



Helping Patrons with Court Forms

A guide for public librarians

Questions about court forms are common when individuals are starting or are involved in a legal action. Court forms can be complex, so you may find patrons coming into your libraries looking for information. This guide gives you some tips to help you answer your patrons' questions – for more information, go to our online guide: www.courthouselibrary.ca/lawmatters/courtforms

WHAT QUESTIONS DO MOST PATRONS NEED HELP WITH?

- 1 What court forms do I need?
- 2 Where do I find them?
- 3 How do I fill them out?

1. What court forms do I need?

When a patron asks what forms they need, they are really asking two questions:

What area of law and court level is my legal issue in?

Each area of law and each court level have their own distinct court forms and jurisdiction to oversee certain types of legal actions. Often, you'll need to do a reference interview to find out what your patron is trying to do in the court system to determine the answer to this question.

Don't know where to start?

Go to Clicklaw:

<https://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/content/forms>

What specific forms do I need to file with the court registry?

Each area of law and court level has many court forms but different ones are needed for different court actions. There are online guides that can help you find out exactly which forms your patron needs.

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2. Where do I find them?

All BC court forms are available online. You can find court forms for Provincial and Supreme Family Court, Supreme Civil Court, and Small Claims Court (provincial Civil court), on Clicklaw - just click on the Forms link under the appropriate court level/area of law:

www.clicklaw.bc.ca/content/forms

For links to court forms in other areas of law, see our online guide:

www.courthouselibrary.ca/lawmatters/courtforms

3. How do I fill them out?

Most forms are in PDF format, and will require being downloaded to a local computer that has Adobe Reader. Court registries will accept forms filled out electronically or by hand, although some forms are easier to fill out online. To open a court form, there are three steps:

A View – Click on the online form to open it in Adobe. Follow the instructions to download the PDF form to the computer.

B Save – These forms don't save automatically. Make sure to remind your patrons to save the forms as they go to avoid losing work. We recommend having the patrons email it to themselves or saving to a personal drive rather than the computer.

C Fill – Remember that you can't tell patrons what information to put in their forms, as this is legal advice. However, you can help patrons 'de-mystify' the forms. For more on what this means and how to fill out the forms go to our online guide:

www.courthouselibrary.ca/lawmatters/courtforms