

If you find yourself in trouble, Canadian consular staff abroad can provide a list of lawyers who have the required expertise, contact your family and friends, and ensure that you receive fair treatment **according to the standards of that country**. They cannot, however, wield any influence to reduce your sentence or fine.

Judicial Process

Never assume that the legal system of the country you are visiting is the same as at home. "Innocent until proven guilty" is not a universally recognized concept. In some countries, you may not even have the right to legal representation or a trial in your own language.

Some countries do not recognize or respect religious freedom: freedom of association, speech or the press; or equality of the sexes. For instance, guilt by association is presumed in some countries. This means that you may be charged simply for being in the company of a person suspected or found guilty of a crime.

Even if you are an innocent bystander at a demonstration or riot, you may be considered a participant and be rounded up with those involved.

If you do find yourself in legal trouble, contact the nearest Canadian government office immediately. If you cannot do so yourself, have someone else do it for you.

Sexual Exploitation of Children

Most countries vigorously enforce laws against the sexual exploitation of children. Canadians who are suspected of sexual exploitation of children in Canada or abroad can be charged under the Canadian Criminal Code (available at <http://laws.justice.gc.ca>). Those convicted face a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment. For more information, see the Publications section of our Web site.

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