

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CANADIAN LAW? — A QUICK QUIZ

1. Can school officials allow a police sniffer dog to search for drugs in students' knapsacks?
2. Is a person who has been arrested required to answer police questions?
3. What happens if a witness in a trial doesn't tell the truth?
4. Is there actually such a thing as a "citizen's arrest"?
5. Are the results of a polygraph or "lie detector" allowed as evidence in a trial?
6. Can someone your age receive an adult sentence for a violent crime?
7. At what age is a person eligible for jury duty?
8. Is polygamy—having more than one husband or wife—legal in Canada?
9. Is suicide or attempted suicide a crime in Canada?
10. Is a verbal agreement legally binding?
11. When does a Canadian judge bang a gavel on the bench?
12. If you break into an empty cabin to escape from a life-threatening blizzard, will you be convicted of breaking and entering?
13. Can you be convicted of an offence for making fun of someone on a social networking Internet site?
14. Can you threaten to lay criminal charges against someone who rightfully owes you money?
15. Is it now legal to possess or use a small quantity of marijuana in Canada?



Answers

1. No—the Supreme Court ruled that such searches are a violation of s. 8 of the *Charter*.
2. No—s. 7 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the right to remain silent.
3. A witness who knowingly gives false evidence commits perjury and can receive a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment.
4. Yes—under the *Criminal Code* anyone may arrest a person who is committing an indictable offence, is fleeing from someone who is authorized to arrest, or has stolen or possesses your property.
5. No—but the prosecutor may attempt to introduce into evidence anything the defendant says during the polygraph test.
6. Yes—judges can impose adult sentences on youths under 18 years of age.
7. You must be at least 18 years of age, a Canadian citizen, and registered on the voters' list.
8. No—but people in polygamous relationships are rarely prosecuted. Two men from Bountiful, British Columbia, were charged with polygamy in early 2009 and if the case goes to court it will be the first such prosecution in Canada in many years.
9. No—but helping or counselling someone to commit suicide is a crime.
10. Yes—a verbal agreement (also known as an oral contract) is legally binding if its terms can be proven.
11. Never—Canadian judges do not use gavels.
12. Not likely—you can claim the defence of necessity as long as you do not steal or destroy anything.
13. Yes—if the target feels bullied or threatened, or if his or her reputation is damaged.
14. No—making such a threat is a *Criminal Code* offence that carries a maximum penalty of life in prison.
15. No—Parliament has discussed “decriminalizing” the possession or use of small amounts of marijuana, but the laws have not been changed. It is still a crime.
16. No—Canada has no laws prohibiting the burning or defacement of Canadian or other flags.