

Canadian Law: Some Do's and Don'ts in Canada

The Allies in Action Project educates newcomers to Canada about domestic abuse/family violence and how to maintain healthy family relationships.

Some laws might be different in Canada than in your home country, such as laws about public behavior, and the treatment of children and private property. Here are some examples:

1. **Question:** In Canada, is it legal or illegal to jaywalk?

Answer: Illegal

According to the city bylaws, a police officer could give you a ticket and fine you up to \$109.

References:

- Times Colonist (2018) 100 Jaywalkers issued warnings in Victoria. Retrieved from <https://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/100-jaywalkers-issued-warnings-in-victoria-1.23156684>.
- CBC (2017) Jaywalkers, Curb Jumpers be warned: Police are watching. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/jaywalkers-curb-jumpers-be-warned-police-are-watching-1.4412760>.

2. **Question:** In Canada, is it legal or illegal to fish without a license in BC?

Answer: Illegal

Fishing laws are different from province to province. They are also different depending on the water: fresh water fishing is regulated provincially, and salt water fishing is regulated federally.

For more information please go to: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/fw/wildlife/hunting/offences.html>.

3. **Question:** In Canada, is it legal or illegal to ride a bicycle on the sidewalk?

Answer: Illegal

“It is against the law to ride on sidewalks, unless specifically directed to do so by a sign or local bylaw.” (The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition, 2005, pg. 21).

“Bicycle police and paramedics are permitted by law to ride on sidewalks.” (The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition, 2005, pg. 21).

Reference:

- The Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition (2005) Bike Sense. Retrieved from <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/bikeSense1105.pdf>.

4. Question: Is it legal or illegal for stores to give free plastic bags in Victoria?

Answer: Illegal

According to the Victoria city bylaw section 3 of Checkout Bag Regulation, store staff shall not provide a checkout bag to a customer

References:

- City of Victoria(N/A) Checkout bag regulation bylaw: A bylaw of the city of Victoria. Retrieved from <https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Legislative~Services/Documents/18008%20Checkout%20Bag%20Bylaw.pdf>.

5. Question: In Canada, is it legal or illegal to fight in front of your children?

Answer: Illegal

According to the BC child, family and community service act, “Sec 13(1.e) and government of BC sees it as the child is in need of protection if the parents behavior is causing emotional distress to the child.” (CFCSA,2018)

Reference:

- Government of BC (2018) Child, Family and Community Service Act. Retrieved from http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/96046_01.

6. Question: In Canada, is it legal or illegal to open someone else’s mail?

Answer: Illegal

According to the Canada post corporation act (Sec 48), “it is illegal to intentionally open someone’s mail if it is not addressed to you unless it is authorized.”

If you receive someone else’s mail, “Cross out the address. Write 'Moved' or 'Unknown' and deposit the item in a Street Letter Box. If you include a forwarding address, it will require additional postage.”(Canada Post)

7. Question: Is it legal or illegal to spit on the street in Vancouver?

Answer: Illegal

It is illegal to spit on the public streets of the City of Vancouver, British Columbia. Clause 4.21 of the City of Vancouver Health By-Law No. 6580 (the “Health By-Law”) says: “No person shall expectorate, urinate or defecate in or on any public street, lane or park except in any public facility specifically provided for that purpose.” (<https://www.legaltree.ca/node/515>)

8. Here are some other things that are illegal in Canada that you might not know about:

In Canada, it is illegal to:

- To get drunk in public
- To feed the seals at Fishermen's Wharf (market)...
- To leave an infant alone in a car
- To enter someone's property without permission

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