

Family Relationships



Marriage

You can be married to only one person at a time in Canada. If you married someone in another country or province, you must get a divorce before you can legally marry another person in Canada.

Same-sex marriage is legal in Manitoba and across Canada. Manitoba accepts marriages from other countries where same-sex marriage is legal.

If you and your partner live together but are not married, you may be common-law partners. To be common-law partners, you must make a serious commitment to each other. Common-law partners are connected financially, socially, emotionally and physically. After three years of sharing a household and responsibilities, you are common-law partners. If you have a child together, you are common-law partners after one year together.

Divorce

You or your partner can apply for a divorce. Only a court can give you a divorce. However, you can arrange the details of your divorce without going to court. This will save you money. Some of your choices are:

- **Mediation** – You and your partner try to settle things in a peaceful way. A mediator helps you listen and talk to each other.
- **Arbitration** – You and your partner have a private meeting with an arbitrator. You try to solve your problems without going to court. The arbitrator listens to both sides and can make decisions for you.
- **Negotiation between lawyers** – You get a lawyer and your partner gets a different lawyer. The two lawyers talk to each other about the details.

Common-law partners who separate may face legal issues. It is important to get legal advice. Some of the big issues are about property, child custody and child support. Child support is the money that one parent pays to another to support their children financially after a separation or divorce.

- Learn more about child support:
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/fl-df/fact1-fiches1.html>



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Domestic Violence

Physical violence is never OK. It is against the law to be violent toward your spouse, common-law partner or any other family member.

This includes sexual activity that you do not want. Hitting or threatening to hurt or kill someone is also a crime. If you are guilty of violence against a family member, you could go to prison.

Important Note: If you are in danger, call 911 for help.

- For more information:
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/fv-vf/laws-lois.html>
- If you are being abused by a family member or any other person:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/msw/fvpp/>
Call the Find a Shelter crisis line: 1-877-977-0007
- If you are a woman dealing with violence and need help
Call : 1-877-977-0007.
More information:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/msw/fvpp/women.html>
- Learn about family law in Manitoba, including your rights and obligations:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/crown/family/law/>
- Learn more about women's rights:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/rights-women.html>
- Learn about women's rights at
Family Law Education for Women:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/crown/family/law/pubs/familylawbooklet2014.pdf>
- Find help for domestic violence:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/stoptheviolence/index.html>
- More information about victim services:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/crown/victims/index.html>

Child Abuse

Child abuse is when a child is hurt or generally not treated well. For example, someone may not provide proper care to a child or youth. Because of this, they might get hurt or have emotional issues. There are many kinds of child and youth abuse:

- emotional abuse
- physical abuse
- sexual abuse (contact or non-contact)
- exposure to family violence
- neglect

Neglect is when a parent or caregiver does not provide necessities such as shelter, food, clothing, education, good hygiene, supervision, health care, adequate rest, moral guidance, exercise, a safe environment and fresh air to a child or youth.

- Learn more about child abuse and neglect:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/childfam/child_protection.html