

Info about Peace Bonds for Youth in BC

What is a peace bond?

A peace bond is a court order to protect you from a person you think might harm you. It lists certain things that the person is not allowed to do. For example, a peace bond might say that the person:

- Must not go to your home, your school, or your workplace, or
- Must not contact you, or
- Must not carry weapons.

These are just examples. A peace bond could also list other requirements for a person's behaviour.

A peace bond can also be called a "surety to keep the peace."

Can youth in BC get a peace bond?

Yes, youth in BC can get a peace bond. There's no minimum age to get a peace bond.

Can a peace bond protect me from another youth?

Yes. You can get a peace bond against a youth or an adult who you think might harm you.

What happens if I get a peace bond and the person I fear doesn't follow it?

If a person doesn't follow the requirements of a peace bond, you can contact police.

Police can look up the peace bond in a database and take steps to enforce it (get the person to follow it) anywhere in Canada. A person who breaks a peace bond might be charged with a criminal offense (a crime).

Police will only enforce the peace bond if you tell them that the person you fear is not following it.

If you don't feel comfortable dealing with police, there are other ways to get help with a dangerous situation. The end of this info sheet lists some options.

How do I get a peace bond?

There are two ways to get a peace bond:

- Go to your local courthouse and ask to see a clerk of the criminal court, or
- Contact police.

No matter which way you choose, you can get legal help.

Where can I get legal help with peace bonds?

The [Child and Youth Legal Centre](#) offers legal help to youth in BC who are 9 to 19 years old. They can help you get a peace bond, look at other legal options, or understand your legal rights.

Here is their contact info:

- Phone: 1-877-462-0037
- Email: cylc@scyofbc.org

How do I get a peace bond through the local courthouse?

Go to the courthouse nearest you and ask to see a clerk of the criminal court. It's a good idea to get a lawyer to go with you, but you can also go by yourself.

Tell the clerk you want a peace bond. The clerk will give you some forms to fill out and will tell you about the next steps.

How do I get a peace bond through police?

Contact your local police to ask for a peace bond.

Police will interview you about why you fear the person and need a peace bond against them. During this interview, it can help to share information about:

- The person's past violence against you or anyone else,
- Their access to weapons,
- Threats they have made,
- Anything else that makes you feel afraid of them,
- Evidence showing what happened or why you are afraid (like texts, social media messages, voice recordings, or letters), and
- Witnesses (people who have seen or heard what's going on).

After the interview, the police will explain the next steps.

How long does it take to get a peace bond?

It could take a few weeks or even a few months.

If you're in danger now and need protection right away, you can call 9-1-1.

How long does a peace bond last?

Each peace bond has an end date. Most peace bonds last for one year.

If you want longer protection from a peace bond, you need to go through the process again to get a new peace bond. You can ask for a new peace bond even before your old one has reached its end date.

I have heard of something called a family law protection order. How is that different from a peace bond?

Peace bonds and family law protection orders are both meant to protect you from someone you fear. But there are some important differences between them.

Family law protection orders are made under the BC *Family Law Act* in family court. They can **only** protect you from certain types of people who are family members: for example, your spouse or ex-spouse, a person you are living with or have lived with in a common-law relationship, your child, or your child's other parent. Because a lot of youth don't have children, a spouse or common-law partner, this info sheet for youth does not go into detail about family law protection orders.

Unlike family law protection orders, peace bonds can protect you from **anyone**, like someone you dated but have never lived with.

Peace bonds can also protect you from a family member, but you don't need to be involved in a family law case to get one.

Find out more about BC's [family law protection orders](#).

If I ask for help for my safety through a peace bond, could this lead to a child welfare social worker getting involved?

In BC, when someone has concerns about the safety or well-being of a person younger than 19, the law says they must report these concerns to a child welfare worker.

If you're younger than 19 and seeking help for your safety through a peace bond, it's possible that these safety concerns would be reported to a child welfare worker who would look into the situation. It's very likely that a child welfare worker would get involved if you share that you're in danger at home or that your parent or guardian isn't protecting you.

Besides peace bonds, what are some options to get help if I don't feel safe?

Deciding whether to get a peace bond is personal.

Some people don't feel comfortable and safe contacting a court or the police to get a peace bond or to ask for help if an issued peace bond isn't being followed. Other people do feel comfortable and safe applying through a court or the police and contacting the police if there are violations.

If you are in danger, it's important to get help. You can do that in a way that feels right to you. Here are some options:

Talk to an adult you trust.

Contact [Kids Help Phone](#) for free listening and crisis support for youth and kids across Canada. This service is available at all times. You don't have to give your name. You can talk about anything. Phone 1-800-668-6868. Or text CONNECT to 686868.

Contact [VictimLinkBC](#) for free crisis support and information about services for victims of crime anywhere in BC or Yukon. VictimLinkBC is available at all times and in about 150 languages. Phone or text 1-800-563-0808. Or email VictimLinkBC@bc211.ca.

VictimLinkBC can connect you with a **community-based victim services worker** or a **transition house** near you.

You don't have to talk to police to get help from a **community-based victim services worker**. This type of worker can offer:

- Safety planning
- Emotional and practical support
- Information about the criminal justice system
- Connections to other services and support

A [transition house](#) can provide a safe, temporary place to stay for youth who have faced violence or who are at risk of violence. A transition house might also offer support services.

Contact a [PEACE Program](#) for children and youth experiencing violence, (formerly the Children Who Witness Abuse program). It is a free, confidential program across BC for children and youth aged 3 to 18 who have experienced domestic violence. There are 86 programs across BC.

Spark Teen Digital Dating Violence Project

This document is a part of the [Spark: Responding to Teen Digital Dating Violence Toolkit](#). This document, or any portion thereof, may be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever as long as acknowledgment to the [BC Society of Transition Houses](#) is included in the product.

We gratefully acknowledge Whitney Vicente and Alana Prochuk of [West Coast LEAF](#) for their support with the creation of this information sheet.



BC Society of
Transition Houses