot cite the *Charter* in a dispute against another person/organization

Ontario Human Rights Code

- All legislation must align with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (unless legislation specifically states that the *Code* does not apply)
- Can be used for both governmental and private actions
 - i.e. can be used in a dispute against another person/organization

Human Rights in Ontario



Human Rights Laws

Deal with five important areas of life:

- **Services, goods and facilities**
- **Housing**
- **Contracts**
- **Employment**
- **Membership in vocational associations and trade unions**

Protect Ontarians against discrimination on the basis of seventeen different grounds:

- **Age**
- **Sex**
- **Gender (including gender identity and expression)**
- **Disability**
- **Race**
- **Ethnic origin**
- **Place of origin**
- **Colour**
- **Religion**
- **Creed**
- **Citizenship**
- **Ancestry**
- **Disability**
- **Family status (including pregnancy)**
- **Marital status**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)**
- **Record of offences (in employment only)**

Housing Law in Ontario: *What is covered?*

Renting a New Place to Live

- Leases and agreements
- Rent, fees and deposits
- Discrimination

Paying Rent

- Rent deposits
- Rates and Increases
- Behind/Unable to Pay Rent

Repairs and Maintenance

- Landlord and tenant responsibilities
- Heat and utilities
- Repairs
- Complaints

Human Rights in Housing

- Types of discrimination
- Human rights complaints

Privacy and Harassment

- Harassment
- Locks
- Guests
- Cutting off services

Moving Out

- Getting out of a lease or rental agreement
- Giving notice
- Lease ending
- Home sold
- Rent deposit
- Your belongings after you move out
- Retirement or care homes



Eviction/Eviction Processes of LTB

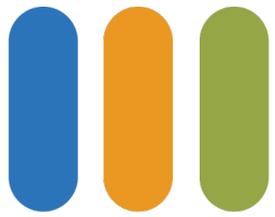
- No-fault eviction
- Eviction for tenant conduct
- Eviction because of rent
- Lease ending
- Home sold
- Eviction orders
- Eviction hearings
- Eviction notices

Tenant Applications to LTB

- Settling your case
- Hearings at the LTB
- How to apply to the LTB
- Issues the LTB can deal with

Getting Legal Help

- Legal help and information
- Working with your lawyer
- Making a complaint



Real Life Legal Problems *Demonstration Scenario*

My landlord is very rude to me and the other students who live in the apartment building he owns. He routinely yells at us over the phone and sends us emails threatening to raise the rent or have us kicked out if we do not clean the place. He is especially mean to the younger students. Last week, he came into our unit without warning and screamed at my roommate for leaving her laundry lying around. She broke down crying. This is too much!





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Some questions:

- What are some examples of harassment?
- What should this person do when they talk to the landlord about this problem?
- Why should this person talk to their neighbours?
- What government agency could this person contact for help if the harassment continues?
- What are some other resources that are available to tenants who feel they are being harassed by a landlord?



**Using the
Steps to Justice
Website**

Steps to Justice



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Steps to Justice website. At the top left is the logo with the text "Steps to Justice" and "Your guide to law in Ontario". To the right is a "HIDE THIS SITE" button and a language selector for "Français". Below these are navigation links: "Legal Topics", "About Steps to Justice", "Latest Updates", and "Embed & Share". The main banner features a woman's portrait and the text "Steps to Justice" in large orange letters, followed by "Step-by-step information about legal problems. Reliable, practical, and easy to understand." A search bar with the placeholder "Tell us what you are looking for..." is positioned below the banner. On the right side of the banner, there is a vertical stack of social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, Email, and a share icon. Below the banner, a "Legal Topics" section lists various legal areas in two columns: Abuse and Family Violence, Criminal Law, Debt and Consumer Rights, Employment and Work, Family Law, Health and Disability, Housing Law, Human Rights, Income Assistance, and Tribunals and Court. A live chat button is located in the bottom right corner of the content area, indicating availability from Monday to Friday, 11am to 1pm.

Steps to Justice
Your guide to law in Ontario

HIDE THIS SITE

Français

Legal Topics About Steps to Justice Latest Updates Embed & Share

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Legal Topics

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Live chat
Mon-Fri 11am-1pm



Group Work

1. Navigate to the Steps to Justice website:
<http://stepstojustice.ca>
2. Read your scenario with your group.
3. Try to identify the main legal issues.
4. Imagine that you are the person in the scenario. Use the Steps to Justice website to answer the questions on your handout.
5. As you browse, try to find out more about how the law would affect the person in your scenario. What does it say? What are their options?
6. Record your answers on the handout.

If you get stuck, ask for help!



Large Group Scenario

FOCUS AREAS:

- 1) Accommodation of disability
- 2) Discrimination
- 3) Eviction

I have been renting in the same house for years. My landlord has always been super nice to me and the location is great: quiet, well-kept, and lots of pleasant neighbors. I am currently renting a room on the 2nd floor and I share the living room and kitchen with 3 other housemates.

A few months ago, I was hit by a car while crossing the street and suffered traumatic injuries to my back and tailbone. I am most likely going to be in a wheelchair for life. In order to enter the house, I would need the help of my housemates to lift me up the front and indoor stairs.

When I told the landlord what happened, he told me it would cost him too much money to put in ramps for my wheelchair. As a result, I used my own money to install a ramp on the front steps and an electronic stair lift that could bring me to the 2nd floor. The stair lift was quite expensive.

A few weeks ago, the landlord told me that some of my housemates have complained that the noise of my wheelchair on the ramp and the stair lift disturb their sleep. He said that he sympathizes with my disability, but he cannot allow my condition to interfere with my housemates' enjoyment of the home. He said if the disruption continues, he will evict me. This is causing me great anxiety – I do not want to be evicted for something I cannot control, especially from the home that I have grown so attached to.

