



Human Rights in Action

A Handbook for Prisoners
in Provincial Jails in Nova Scotia

Original edition: 2016; update and revision: 2019-2020.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ACTION

*A Handbook for Prisoners in
Provincial Jails in Nova Scotia*

**Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies
with East Coast Prison Justice Society**

Original Authors (2016): Hanna Garson, Brent Murphy, the Pro Bono Students Canada Dalhousie Chapter and Emma Halpern, Regional Advocate, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Update and Revision (2019-2020) overseen by Sheila Wildeman (Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law), with substantial contributions from volunteers with Elizabeth Fry Societies, East Coast Prison Justice Society, and Pro Bono Students Dalhousie, and from Harry Critchley, Peter Duke, Hanna Garson, Claire McNeil, and Jessica Rose.

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PREFACE

This manual was created as part of the Human Rights in Action (HRIA) work of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, with the assistance of Dalhousie's Pro Bono Students and Status of Women Canada. It was updated in 2019-20 through a collaboration of Elizabeth Fry Societies, East Coast Prison Justice Society and Dalhousie's Pro Bono Students.

The goal of the HRIA project is to protect the human rights of all prisoners, with particular attention to the rights of Indigenous, racialized and women prisoners, and those with disabling mental health issues. The groups involved in this project are committed to decreasing the use of prisons and to developing release strategies for those who are currently incarcerated.

This handbook's use of language is intentional and reflects the philosophies of both the Elizabeth Fry Societies and East Coast Prison Justice Society. For example, we do not employ the term 'reformatory', as prisons do not 'reform' the individual. We do not employ the term 'inmate' or 'offender'. The continual use of the term 'offender' justifies everything done to a prisoner in the name of the law. Yet 'offender' describes a person who commits an offence – a current transgression, one that is occurring at a specific time. Charged with an offence, the person is tried, and if convicted becomes a prisoner. The offence has already happened. It is in the past. The person in prison is not offending. They have already offended. Using the static label "offender" is a way of justifying ongoing brutalization and degradation (euphemistically referred to as "treatment of the offender").

We want to assist prisoners to survive criminalization and jail by strengthening their abilities. Our aim is to support individuals in jail and after release to:

- create advocacy teams made up of current prisoners, ex-prisoners, and community supports;
- get out of jail as quickly as possible;
- stay out of jail once they are released;
- participate in systemic and issue-specific coalitions that support human rights principles and goals at the local, regional, and national levels.

This handbook will assist you to advocate for yourself and/or your peers in the provincial jail system. The idea is to ensure that those whose rights are violated have support to address discriminatory treatment, and to identify and address areas that require systemic advocacy.

A Brief History of the Human Rights in Action Project

On March 8, 2001, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS), Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), Strength in Sisterhood (SIS), and 24 other national and international women's, Aboriginal and justice groups formed a coalition that urged the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) to conduct a broad-based systemic review of the federal government's discriminatory treatment of women who are criminalized and imprisoned.

Nearly three years later, the Commission issued a special report entitled, *Protecting Their Rights: A Systemic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*. The CHRC Report made nineteen recommendations that call for far-reaching changes with respect to the manner in which the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) might work to alleviate the systemic discrimination experienced by women serving sentences of two years or more.

CAEFS and other coalition partners continued to work together on efforts to ensure the implementation of the CHRC recommendations and on long-term commitments to social justice, decarceration, and deinstitutionalization. CAEFS sought and obtained resources that enabled it to work collaboratively with NWAC and SIS to further the human rights of women prisoners. The Human Rights in Action (HRIA) project was developed to provide practical tools and training for women inside to work with the support of allies on the outside to address advocacy issues in the jails for women, as well as to develop community release options for women.

From 2006 through 2009, the HRIA project was initiated in 8 federal prisons throughout Canada where women are serving prison sentences of two years or more. In each prison, we were very pleased to welcome the majority of the women as participants in the rights orientation and training sessions. Many also continue to work at advocating for their rights and continue to push for additional supports and opportunities to better advocate for themselves and their peers.

Many women also suggested that the program be offered to women in and from provincial jails. As a result, we are now piloting provincial human rights projects in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, in the hopes that women who are provincially sentenced can also benefit from the training and experience opportunities to better advocate for their rights. Supporters and advocates are also being trained in each of the pilot sites.

Recently, the work of CAEFS inspired Elizabeth Fry (NS Mainland) to join forces with East Coast Prison Justice Society to create a revised edition of the handbook for use by men, women and non-binary persons in provincial jails –on the basis that the human rights of all prisoners must be protected.

The Provincial HRIA Project

This manual is similar in format to the one CAEFS used for its federal initiative. That manual was originally drafted by a group of law students working with CAEFS and women who are or were federally sentenced prisoners. This one was first drafted in 2016 in a way that was geared to women in provincial jails, using Nova Scotia provincial laws and correctional policies. In 2019-20, Elizabeth Fry Society (NS Mainland) and East Coast Prison Justice Society updated the handbook and revised it to use gender-inclusive terms.

In drafting this manual, we have noted many places on the internet where you can access more information. We know that while you are inside, it won't be possible to access the internet, but wherever possible, we have included web site addresses, so that your family, friends and advocates can access the web site for you. Also, when you have access to the internet in the community, you can visit those sites on your own.

If you have any suggestions, comments or questions, please contact CAEFS, Mainland Elizabeth Fry, Elizabeth Fry Cape Breton, or East Coast Prison Justice.

CAEFS

Tel: (613) 238-2422 (collect)
Toll free: 1-800-637-4606
Email: caefs@web.ca
Website: www.caefs.ca

Elizabeth Fry Cape Breton

Address: 16 C. Levatte Crescent
Sydney, NS
Tel: (902) 539-6165
Fax: (902) 539-1683
Email: efrycb@eastlink.ca

Mainland Elizabeth Fry Society

Address: 1 Tulip Street
Dartmouth, NS
Tel: (902) 454-5041
Email: ed@efrymns.ca
Website: www.efrymns.ca

East Coast Prison Justice Society

Address: 6061 University Ave
PO Box 15000
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R2
Email: eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com

Please note that the content of this handbook is primarily based on law, regulation and policy that can be subject to frequent updates and changes. If, while reading this book, you become aware of information, references or citations that are incorrect, please contact the authors at your local Elizabeth Fry Society / East Coast Prison Justice Society.

How to Use This Handbook

This handbook is intended to give you information about the laws, regulations and policies that apply in provincial correctional facilities in Nova Scotia (Corrections law and policy).

Unfortunately, staff do not always follow Corrections law and policy.

Knowing what the Corrections law and policy says about your situation is the first step towards claiming your rights while in jail.

If you are denied what you are entitled to under Corrections law and policy, you can take legal steps to assert your rights. For instance, you may be able to file a Complaint using the jail's internal Complaint process (see Part VI). However, in some situations, a Complaint will not fix the problem. This may be the case where the policies or procedures used by Correctional authorities in making decisions about you are themselves unfair or illegal.

If you feel a policy, procedure, or decision is degrading, humiliating or otherwise violates your rights, you should look at the 'Remedies' section (PART VI) to determine how best to challenge it.

In **Part One (Introduction)** we provide you with some basic information about the Canadian legal system.

In **Part Two (Arriving in Jail)**, **Three (Access to Health Care)**, **Four (Restrictive Measures)** and **Five (Conditional Release)**, we review the government laws, regulations and policies that set the rules that apply to you while you are incarcerated. In these sections we also review how to bring a Complaint under the corrections policy, as well as other types of complaints.

In the final section, **Part Six (Remedies)**, we look at other ways of claiming your rights. You will find information about legal aid and finding a lawyer in Nova Scotia, as well as information about the Ombuds office, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, the Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the Nova Scotia Supreme Court.

PART I

INTRODUCTION: THE LAW IN CANADA

This section outlines Canada's legal system.

It is essential to understand your rights and responsibilities under the law in order to better protect yourself from violation.

The Canadian Constitution: The Supreme Law of Canada

The *Constitution* is the supreme law of Canada. It outlines the powers of the different levels and branches of government. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* sets out your rights and freedoms in the *Constitution*.

Who makes the law: the federal government of Canada or the provincial government?

The Canadian *Constitution* divides the authority to make laws between the federal government and the provinces and territories. Laws can be federal or provincial. Federal laws apply throughout Canada. Provincial laws only apply within that specific province or territory.

Laws made by the federal Parliament, that apply throughout all of Canada, include laws about national defence, immigration, criminal law, divorce, as well as laws affecting Indigenous peoples.

The provinces have power to make laws about the administration of justice, meaning how the police and the courts enforce laws. The provinces also make laws about hospitals and health care, education, family law, and human rights and discrimination.

Indigenous and First Nations peoples in Canada have a unique relationship with both the federal and provincial governments. Some First Nations are self-governing with powers similar to provincial or territorial governments. The federal Parliament makes laws about rights and duties in federal prisons, while provincial governments make laws about rights and duties in provincial jails.

Which laws apply to you while you are in jail?

Provincial governments run provincial jails. If you receive a custodial sentence less than two years, you will be sent to a provincial jail. This handbook is about Nova Scotia run jails so many of the laws and policies discussed will be specific to Nova Scotia.

The federal government runs the federal penitentiaries. If you receive a custodial sentence of two years or more, you will be incarcerated in a federal penitentiary, unless special circumstances exist.

If you are in a provincial jail but serving a federal sentence, Nova Scotia's laws apply to you. If you are transferred to a federal institution, which is managed by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), federal laws about prison administration apply.

If you are in a provincial jail on a temporary hold (e.g. for court proceedings), the CSC may negotiate with the province to either further restrict you or provide you more freedoms on an individual basis. The CSC makes the requests and pays for more restrictive measures for prisoners they consider dangerous.

Some provincial laws, like those dealing with child custody, will apply to you whether you are in a provincial jail or federal prison. The provincial and federal laws around prisons can vary a lot, so it is important that you are familiar with the laws that apply to *your* situation.

Your rights as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The Charter protects everyone in Canada from laws or actions by government officials that are contrary to the Constitution – including in prison. No government law, regulation, policy, or administrative decision, nor any court decision, should take away your Charter rights. When your Charter rights are limited by the law or by other government action, it is up to government to demonstrate that those limits are justified and consistent with the values of “a free and democratic society”.

Sections of the Charter that are particularly relevant to prisoners are:

Section 2: Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- a. freedom of conscience and religion;
- b. freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- c. freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- d. freedom of association.

This section means that you have the right to practice your own beliefs or religion; express yourself and your opinions; the right to meet in groups peacefully; and the right to belong to any group or organization, without government interference. Like all rights, they are not absolute. You cannot use these rights as an entitlement to cause harm to others.

Section 7: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

This right means that the government cannot physically harm you or take away your life (or quality of life) or freedom, unless this is done in a manner that is fundamentally just and fair. This means that the state cannot take away your liberty for a significant amount of time without a fair judicial process. 'Fair judicial process' refers to things such as a judge without bias, having a lawyer to represent you and your interests, and being given the opportunity to fully defend yourself against charges.

Section 8: Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.

This right means that a government official, such as a police officer, cannot search you or your property, or seize your property, without a valid reason.

Section 9: Everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned.

This right means that you cannot be held against your will or imprisoned by a government official, such as a police officer, without a valid reason.

Section 10: Everyone has the right on arrest or detention:

- a. to be informed promptly of the reasons thereof;
- b. to retain and instruct counsel without delay and to be informed of that right; and
- c. to have the validity of the detention determined by way of *habeas corpus* and to be released if the detention is not lawful.

This section grants you the right, once you have been arrested or detained, to be told why; to be given the opportunity to speak with and get advice from a lawyer promptly; and to have the reasons for your detention assessed according to the law to determine if they are reasonable. If the arrest or detention was not lawful, this section grants you the right to be released.

Section 12: Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

This right means that a government official, such as a police officer or jail guard, cannot treat you inhumanely by subjecting you to treatment such as torture.

Section 15: (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

This section means that government officials cannot discriminate against you or treat you unfairly solely because you are a particular race, sex, colour, **or** other characteristic that courts have identified as comparable to those listed above (e.g., sexual orientation, marital status).

Different sources of law: where the laws come from

How are laws made?

There are two main sources of power that make our laws:

Governments make legislation that include:

- Statutes, such as the *Correctional Services Act*;
- Regulations;
- Policy: Some statutes also give government policy the force of law. You can challenge policies that are inconsistent with the regulations or statute. Correctional policies in Nova Scotia do not have the force of law.

Judges or courts make the “common law” through their written decisions, also called case law.

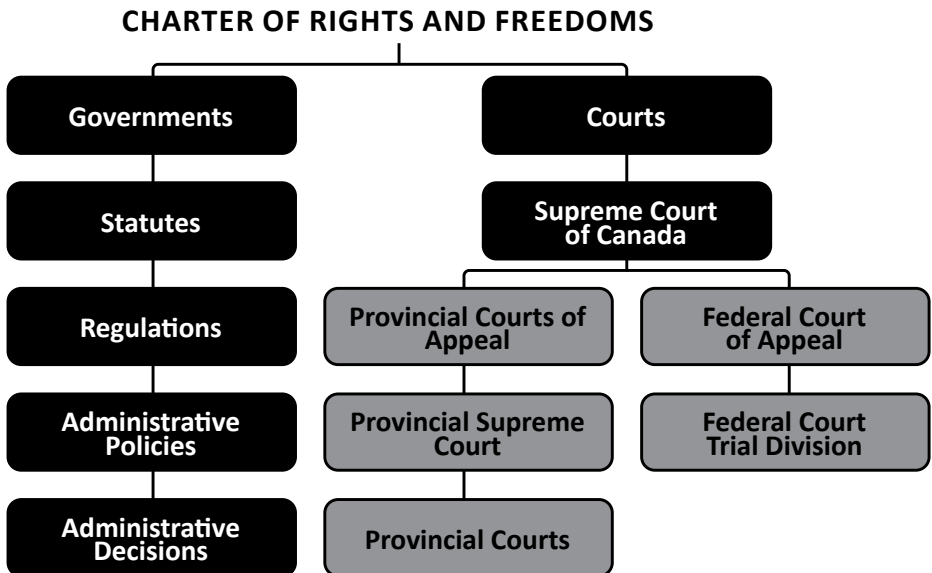
All laws made by government and the courts, as well as all decisions made by public authorities (such as correctional staff) must follow the law as set out by the Constitution (including the Charter). You can challenge any law that is inconsistent with the Charter.

The Hierarchy of Laws

It is important to know that there is a hierarchy or ranking (pecking order) to the law. This means that every law has to be consistent with the laws that are made by the court or group above it. All laws made by government and judges must follow the law as set out by the Constitution. Policies must be consistent with the regulations, and regulations must be consistent with the statute. Judges must follow the law as interpreted by Courts above them.

It is important to understand the role interpretation and discretion play in law. Words do not interpret themselves and laws require interpretation. Sometimes there is room to argue that a law or policy should be interpreted differently than officials say it should. Discretion exists where laws give government officials, like correctional staff, room to choose from a range of options. However, there are always limits to discretion, and the decisions and actions of authorities must be consistent with the law, including the Constitution and the Charter.

The following chart illustrates the order / hierarchy of legal authority:



Laws Made By Government⁵

Statutes

Statutes are laws or legislation made by the federal, provincial or territorial legislatures or Parliament. They are called Codes or Acts. Statutes set out the powers of government and your rights. The Correctional Services Act sets out the powers of correctional authorities and the rights of people serving sentences. Judges and courts must follow the statutes when they decide a case.

The Nova Scotia *Correctional Services Act*⁶ is made by the government of Nova Scotia and is designed specifically for the operation of jails in this province.

The *Criminal Code of Canada*⁷ is the statute that defines what actions or behaviours are criminal in Canada.

While there are some federal statutes such as the Criminal Code that will affect you while you are in a provincial jail, the majority of laws affecting you while in provincial jail are provincial.

Next to the Charter, the Nova Scotia *Correctional Services Act* is the most important law for you to know. It specifies that you have certain rights, but also permits certain restrictions on people who are in jail. Understanding what the Correctional Services Act says about your rights can help you ensure that your rights are protected. **If Corrections policies or decisions do not match up with what is said in the *Correctional Services Act* (or *Correctional Services Regulations*), you can challenge these policies by looking to the options available to you in the Remedies section, (PART VI).**

Other statutes that may affect you are the *Children and Family Services Act*⁸ or the *Human Rights Act*⁹. The *Nova Scotia Human Rights Act* lists ways in which it protects people in Nova Scotia from discrimination. It prohibits discrimination on the following grounds: age, race, colour, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability or mental disability, an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, ethnic, national or aboriginal status, family status, marital status, source of income, political belief, affiliation or activity, or any association with any individual or group of individuals who share any listed characteristic.

If you feel that any of these rights are being infringed, you can file a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. They are set up to investigate complaints and promote equality in Nova Scotia. Information on how to file a complaint can be found in the “Remedies” section (Part VI) of this manual.

The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*¹⁰ (CCRA) governs the administration of prisons federally.

Regulations

Regulations get their legal authority from the statute that they relate to, and provide important detail on how government implements the statute.

The *Correctional Services Act* regulations¹¹ set out rules on things like searches, close confinement and community release. These regulations contain provisions that protect your rights (e.g. limits on recording conversations) and rules about how corrections can restrict your liberty (e.g. disciplinary processes, sanctions).

Policy

Much of this handbook will explain the policies of Corrections Nova Scotia that apply to you. Knowing what the Corrections policy says about your situation is the first step towards claiming your rights while in jail. If you are denied what you are entitled to under Corrections policy, you can file a Complaint. However, if the policies or the complaint procedures used are unfair or illegal, a Complaint will not fix this problem. If you feel a policy/ policies is/are contrary to the *Correctional Services Act* or Regulations or are degrading, humiliating or violate your human or Charter rights, you can look at the “Remedies’ section” (PART VI) to find other ways of claiming your rights.

You can challenge policies that are inconsistent with the regulations or statute. Correctional policies in Nova Scotia do not hold the same power as law.¹² Policies are created by Correctional Services administrators, not the Legislature or Cabinet. Policies are the rules and procedures made by government departments to help their employees apply the law.

Nova Scotia’s *Correctional Services Policy & Procedures* apply to you while you’re in jail.¹³ Because Correctional Services policies are not law, the legal authority for the policy must be found in the statute or regulations.

Administrative Policies and Decisions

The *Correctional Services Act* and Regulations give the legal authority to make decisions about jail-related matters to one of the following decision-makers:

- Local (usually the superintendent or her/his designate),
- Regional (often the Director of Correctional Services), or
- Provincial (the Minister of Justice)

Judge-Made Law: Case Law or Common Law

The law we've discussed so far is made by the government, such as statutes, regulations and policies. Courts also make laws, in the form of case law. Case law comes from judges' decisions or judgments.

When a judge makes a decision on a new type of case or issue, the decision sets a new standard. This is called a *precedent*. All the courts below the court in which that precedent is set are supposed to follow the precedent set by the higher court. This means that the lower courts must make the same decision in similar cases. If the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal made a decision, all the other courts in the province have to then follow that decision. Decisions from the Supreme Court of Canada apply to all provinces and territories.

There is a hierarchy of courts in Canada. This is shown in the chart on page 15 and below. The higher the court, the more likely it is that other courts will follow the precedent. This means that if the Supreme Court of Canada makes a decision, all the lower courts are supposed to follow it.

"Although under common law, Canadian judges follow earlier decisions in cases dealing with similar issues, government-made laws have priority and judges must follow these first."¹⁴ In other words, statutes have more authority than, and can overrule, case law.

The structure of Canada's court system

Powers over the court system have been divided by the Constitution between the federal and the provincial governments, and also divided by what issues they decide.

The different kinds of courts are:

Federal:

- Supreme Court of Canada
- Federal Court of Appeal
- Federal Court
- Specialized federal courts (e.g., Tax Court of Canada and Court Martial Appeal Court of Canada)

Provincial:

- Provincial courts of appeal
- Provincial superior courts
- Provincial courts
- Administrative boards and tribunals like the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and Boards of Inquiry

The Supreme Court of Canada

The Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) is Canada's final court of appeal, which means that it is the highest level of court. The SCC's judgments are final.

Federal Courts

The Federal Court hears cases in areas such as reviews of corrections and parole decisions, intellectual property and maritime law. The Federal Court of Appeal reviews the judgements of these courts.

The Provincial Superior Courts

The Nova Scotia Court of Appeal is the top level of court in this province and hears both civil and criminal appeals. The Nova Scotia Supreme Court hears both civil and criminal cases and has the power to grant divorces.

The Provincial Courts

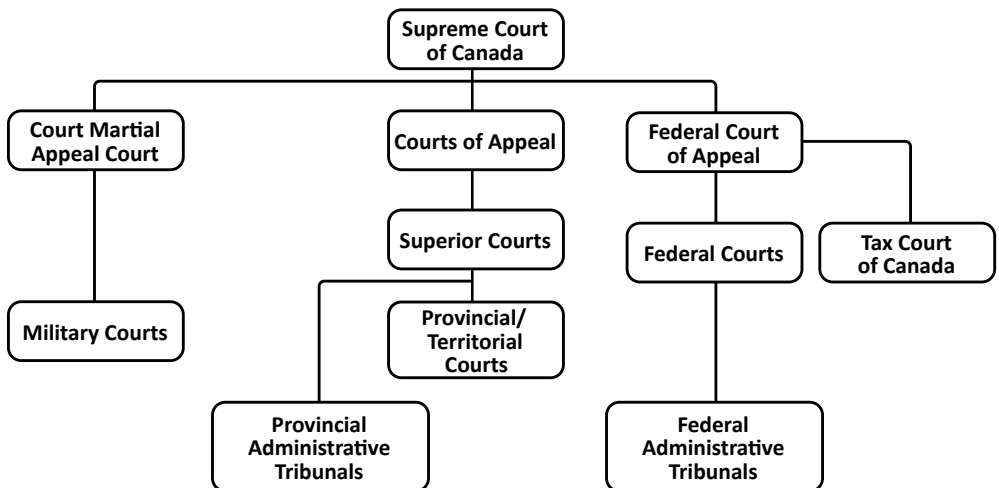
Provincial and territorial courts deal with most of the cases that enter the court system, such as provincial offence matters and most criminal cases. These courts sometimes include specialized courts, for example, youth and family courts.

Administrative Boards and Tribunals

Some statutes authorise boards or tribunals to resolve disputes instead of a court. The procedure of these administrative boards is usually less complex and less formal than the court system.

Depending on the legislation that created the tribunal or board, its decisions may be subject to review by the courts in order to make sure the procedures are fair and lawful. This process of appeal is called judicial review.

CANADA'S COURT SYSTEM



What is the structure of Nova Scotia's court system?¹⁵

In Nova Scotia there are different levels of court that handle different legal issues.

Small Claims Court handles civil matters in cases where a person is suing, or being sued for \$25,000 or less.

The **Provincial Court** hears most of the criminal cases in Nova Scotia, but it does not have authority to try very serious criminal charges, for example murder.

The **Family Court**: In all locations in Nova Scotia, other than Cape Breton and the Halifax Regional Municipality, the Family Court handles most family law issues with the exception of division of property and divorce. Division of property and divorce are handled by the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia.

The **Probate Court** handles issues of wills and estate.

Nova Scotia **Supreme Court** hears the serious criminal cases containing jury trials as well as most civil law suits where the dispute involves more than \$25,000. Other than in Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipality, the Supreme Court also handles divorce and division of property.

The **Supreme Court (Family Division)** in Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipality handles all matters of family law including division of property and divorce.

The **Nova Scotia Court of Appeal** is central in deciding the law of Nova Scotia. Appeals of judgments from lower courts in the province are dealt with by the Court of Appeal.

International Law

Treaties are international agreements between countries. Countries that ratify international – especially UN – instruments, are then expected to implement them in their own countries. When Canada ratifies a treaty, it means that Canada commits itself to the obligations set out in the treaty. However, a treaty is not directly enforceable in Canada unless it has been incorporated into domestic law. That said, Canadian laws and policies must be interpreted in a way that is consistent with Canada's international obligations.

This is true not only of international treaties but also other international human rights instruments (such as UN declarations). For example, the fact that Canada has historically endorsed the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (recently revised and renamed the Nelson Mandela Rules)¹⁶ should mean that Canadian prisoners are treated in accordance with the standards set out in that document.

Some treaties that Canada has signed that relate to people in prison include:

- *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*; ¹⁷
- *The Convention Against Torture and other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)*; ¹⁸
- *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*; ¹⁹
- *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*; ²⁰
- *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR)*; ²¹
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* ²²

In addition to the *Mandela Rules* (noted above), a recent UN process has produced the *Bangkok Rules*²³, which specifically address women's imprisonment. The *Bangkok Rules* provide important guidance on the rights of women in prison, including rights to equitable access to health care and community-based supports for re-entering the community. Rule 6 states that women prisoners should receive a comprehensive screening to determine a range of health care needs. This includes the presence of sexually transmitted diseases, mental health care needs, reproductive health history, any drug dependency, and sexual abuse or other forms of violence that may have been suffered prior to admission.²⁴

The *Mandela Rules* include important minimal standards of health care to be provided to all prisoners.²⁵

Reports/Commissions

In addition to the various legal documents related to the rights of prisoners, there have been a number of reports and enquiries in Canada related to the treatment of prisoners. Among the most influential reports are those created by the federal Office of the Correctional Investigator. These include *Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections*²⁶ and *Summary of Issues and Challenges in the Management of Prison Self-Injury*²⁷.

Other important reports apply to women who are federally sentenced, such as the *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at the Prison for Women in Kingston*²⁸ and the *Systemic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*²⁹.

Although the findings from these reports do not result in binding law, the recommendations may influence courts as well as spur law and policy reform.

Can I challenge an unfair law, policy, or decision?

Much of this handbook will explain Nova Scotia's Correctional Services Act, regulations and policies. Unfortunately, the rights that you are guaranteed on paper may be different than the way you experience them in real life. This project aims to close that gap, help you know your rights, and also provide the tools to claim those rights. **Knowing what Corrections law and policy says about your situation is the first step towards claiming your rights while in prison. If you are denied what you are entitled to you can file a Complaint. However, if the policies or the complaint procedures used are unfair or illegal, a Complaint will not fix this problem. If you feel a decision or policy is unlawful, degrading, humiliating or violates your rights, you can look at the 'Remedies' section (PART VI) to find other ways of claiming your rights.**

You can challenge decisions or policies that are inconsistent with the regulations or statute, or inconsistent with the Charter. Policies do not hold the same power as the law.³⁰

There are many ways that you can challenge unfair laws or policies. Two main ways to complain when your rights have been violated:

Internal Complaint: If staff has not been following the proper policy of Correctional Services, as explained in this book, make an internal complaint through the Corrections complaint process.

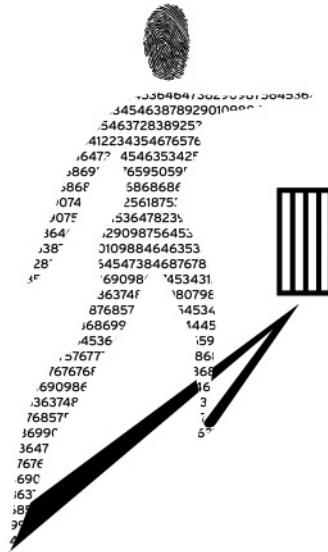
External Complaint: If you have made an internal complaint and it failed (about either not following policy, or the policy itself being unfair) you can look for help outside the prison system, from agencies such as legal aid, the Ombuds office, the Human Rights Commission of Nova Scotia, or the Court system.

A few different ways to challenge a decision, law, policy or action that you disagree with are outlined at the end of this booklet in the section on “Protecting Your Rights”. For example, some places to start in terms of reaching out to someone to explain your situation are:

- Office of the Ombuds: see page 105 for explanation and contact information.
- Human Rights Commission: see page 107 for explanation and contact information
- Elizabeth Fry Societies: see page 117 for contact information (*specifically for women, non-binary and trans* prisoners*)
- Habeas Corpus Application: see page 112 for explanation
- Judicial Review: see page 111 for explanation

Alternatively, you can challenge a decision, law, policy or action that you disagree with in court, using the Charter, where you believe your rights are being violated. Prisoners have launched Charter challenges using sections 7, 12 and 15 of the Charter in the past.

PART II — ARRIVING IN JAIL: THE INTAKE ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND SECURITY CLASSIFICATION



Admission to a Correctional Facility

Orientation and Assessment Program

When you first enter custody of a correctional facility, you should receive an orientation/ introduction. Orientation is a process used to explain to you how the jail works. The orientation program will include, among other things, learning about the facility's rules, disciplinary system, programs, activities, services and daily routines.³¹

In addition, assessment processes will be used to gather information about your security classification, your level of risk, your needs, and your health. These processes are also supposed to be used to address any possible community reintegration strategies moving forward.³²

The intake assessment will include the following: an intake interview, a health assessment, a risk and needs assessment, a classification assessment, and a security risk assessment.³³

Once you have finished the orientation and assessment process, the facility review board is to consider all relevant information and determine where you should be placed in the jail (i.e. which unit).³⁴ Women will always be housed separately from men.³⁵

Trans and gender variant offenders will be assigned a unit placement according to their gender identity, unless:

- They request to be housed in a facility that does not correspond to their self-identified gender;
- Privacy concerns and/or health and safety risks are identified; or
- Security concerns are identified that may impact the placement decision (e.g. information from other sources)³⁶

What is a Security Risk Assessment?

It is the policy of Correctional Services to use a 'security risk assessment tool' for assessments, known as an "Institutional Security Assessment" (ISA).³⁷

The ISA involves an interview with members of the correctional staff. You will be asked a series of questions in eleven areas. Each area is scored individually. Your answers will determine your score and the level of security risk you are assigned for your time in jail.³⁸

The purpose of your security risk assessment is to help determine if you might pose a threat to the facility, staff, other prisoners, or yourself. This includes assessment of your potential for dangerous behaviour such as assaults on other prisoners or staff, and your risk of escape. Your security assessment is also used to determine your risk level while being escorted during a temporary absence, and any security considerations that corrections determines are relevant to your participation in programming and work assignments, or eligibility to participate in temporary absences, among other things.³⁹

Your security assessment score can be changed by the officer-in-charge. This means that your score can be moved upwards or downwards based on the officer's discretion ('discretion' is explained in the chapter "Introduction: The Law in Canada", at page 15). If your score is changed, the officer-in-charge must clearly state their reasons on your ISA form.⁴⁰

What is a Risk/Needs Assessment?

It is the policy of Correctional Services to assess you using a risk and needs assessment tool known as the “Level of Service/Case Management Inventory” (LS/CMI).⁴¹ The LS/CMI involves an interview where you will be asked a series of questions in eight areas. Each area is scored individually. **Your answers will determine your score and will determine what level of risk you are assigned.**⁴²

Remember, these risk/needs assessment tools are imperfect creations of the correctional system – they are by no means accurate predictors of how your life will go. However, it is important for you to know how they work.

Risk factors are things that are said to be connected to your involvement in criminal activity, including:

- your personality,
- the ways you behave (i.e. how you speak and act generally),
- your family situation,
- your educational and employment performance, and
- the people that you associate with.⁴³

Need factors are risk factors that can be changed and, if changed, can reduce the chances of future criminal activity.⁴⁴

The purpose of your risk and needs assessment is to figure out the things that led to your conviction/ imprisonment, and then to make a plan that will help lower your chances of being involved in crime. This is known as a Case Management Plan. A Case Management Plan is a document that outlines the goals that Correctional Services set for you, and the programs available in jail that might help you meet those goals. Your Case Management Plan can change over time.

Your risk and needs assessment will also be used to figure out whether you should have your level of custody reduced or whether you should be granted temporary absence. It will also help determine the level of supervision your probation officer will have over you when you leave jail.⁴⁵

What Information Do I Have to Provide During These Assessments?

It is important to understand that you do not need to answer any questions asked during the intake process,⁴⁶ either about yourself or your family. **You must decide for yourself how much you want to cooperate and give information about yourself.**

On one hand, be aware that the way you act in the assessment may be used as a factor in determining your classification. Refusing to answer questions may have a negative effect on this. For example, if you refuse to cooperate or are seen as being difficult, it may be used as an excuse to keep you in a setting with higher security.

On the other hand, keep in mind that the information you tell the interviewers during the intake process is not kept confidential. In fact, the information may be used against you.⁴⁷

There are some circumstances when it makes sense to exercise your right not to cooperate. For example, if you are awaiting a decision in an appeal, your lawyer might tell you not to participate in 'supplementary assessments' such as psychological assessments, until after your appeal is done. Corrections may still proceed even if you refuse to cooperate. If your lawyer has advised you against cooperating with the assessment, tell that to the person writing the report. Also request that they write clearly at the start of the report that you have told them your lawyer said not to participate in this assessment. If, on the other hand, your lawyer advises you to undergo the assessment, you should also tell that to your interviewer and ask them to put that information at the top of their report.

Be aware that any information you share about things you have done in the past can be used against you, even if you were not convicted of a crime in relation to these actions. In some cases, depending upon the seriousness of the behaviour, information can lead to further criminal investigation, charges, convictions, and imprisonment.

What Will Happen to my Personal Property When I Arrive in Jail?

Upon admission to a correctional facility, you are required to surrender all of your things to the staff person who is admitting you. None of your personal property can be removed from the correctional facility without your consent, or an appropriate court order. Where it is necessary for staff to destroy your property, you must be informed as soon as possible.

You are allowed to keep your wedding ring, body rings that cannot be removed, and any other things that have been approved by the superintendent based on humanitarian, medical, or religious/cultural reasons.⁴⁹

Entitlements and Privileges

You have certain entitlements and privileges once you have been admitted to a correctional facility. **Privileges** can be limited for disciplinary purposes, while **entitlements** can only be limited for safety purposes.⁵⁰ Some of these entitlements and privileges include:

Meals

You are **entitled to three meals on each week day and two meals, including a brunch, on each weekend day and each holiday.**⁵¹ Your security status will determine where meals are served. **Food is not to be withheld as a form of punishment or offered as a reward.**⁵²

You are entitled to special diets for religious, cultural or health reasons where the request is not unreasonable.⁵³ If you are requesting a special diet for therapeutic/health reasons, such as weight loss or allergies, you should do so during your initial health assessment (see *“Health Assessments Upon Admission to a Correctional Facility”*).

If you do not make a request for a special diet during this initial assessment, you must fill out a Health Care Request Form and speak to a nurse. Health care staff will assess you and decide if the special diet should be ordered. The special diet must then be approved by the superintendent.⁵⁴

Religious/cultural diets must be approved in writing by the superintendent and recommended by the chaplain.⁵⁵

Recreation

You are **entitled to at least thirty minutes a day for outdoor exercise**. However, the superintendent may deny you access to outdoor exercise if the weather conditions make it unsafe, if you are actively trying to escape, if you pose an immediate threat to the security of the correctional facility, or if you pose an immediate physical threat to the safety of other prisoners in the facility, or correctional staff.⁵⁶ **A superintendent who denies you access to outdoor exercise must advise you of the reasons for the denial and prepare a written report detailing the reasons for the denial.**⁵⁷

The **privilege** of participating in other recreational activities may be taken away for disciplinary purposes. This does not apply to your thirty minutes of outdoor exercise. **Outdoor exercise cannot be taken away for disciplinary reasons since it is an entitlement, not a privilege.**⁵⁸

Access to a Library

You must be allowed library privileges at least once a week for the purpose of selecting and exchanging reading material, unless you have had this privilege taken away for disciplinary reasons.⁵⁹

Toiletries, Clothing and Laundry

Every person admitted to an adult facility must be issued necessary toiletry items. These toiletry items include: soap, shampoo, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a comb or hair pick, and approved religious and cultural items. Women are also entitled to feminine hygiene products. Following admission, you are responsible for purchasing additional personal hygiene items from the facility canteen. If you do not have money to purchase additional personal hygiene items you may submit a request for additional correctional facility issued personal hygiene items.⁶⁰

All prisoners are to wear the official correctional facility clothing. Clothing issued to you upon admission to a correctional facility, at a minimum, must include:

- Two pairs of pants
- Two t-shirts
- Two shirts
- Four new underwear
- Four new bras (for female prisoners)
- Three pairs of socks
- One pair of sneakers
- One laundry bag⁶¹

You must be given access to laundry facilities, or have your clothes laundered, at a minimum of twice weekly.⁶²

Visits

If it is concluded that the safety and security of the correctional facility will not be put at risk, the superintendent must permit you to have visitors.⁶³ Only those individuals included in your “approved visitor list” will be permitted access to the facility. This list will be in your orientation/ assessment program when you are first admitted to a correctional facility.⁶⁴ An approved visitor can only visit a correctional facility during the hours listed in the policies and procedures.⁶⁵

If a superintendent thinks that a visit is “not in your best interests”, the best interests of the correctional facility, or the best interests of the visitor, the superintendent can deny the visitor entry to the correctional facility.⁶⁶

Even if your visiting privileges are being limited for disciplinary reasons, you must be allowed visits with the following people: a spiritual advisor, a lawyer, a representative of the Office of the Ombuds, a representative of the Human Rights Commission, or an individual approved by the superintendent.

Issues Affecting Communication

You must be provided access to mail and written correspondence, as well as access to telephone communication.⁶⁸

Your communications (telephone, video or electronic) may be recorded at any time – except in the situations noted below. Before recording your communication, the superintendent must tell you ahead of time that the communication will be recorded. This could be achieved through a recorded announcement played at the beginning of the communication, or even by sign posted near the communication device.⁶⁹

A superintendent may also restrict, intercept, or monitor your communications in some situations. If your communication has been restricted, intercepted, or monitored, the superintendent must inform you in writing as soon as possible and explain why they did this.⁷⁰

Your communications with any of the following people cannot be restricted, intercepted, monitored, or recorded: a lawyer, a representative of the Office of the Ombudsman, a representative of the Human Rights Commission, the Nova Scotia Police Complaints Commissioner, and the Nova Scotia Civilian Director of the Serious Incident Response Team.⁷¹

What is the Procedure for Making a Phone Call?

Synergy Prisoner Phone Solutions Inc. provides telephone service to the provincial jails in Nova Scotia. There are two ways that you can place a call: a) collect calling, and b) prepaid calling.

Collect calling is where the person you are calling accepts and pays for the call; **prepaid calling** is where you or the recipient of the call can prepay for the call by setting up an account. Prepaid options include calls prepaid from your telephone account, calls prepaid by the person receiving the call or calls paid for by the called party's credit card at the time of the call.⁷²

Funds can be deposited into your telephone account with cash, a bank debit card, Moneygram deposit at any Canada Post location, or a credit card. The following payment options are available:

- At all adult correctional facilities within Nova Scotia—credit card, or cash deposit
- Toll-Free Customer Service (1-866-713-4761)—credit card deposit
- Website (www.telmate.ca)—credit card deposit; and
- Canada Post—Moneygram—cash, bank debit card, credit card deposit.⁷³

Telephone calls can be made between 8:00 a.m. and 9:45 p.m. seven days a week. Sometimes, ordinary access to the phone is affected by lockdowns or other restrictions on liberty. It is important that you be able to contact your lawyer. Where you need to do this, you should make your need clear to correctional staff. If your request is not granted, keep a record of that and let your lawyer know. If your ability to contact your lawyer, or friends and family, is being restricted because of lockdowns or other reasons, you should let Elizabeth Fry Societies or East Coast Prison Justice Society know.

Issues Affecting Correspondence

The superintendent **can inspect** all correspondence coming into or going out of a correctional facility, including:

- parcels,
- written material, and
- material stored by electronic media.⁷⁴

The superintendent **cannot inspect** the correspondence between you and any of the following people:

- a lawyer;
- a member of the Legislative Assembly of Nova Scotia;
- a member of the Parliament of Canada;
- the Deputy Minister of the Department of Justice or the Executive Director (Assistant Deputy Minister) or a director of the Correctional Services Division;
- NS Police Complaints Commissioner;
- NS Civilian Director Serious Incident Response Team [SIRT];
- a representative of the Office of the Ombuds;
- a representative of the Human Rights Commission;
- an inspector designated under the *Correctional Services Act*.⁷⁵

If you are being penalized by having your communications or correspondence privileges restricted, you are still allowed to send and receive letters from, and communicate with, the following people:

- your spiritual advisor;
- your lawyer;
- a representative of the Office of the Ombudsman;
- a representative of the Human Rights Commission; and
- any individual approved by the superintendent.⁷⁶

Access to Programs

Who has Access to Programs?

Every prisoner should have access to programs at a correctional facility.⁷⁷

It is the superintendent's responsibility to maintain a schedule of regularly provided programs, and to ensure that you are informed of the availability of these programs.⁷⁸

You should be provided with gender specific programs that identify and address your emotional, behavioural, social, spiritual, developmental and physical needs.

What are the Different Categories of Programs?

Correctional services offers three levels of programs:

1. Psycho-Educational Programs

These programs are meant to teach you about basic awareness and relapse prevention skills. The goal is to motivate you to join related intensive programs that will help you make changes in your life.⁷⁹

2. Academic/Knowledge Based Programs

These programs are delivered by licensed teachers or correctional staff who have received literacy/tutor training.⁸⁰ These educational programs are meant to teach you new skills, improve your employability, and to assist you in get into post-secondary community educational programs at the end of your sentence.⁸¹

3. Clinically Supported Behaviour Management Programs

These programs offer more approaches to behaviour management and are run by professional clinical staff.⁸²

What are the Core Programs Offered at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility?

Some of the core programs offered at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility include the following:

- **Beyond Trauma:** An 11 session, gender specific program that focuses on the impact of trauma and teaching wellness.
- **Substance Abuse Management (SAM):** A 12 session program to help manage and reduce substance abuse and to help connect with community resources for when you leave jail.
- **Options to Anger:** An introductory anger management program that looks at the root causes of anger and teaches coping skills.
- **Educational Programs:** There is a licensed teacher who will develop individualized assessment plan for those who participate. This program could involve literacy support, GED prep etc. ⁸³

You can lose the privilege of taking part in programs.⁸⁴ You can also be disciplined for disrupting programs. ⁸⁵

A complete record of your program participation, program completion, personal progress, and refusal to participate in programs will be kept in your Case Management Plan. ⁸⁶

Participation in certain programs may be suggested to you based on your risk and needs assessment.

Parents in Jail

Introduction

Many people in jail are parents and may have been the only caregiver for their children before they were imprisoned. Being away from your children is difficult at any time. Being away from your children because you are in jail is especially difficult. In addition to the separation, jail can also make it difficult (or impossible) to visit or speak with your children.

Understandably, you may also be worried about the difficulties you might experience while trying to get custody of your children after your release from jail.

This section reviews your rights as a parent in jail and explains some of the general concepts in the law regarding the custody and care of children.

In Nova Scotia, the main laws that deal with child custody and access issues are:

- *The Children and Family Services Act* (and its Regulations), ⁸⁷
- *The Parenting and Support Act* ⁸⁸
- *Divorce Act* ⁸⁹

Practical tips for planning for your children when your lawyer tells you that you may get time: make a plan

1a. If you have custody of your child, make alternative care arrangements for your child: decide upon an alternative care giver – someone who you trust to look after the best interests of your children:

- the other parent – if it is in the child’s best interests (see definition of ‘best interest of the child’ on page 39)
- if the other parent is not available/appropriate caregiver, someone else you know – family member, friend
- make a written guardianship agreement for the time you are imprisoned

1b. If you don’t have someone to care for your child:

- you can create a temporary care agreement with the Department of Community Services – Child Protection Services (under s. 17 of *Children and Family Services Act*)⁹⁰. It can be for up to 6 months, and can be extended for another 6 months if needed. The Department of Community Services will provide financial assistance to foster placement: monthly payments to help with the basic costs of caring for the child. The payment is intended to cover the food, laundry, clothing, allowance, school supplies, recreational activities and child care and special requirements such as prescription and non-prescription medications, glasses and other necessities.

2. If there is a custody or access hearing for custody of your child taking place, you are entitled to attend these proceedings and also entitled to have a lawyer in these proceedings. This is provided by Section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*⁹¹ (for more information see ‘what rights do I have at a custody or access hearing’ page 43).

3. Financial support for your children while you are incarcerated:

- The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age:
- In order for the temporary guardian of your child to access this payment, they must apply for these benefits. This application must include proof that they are the current primary care giver of the child.

4. Links to more information about child custody and support:

- www.nsfamilylaw.ca/custody-access/information-about-custody-and-access
- www.legalinfo.org/family-law/common-law-relationships.html

What is custody?

Many people think of custody as simply determining which parent or guardian a child will live with, where the parents do not live together. Custody is more than that. Although children often do spend most of their time with the parent who has custody, custody also involves the right to make important decisions about your child. Parents with custody rights can make decisions about medical, educational and other major aspects of their upbringing. Shared and joint custody allow for parents to share the responsibility for caring for their children even after they have separated.

What is access?

Access means to visit or be visited by your child, and can include obtaining information about your child's health, education, and welfare. Access is granted by courts when parents separate or divorce, and also in child protection cases. Courts may also grant access to grandparents and other people who have stood in the place of a parent to a child. In all cases, courts will grant access where it is in the child's best interests. The court order will often set out specific times when the parent with access is allowed to see the child. Sometimes courts will order telephone access if it is hard for a parent to see a child in person.

It is important to remember that access will be determined based on the child's best interests.

What is supervised access?

If a court grants a parent supervised access, it means that the parent will be able to see the child, but there will be someone else present at all times during the visit. Sometimes supervised access can take place at an approved supervised access service, where there are staff to supervise the visits. Other times, a social worker or a family member may be approved as the supervisor by a court, or by consent, if parents and the other parties involved, such as a child protection agency, can agree.

Who may apply for custody or access of a child?

In most provinces, anyone may apply for custody or access of a child, although some people are more likely than others to be successful. It is often assumed that parents will have joint custody of a child,⁹² so a parent is most likely to be granted custody or access. The most important factor in all matters involving children is the best interest of the child.

If a biological parent's new partner (the step-parent) has developed a bond with a child and helped with parental responsibilities, they may also apply to the court. If the court decides that they acted "in the place of a parent," that person may also have a good chance of getting custody or access. If the judge thinks it is in the best

interests of the child, family members, for instance grandparents, or even close family friends, can also be given custody or access.

What will a court consider when deciding if a proposed caregiver should be granted custody of my child?

The best **interests of the child** is the most important factor. The things a court might consider in deciding if someone should be granted custody of your child(ren) include: ⁹³

- (a) their willingness to accept responsibility for the care and custody of your child;
- (b) their ability to provide for your child, including their physical health (if you are thinking about having an aging parent or grandparent take care of your child while you are inside, a court may check into their ability to handle the physical requirements of caring for your child);
- (c) the stability of the people and their environment;
- (d) whether they have a spouse, and if so, how that spouse feels about bringing your child into their home;
- (e) whether that person is already dealing with difficult issues that might interfere with their ability to care for your child.⁹⁴

What are “the best interests of the child”?

The best interests of the child (BIOC) is the test used by child protection authorities and the courts to help resolve any legal matter involving children. It has even been used to override parents’ Charter rights, such as their right to freedom of expression and their right to freedom of movement.

The BIOC test is defined in section 3 of the *Children and Family Services Act*.

Factors to be considered in determining the best interests of the child include:

- (a) the importance for the child’s development of a positive relationship with a parent, guardian or other relatives and a secure place as a member of a family;
- (b) the child’s relationships with relatives;
- (c) the importance of continuity in the child’s care and the possible effect on the child of the disruption of that continuity;
- (d) the bonding that exists between the child and the child’s parent or guardian;
- (e) the child’s physical, mental and emotional needs, and the appropriate care or treatment to meet those needs;
- (f) the child’s physical, mental and emotional level of development;
- (g) the child’s cultural, racial and linguistic heritage;
- (h) the religious faith, if any, in which the child is being raised;
- (i) the merits of a plan for the child’s care proposed by an agency, including a proposal that the child be placed for adoption, compared with the merits of the child remaining with or returning to a parent or guardian;

- (j) the child’s views and wishes, if they can be reasonably ascertained;
- (k) the effect on the child of delay in the disposition of the case;
- (l) the risk that the child may suffer harm through being removed from, kept away from, returned to or allowed to remain in the care of a parent or guardian;
- (m) the degree of risk, if any, that justified the finding that the child is in need of protective services ;
- (n) any other relevant circumstances. ⁹⁵

What is child protection?

Child protection is an area of the law where the government takes over the care of children who are found by a court to be at risk of abuse or neglect. Each province and territory has its own child protection laws.

In Nova Scotia, the Department of Community Services is the government body that manages child protection. They are required to investigate allegations of child abuse, and they are required to provide care for children who have been found to be “in need of protection”.

There are 20 offices that deal with child protection in Nova Scotia.

NS Department of Community Services

P. O. Box 696

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T7

1-877-424-1177

How can my child be found in need of protection?

According to the law in Nova Scotia, some examples of when a child can be determined to need protection are: ⁹⁶

- if the child is without adequate care, supervision or control;
- the child is physically or sexually abused;
- the child is living in a situation where there is domestic violence.⁹⁷

The Department of Community Services can conduct an investigation to decide whether the security or development of the child is in danger.⁹⁸ If they decide that the child is at risk, then the child may be placed under protective care. This means that the child could end up in a foster home, or in permanent care of the state, or remain in the care of parents who will be supervised by a child protection agency.

What role might a child protection agency play?

Child protection agencies are supposed to provide support to families, and to care for children when their parents are unable to do so. If you are a single parent and you do not have a family member who could apply for custody of your child, a child protection agency might take your child when you go to jail. They may place your child with a family member, or if no family member is available or willing to care for your child, they may place your child in a foster home.

If there is an investigation involving your child, the Department of Community Services may stay involved with your family through a supervision order, or may take your child if your child is thought to be in need of protection.

If your child is taken into care, the Department of Community Services is always required to argue their case before the court as to why this is the best decision. If the court does not agree with their decision, the judge will order that your child should be returned to you or to a family member whom you have designated.

Nova Scotia law recognizes the entitlement of Mi'kmaq children to maintain a connection with their community and the central role of Mi'kmaq Family and Children's Services (MFCS) in implementing child protection in situations involving Mi'kmaq children and other Indigenous children.⁹⁹

What happens if my child is found to be “in need of protection”?

If the child protection agency takes (apprehends) your child, they have to make a court application to have the court decide if your child is in need of protection, or, return your child to you within 5 days.¹⁰⁰ The court will hold a hearing about the reasons why your child was apprehended within 5 business days of your child being placed in care.¹⁰¹

What is a supervision order?

A court may order that an individual take custody of a child, and that a child protection agency will supervise that parent or other person responsible for the child. Supervision orders in Nova Scotia can last up to 12 months.¹⁰² They may also be reviewed and extended.¹⁰³

If, at a protection or disposition hearing, your child is found to be in need of protection, then the court will decide who gets custody of your child. The Minister is required to make sure that your child is cared for, and may place them in another home or in the care of social services.¹⁰⁴ If the court orders that a child become a temporary ward of the child protection agency, the order cannot last for more than twelve to eighteen months without a review, so each case of temporary care is reviewed at least once during that period.¹⁰⁵

What happens if your child is taken out of his or her home and into custody of Child Protection Services?

If a child is taken out of his or her home and the child protection agency cannot find a family member with whom to place the child, the agency may take the child into custody (sometimes called protective care). This may be temporary or permanent.

If your child is taken into care, you should be informed immediately of what action has been taken.¹⁰⁶ Within 5 days of removing your child, the agency should either return the child to your care or make an agreement with you (and/or another parent of the child) as to what needs to be done with the child, or, the agency can apply to the court to make another order.¹⁰⁷

Temporary orders last up to 3 months, but can be reviewed and extended.¹⁰⁸ Under a temporary order, the Minister should still consider the wishes of the child and the parent.

If a child is placed in care permanently, then all your rights and responsibilities as a parent stop, and those rights and responsibilities are given to the child protection agency.¹¹⁰ The child may be put up for adoption.¹¹¹

Throughout child protection proceedings, the court should impose reasonable terms. This includes allowing access by a child to their parent, unless the court decides this is not in the best interests of the child.¹¹² If a court orders that your child should be placed in permanent care and custody, then you will not have a right to access the child.¹¹³ However, even where your child is in permanent care and custody of children and family services, they may allow you to communicate with the child where that is deemed to be in the child's best interests.¹¹⁴

Are child protection orders final?

Not much is final in cases involving children. Court orders can usually be changed or varied. But, it is difficult to change child protection orders. **You can appeal orders or decisions about protective care to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal if you apply for the appeal within 30 days** after the order was made.¹¹⁵ The order will still be valid/in force until the hearing, at which point, the Court can affirm, end, or change the order.

An appeal may be the only way for a parent to change a custody order.

What rights do I have at a custody or access hearing?

Section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*¹¹⁶ guarantees parents the right to a fair hearing when the state is seeking custody of their children. **This includes the right to a lawyer in child protection proceedings where the child is being removed from your care.** In some cases, this will mean legal aid will provide you with a lawyer for your hearing. Whether or not you will have the right to have free legal assistance will depend on your financial situation, as well as the details of what has happened to you and your children.¹¹⁷

Even if you do not receive a legal aid certificate to find your own lawyer, you will likely be able to **get assistance from duty counsel** for many of the hearings you will have to attend.

When applying for custody or access to your child, you must apply to the court in the province/ jurisdiction where your child lives.

You have the right to attend court in person in child protection proceedings where the child is being removed from your care. The Court or your lawyer should prepare an Order to allow you to attend. The Charter also entitles you to attend.

Once I am in jail, do I still have the right to see my child?

Whether or not you have the right to see your child will depend on a few things. Courts can order that parents should have no access to their children. All decisions are made according to the judge's interpretation of the best interests of the child. Still, there are examples of prisoners maintaining access even under extreme conditions, such as a father who was able to maintain telephone access with his children even though he was in jail for killing their mother.¹¹⁸

Child protection agencies have the authority to limit your contact with your child if they think it is in the child's best interests. A judge, acting on behalf of an agency, is allowed to prohibit any person (including a parent) from visiting, writing to, telephoning or otherwise contacting the child.¹¹⁹

There have been cases in which parents have been denied access to their children largely because they are in jail.¹²⁰ It is difficult to predict how a judge will decide, and as you will know, sometimes judges are not very sympathetic to parents in jail. However, depending on your situation, it might be very important both to you and your child to maintain contact/access while you are in prison. The Court in the Inglis case recognized incarcerated women's right to do so, as long as it is in the best interest of the child.¹²¹

Usually, your visits will not be interfered with unless you or your visitors are suspected of doing something wrong. But, in more than one case, a provincial jail director decided to suspend all contact visits for a parent because of a general concern about drug and weapons being smuggled into a jail and the courts did not interfere with the jail's decision.¹²²

It is important to know that in deciding a plan for a child, including custody and access, the Minister should consider the wishes of the child and the parent. Therefore, it is important to make sure that you and your child make your wishes known in deciding what happens. Also, Canada has an international obligation under the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* to give parents an opportunity to participate and make their views known if a child is being separated from his or her parents.¹²³

You may be able to use laws, such as the Charter, to argue that you should have access to your child. For example, in one case, a woman argued that being kept from her newborn amounted to cruel and unusual punishment under section 12 of the Charter. Sadly, she lost the case, but the judge said that this was because she was a flight risk and was in a secure custody unit.¹²⁴ This might leave room for other mothers (or arguably, in certain cases, fathers) who are not considered flight risks and who are not in a secure unit to be successful with a similar argument.

Other human rights arguments are available as well. The Supreme Court of Canada has recognized that apprehension of a child can interfere with the parents' right to security of the person under s.7 of the Charter.¹²⁵ In a case where the provincial government shut down a mother-baby program at a jail, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that that closure was contrary to mothers' and babies' right to security of person and to equality under s.7 and s. 15 of the Charter.¹²⁶ This judgment recognized that women in prison are often from marginalized groups and sole support parents – so that separating them from their dependent children deepened their inequality. You may be able to make similar points to argue that it is in the best interests of your child and your constitutional right as a parent to have access to your child.

Another Charter argument that could be useful is the section 2(d) right of freedom of association. You could argue that you have the right to associate with your children, and that limiting your ability to interact with them is an interference with your Charter rights. Remember that children have a right to access their parents. Your child can argue that their rights are being interfered with if they are not allowed to see you.

What sort of things should I tell the judge if I apply for access to my child(ren) while I am in jail?

The judge will be making decisions according to their interpretation of the best interests of your child(ren), so **you will need to argue that it is in your child(ren)'s best interests to stay in touch with you**. Important information for the judge to know includes things like:

- Were you your child(ren)'s primary caregiver (were you a single parent or did you do most of the parenting, including emotional and financial support and tasks like feeding, clothing, bathing, etc.)?
- How was your child doing under your care (were they healthy, doing well in school, happy with their friends, supported by your family)?

The fact that you are in jail may bias the judge, as they do not see many applications from prisoners, so you need to **focus on the bond between you and your child(ren)** and how that is sufficiently important to you and your child(ren) that it be maintained.

Can my child come to visit me in jail?

Some children do have regular visits with their parents in jail. As long as there is no court order saying that you may not have access to your child(ren), then your child(ren) should be able to visit you. Special requests will need to be made in order to ensure you are able to have contact visits with your child. How often you have visits usually depends on how far your child(ren) are able to travel for the visits, and whether there is someone willing to bring them to visit you.

Should I participate in the parenting skills program?

While you should never feel that the fact that you are in jail means that you are an inadequate parent, there may be benefits to taking a parenting skills program offered by Nova Scotia Corrections.¹²⁷ For one, many judges may have a bias, however unfair, against parents in jail. If you want to apply for access or custody of your child(ren), it may help if you can show the judge that you have taken a parenting course. Also, such programs often involve visitation with children, so this might be an additional way to see your child(ren) more frequently.

If there is no parenting skills program in the jail where you are being held, you may want to request that one be put in place.

Do I still have the right to make important decisions about my child?

There are two important legal concepts regarding parenting. Custody refers to decision making authority, and access refers to having physical care of the child(ren). Legal custody and decision-making authority refer to the same concept.

Both parents are presumed to have joint decision-making authority unless there is a court order giving custody to one person. Having joint custody means that both parents have a say in making significant decisions about the child's medical, education, religious and moral upbringing.

The parent who has physical care of the child(ren) is responsible for making day to day decisions about the child such as meals, what to wear, letting them go to a friend's house, etc. You may hear terms like primary care, or primary parenting, access, or parenting time. All of those terms refer to who has physical care of the children.

When a parent is incarcerated, it can be difficult to participate in making major decisions for your child because of the limits placed on communication. Unless a court order states otherwise, parents also have a right to see medical and school documents, report cards, and to receive information from professionals working with their child(ren).

If you do not have access, you may not have any ability to make such decisions. If you do have access, and certainly if you have custody, you may be able to make important decisions about your child's health, education, and well-being.

If you have joint custody of your child(ren), meaning that you and the other parent share legal custody of the children, you will both have some ability to make decisions about your child(ren), even if the child(ren) only lives with one parent. If you and the child(ren)'s other parent are still in a relationship, then you automatically have the right to make decisions about your child because it is presumed that you have "joint custody", unless the child's other parent has obtained a court order saying that you no longer have custody.

Even though you are in jail, if your spouse or another family member has custody of your child, you might still be able to apply for joint custody. Unfortunately, many parents are not able to maintain custody of their child(ren) while they are in jail.

Does my child have rights?

The short answer is, yes. For example, your child has a right of access to you in order to maintain his or her bond with you. The *Children and Family Services Act* says that a child's wishes are part of the best interests of a child.¹²⁸ A child has the right to have their wishes heard directly. They are also entitled to have a spokesperson to speak on their behalf.¹²⁸ This is a right that is also protected by our Charter.

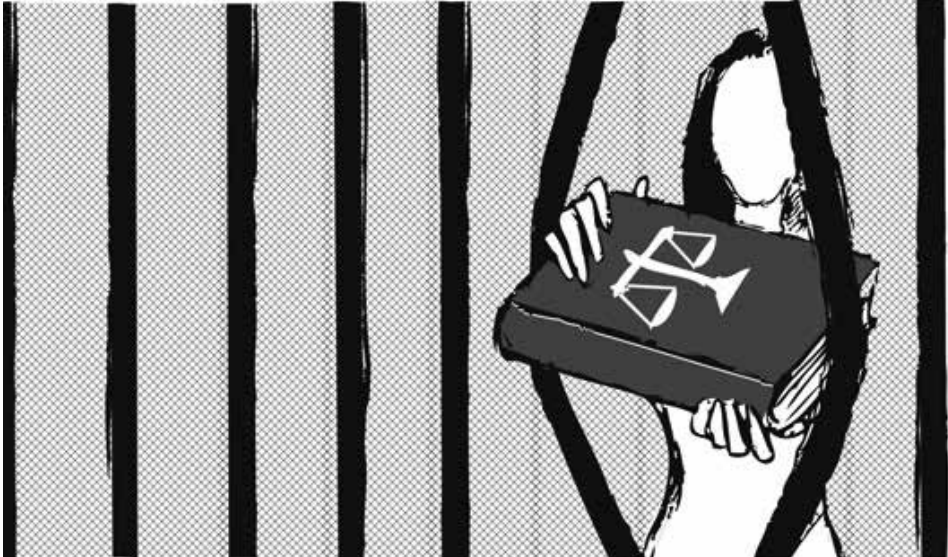
Article 7 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* says that a child has the right to know and be cared for by their parents. In the event that a child is separated from one or both parents, Article 9 says that the child can "maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests."¹³⁰

The Supreme Court of Canada has also recognized that keeping a child from their parents infringes the child's right to security of the person, and must only be done in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.¹³¹ This means that if you believe that your child is being kept from you for arbitrary or unfair reasons, you might be able to work with your child's caregiver to argue that your lack of access to the child violates their rights pursuant to section 7 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

What if my child is Indigenous?

The extent to which a child's Indigenous heritage is considered in child protection matters varies between provinces and territories. In Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq children are subject to Mi'kmaq Family and Children Services.¹³² Important sections of the *Children and Family Services Act* and regulations recognize the right of Indigenous children to retain connection to their culture, community, spirituality and heritage. You may also be able to use Aboriginality as a factor in support of an equality argument under s. 15 of the Charter against depriving parents and children of an ongoing relationship including custody and access.

PART III: PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS



While many things in jail will restrict your freedom, you still have certain rights and privileges inside. **It is important to know the difference between rights and privileges:**

- A right is a legal entitlement that cannot be taken away from you, regardless of whether or not you are in jail. Withholding someone's right without a clear legal justification is against the law, and there are remedies that may be used to ensure that rights are respected.
- Privileges, on the other hand, usually have to be earned in jail and are not guaranteed. For example, a temporary absence is not guaranteed and may be granted based on your behaviour or other factors. Corrections staff can often decide to grant or limit privileges, but they still should not be taken away for random or arbitrary reasons.

You have many very important rights. The following section will look at some of the rights you have in jail and discuss how you can make sure these rights are respected. When your rights are violated, look to the Remedies section to address the violation (PART VI).

Confidentiality and Access to Information

Your personal information is very important in jail, as it will impact many parts of your experience while incarcerated and upon release. Information in your file plays a big role in things like classification, programming, and the success (or not) of applications for various forms of conditional release. It is therefore important to **know what is in your file and to make sure that if you find any errors, you try to correct them.**

Your rights to protect your personal information are in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.¹³³

Is the information Corrections collects about me considered confidential by law?

The Correctional Services Regulations require that information collected about you is to be kept confidential. Corrections staff, volunteers (including students), and assistant probation officers must keep all the information about you private, and not release your personal information to anyone outside Corrections, unless sharing information is justified because you commit a criminal offence or are involved in a serious incident.¹³⁴ Staff members of Corrections are required to sign an oath, saying that they will keep all of your information confidential.¹³⁵

However, there are limits on your right to confidentiality. For example, if you are the cause of a major incident within the jail, your information will be revealed to the general public and/or to the media.¹³⁶ According to the Nova Scotia Government, major incidents include: ¹³⁷

- A major disturbance at a correctional facility. A major disturbance is defined as a disturbance of four or more persons in custody, over a protracted period of 60 minutes or longer, which either (a) necessitates the hold or call back of staff, or (b) exceeds the resource capacity of the facility and requires emergency police services to respond to the identified threat;
- Major disruptions of day-to-day activities in a correctional facility or Justice Centre/Court (including major power outages or loss of telephone service), where it has been determined that there is a threat to public safety;
- Purposeful damage to a correctional facility, Justice Centre/Court, Department of Justice office, or Department vehicle estimated to be worth more than \$5,000;
- A motor vehicle accident that happens while transporting someone in custody, resulting in an emergency medical response at the scene or inpatient hospitalization;
- Assault committed by a person in custody against another person, either

within a correctional facility, while in the custody of Sheriff Services, or while in court, resulting in serious injury that requires inpatient hospitalization;

- Escape from custody, including escape from Sheriff Services, escape from correctional facilities, and escape from escorted temporary absences;
- Wrongful release of a person from custody before the end of that person's sentence or remand;
- Seizure of explosives or firearms at a correctional facility or Justice Centre/ Court;
- A hostage taking;
- A bomb threat;
- Major seizure of drugs at a correctional facility;
- Closure of a correctional facility to the public as a result of a health concern (e.g., flu outbreak); and
- The death of a person while in custody.

Is my health information considered confidential by law?

Yes. The *Code of Ethics for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia* says that health professionals “protect the personal health information” of patients.¹³⁸ However, your information will not be kept confidential when they have reasonable grounds to believe there is a “significant risk of substantial harm” to yourself or to others. If this is the case, the health professional has to “take all reasonable steps to inform” you that the “confidentiality will be breached.”¹³⁹

Do I have the right to know what information Corrections has in my file?

You have the right to have access to information in files they keep on you.¹⁴⁰ You have the right, like any other citizen of Nova Scotia, to use the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)* to access any of your personal information.¹⁴¹ Using the Act can be more complicated and time-consuming than simply dealing with staff at the jail, but you are still entitled to use it.

How do I access my own information through FOIPOP?

You have the right to access all of the information Corrections has about you, including your personal health information. To access your own information, you must **file a request in writing** specifying the subject matter of the request to the relevant person or group.

If you are not comfortable seeking the assistance of staff to access your information, then **you may request assistance from the Elizabeth Fry workers or the Ombuds office.** You should receive a response acknowledging your request for information, and whether it will be provided within 30 calendar days.¹⁴²

If you receive the response that you will not be granted access to the information, **you have 60 days after receiving the response to apply for the decision to be reviewed by the Review Officer.**

The Ombuds can help ensure that the government is following their policy/ legal obligations in terms of you accessing your information. Complaints about accessing your information can be made to the Ombuds Office in writing, by fax, over the phone, via e-mail, or in person. If you wish to make your complaint in person, we recommend that you call first to ensure someone will be available in the office to help you. You can contact the Ombuds Office at:

Office of the Ombuds

5670 Spring Garden Road
Suite 700
P.O. Box 2152
Halifax, NS B3J 3B7

Telephone: 902-424-6780
Toll-free: 1-800-670-1111
Fax: 902-424-6675
E-mail: ombudsman@gov.ns.ca

You can find many forms that may be used for procedures under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* online at <http://foipop.ns.ca/forms>. These forms are not needed to request access or a review, but you might find them helpful.

Can any information be withheld from me?

According to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (and other policies)¹⁴³ information can be denied for a variety of reasons. For example, information can be withheld if:

- It would disclose someone else’s confidential information;¹⁴⁴
- It could reasonably be expected to threaten your safety or mental or physical health, or that of another person;¹⁴⁵
- It would be detrimental to ‘the proper custody, control or supervision’ of someone who has been sentenced;¹⁴⁶
- It would reveal information gathered by the police in the course of an investigation.¹⁴⁷

What if some of the information about me is wrong?

If you think the information in your file is wrong, you should do your best to make sure it gets corrected. You are not allowed to alter information contained in your file, but you should tell the Superintendent, in writing, of the mistake. The Superintendent should then either correct the mistake or, if the superintendent disagrees, note the objection in your file. Depending on what is at stake, you might consider making an internal complaint and then possibly even seeking judicial review of the decision in a court.

Are my conversations and mail confidential?

Some of your conversations and mail are confidential and some are not. Certain communications, called ‘privileged communications,’ are confidential. People with whom you share privileged communication include: ¹⁴⁸

- a lawyer;
- a member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Nova Scotia;
- a member of the Parliament of Canada (MP);
- the Deputy Minister or Assistant Deputy Minister (Executive Director) of the Department of Justice, or a director of the Correctional Services Division;
- NS Police Complaints Commissioner;
- NS Civilian Director of the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT);
- a representative of the Office of the Ombudsman;
- a representative of the Human Rights Commission;
- an inspector designated under the Act. ¹⁴⁹

These calls are not allowed to be monitored or recorded.

Any other communications can be monitored or recorded in accordance with regulation and policy.¹⁵⁰ Staff may review non-privileged incoming and outgoing mail to ensure it doesn’t jeopardize security, contain threats, aid in committing further offences, contain contraband, or pose a risk to public safety. ¹⁵¹

The Right to Counsel (Legal Assistance)

Do I have a right to a lawyer while I am in jail?

You have a right to legal assistance in the following circumstances (also known as right to counsel). You are entitled to be informed of this right anytime you are:

- Arrested;
- Detained; or,
- Charged with an offence.

You are always entitled to communicate with your lawyer while in jail, free from restriction and free from monitoring.¹⁵³ You are entitled to talk to your lawyer without anyone being able to hear or record what you are saying.

You also have the right to be provided with information about legal aid services. You should be given an application for legal aid on request.

Are my communications with my lawyer private?

Yes.¹⁵⁴ What you and your lawyer say to each other during visits cannot be monitored. Likewise, mail that is between you and your lawyer should not be read. You also have a right to confidential phone calls with your lawyer.¹⁵⁵

While you have a right to insist that calls with your lawyer not be listened to or recorded, you should be aware that there is no guarantee that calls made on the phone systems will not in fact be monitored.

When would I use my right to legal assistance?

There are many circumstances in which it is in your interest to exercise your right to counsel. **You should try to speak to a lawyer right away if you are:**

- Placed in close confinement;
- About to be transferred involuntarily to another institution;
- Have just arrived at another institution after an involuntary transfer;
- If you have a parole hearing; or,
- If you are charged with a serious disciplinary offence, either institutional (by the jail), or outside charges (by the police).

Can you be denied the right to counsel?

Nobody, including the Superintendent, can interfere with your right to legal counsel. This right is protected by section 10(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. You must immediately be given the opportunity to have a confidential phone call to your lawyer, unless there is an emergency that must be dealt with (i.e. a medical emergency), in which case you may have to wait until the emergency is under control. ¹⁵⁶

Unfortunately, the right to counsel, especially regarding incidents that take place in jail, continues to be interfered with in Canada. While the Arbour Commission went as far as to recommend that some form of sanction be placed on those who fail to comply with a prisoner's right to counsel, the recommendation has not been implemented. For this reason, **you must be aware of and exercise your right to counsel.** Jail staff must also be aware of their duties regarding this important right. ¹⁵⁷

Legal Aid

The right to counsel is protected by the Charter. If you need a lawyer and can't afford one, you may be able to get a legal aid lawyer to represent you on a range of legal matters. To apply for legal aid while you are in prison you must ask Corrections for a legal aid application form. Once you complete the form Corrections is obligated to forward it to Nova Scotia Legal Aid on your behalf.

If Nova Scotia Legal Aid denies you legal aid services, you can appeal the decision to deny you legal aid to the Legal Aid Commission.

If you cannot otherwise obtain a lawyer, you may be able to get help from duty counsel at the courthouse.

For information about exercising your right to Legal Aid, see '*Getting Legal Aid*' in the Remedies section, PART VI.

Interpreter Services

If you are hearing impaired, or if your English is limited, you are entitled to help from an interpreter.¹⁵⁸ When staff communicate with you, this should be done in the language of your choice (which includes sign language), so that you can fully understand information or directions being given to you. This applies whenever you are in custody or under community supervision.¹⁵⁹

Health Care

Who is Responsible for the Delivery of Health Services in Jail?

The delivery of health services to people in custody is the responsibility of the Minister of Health. The Minister has given this responsibility to the Nova Scotia Health Authority. The health care services that are provided must include medical services, mental health services, and dental services.¹⁶⁰

Medical Services

Do I Have Health Coverage?

If you are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, and also a resident of Nova Scotia, you are entitled to medical services that are covered by Nova Scotia Medical Services Insurance (MSI). If you are the resident of another province, other than Quebec, but have been imprisoned in Nova Scotia, you will be covered by your home province's medical insurance program.¹⁶¹

Upon admission to a correctional facility, you will be asked to provide a current Nova Scotia Health Card.¹⁶² If you do not have a current Nova Scotia Health Card, you will be required to produce a birth certificate or citizenship card so that a health card can be issued to you.¹⁶³ A social worker will be available to help you fill out the documents required to apply for a health card.¹⁶⁴

If you refuse to provide the information necessary for MSI registration, the incident may be documented on a level II disciplinary report, and the resulting administrative costs will be taken from your account.¹⁶⁵ Without a valid health card, you may have trouble accessing non-emergency health care services, such as an elective surgery.¹⁶⁶

Uninsured Health Services

Not all medical services are covered by MSI. Uninsured health services are not covered by MSI. If you require medical services that are not covered by MSI, you must get written approval from the superintendent. You will be required to pay all costs for these uninsured medical services. You are also required to provide written consent for the treatment with the understanding that you will be paying for the total cost of the non-insured medical service.¹⁶⁷ Health care providers must advise you of the medical services that are not covered by MSI.¹⁶⁸

The services that are not covered by MSI include:

- Excisions of benign growth unless recognized as a pre-malignant condition;
- Removal of wax from ear;
- Removal of warts including papillomata, keratose, nevi, and moles, unless there is a clinical suspicion of skin cancer;
- Routine vision care from the 10th – 65th birthday;
- Second and subsequent ultrasound exam in uncomplicated pregnancy;
- Surgical assistance for cataract surgery and insertion of lens, except for people who require cataract surgery associated with glaucoma, vitreoretinal surgery, and corneal transplantation;
- Eye examinations, except for examinations required for medical reasons and examinations ordered by an Optometrist for persons under 9 years of age and over 65 years of age, once every two years;
- Acupuncture;
- Annual or periodic complete physicals where no disease or symptoms are present;
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids are not covered;
- Trusses, crutches, surgical appliances, wheelchairs and prosthetic appliances, except those that are insured under the MSI Prosthetic Services Program;
- Cosmetic surgery (removal of tattoos, varicose veins, liposuction, etc.); and
- Medical/Legal services (correspondence for legal purposes or court appearances as witnesses).¹⁶⁹

Health Assessments upon Admission to a Correctional Facility

Upon admission to a correctional facility, you will be required to meet with a nurse and complete an “Admission Health Information Form.”¹⁷⁰ You should be told by the person completing the “Admission Health Information Form” about who the information will be given to and where the information will be stored.¹⁷¹

Filling out this form is part of your initial health assessment.¹⁷² The nurse will complete the assessment to determine if you have any serious or chronic physiological, emotional, or mental conditions. According to Nova Scotia Health Authority policy, the purpose of the assessment is to identify health issues, potential health risks, personal needs, and any infection control issues. It is also intended to assist you in caring for your own health and well-being.¹⁷³ If you decline to participate in the screening, the health care provider assessing you will note this in your health record.¹⁷⁴

If you have symptoms of mental illness, then you are supposed to be seen as soon as possible by the physician. Also, if you have a history of mental health problems, the doctor can refer you to a psychiatric consult as part of your assessment.

If you indicate “yes” to conditions listed on the “Admission Health Information Form” as potential infection control concerns, you will be isolated until cleared by a health services professional, such as a nurse or a physician.¹⁷⁵ (*Refer to section on “Infection Control”*). Special measures, including isolation measures, have been put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic; those measures are likely to change over the pandemic period. They should be clearly posted and all prisoners and staff should be made fully aware of the policies and how to report a breach of policy.

Are My Medical Records Confidential?

Your medical information and records are confidential and cannot legally be shared or disclosed outside the institution unless you authorize the disclosure. However, within the institution, health care staff are allowed to share specific health information with correctional staff if it is needed to help with your care. The health care staff have to tell you what information they are sharing with correctional staff.¹⁷⁶

Correctional staff are also allowed to obtain and document important health information as specified on the “Admission Health Information Form” so that they can address immediate medical conditions, and identify potential infection control concerns etc.¹⁷⁷

Access to Health Care Services

When you are admitted to a correctional facility the admitting officer must tell you how you can access health care services.¹⁷⁸ You may obtain access to health care services by putting in a request slip and request that staff file a written report about your injury/illness. Staff may make verbal requests in urgent situations.

The main times that you will access health services are:

- When you admitted to the jail;
- When you are in segregation (daily health monitoring is required);¹⁷⁹ and
- When you report an injury or illness.

The Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility has 24-hour on-site health care providers at the health clinic.¹⁸⁰ However, this does not mean that you will always have access to a doctor. At the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, the doctor is only on site for 3 hours, twice a week. Nurses are available the rest of the time, and after hours, from 11pm-7am, there will be a paramedic working on site.¹⁸¹ At the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility, a woman doctor will be available on Wednesdays if you are a woman and prefer to be seen by a physician of the same gender.¹⁸²

You are entitled to reasonable access to these health care providers. Part of this “reasonable access” is that correctional staff must tell health care providers when you have an urgent need or issue requiring immediate medical attention.¹⁸³

Because access to doctors is limited, and because the health clinic is not equipped to provide emergency care, referrals to outside medical agencies may be made on your behalf, if health care staff think it is needed. Correctional Services will arrange for you to be transported to these outside medical referrals.¹⁸⁴

Additionally, if you had any medical appointments or elective surgery scheduled before you were admitted to a correctional facility, the Facility General Practitioner should consider and review these appointments. The General Practitioner will evaluate whether it is necessary to attend the appointment outside the correctional facility. If the outside appointment is approved, Corrections may grant a temporary absence so that you can attend the appointment. If the procedure has any costs, you will be responsible for them.¹⁸⁵

What happens if I refuse treatment?

You do not have to accept medical treatment.¹⁸⁶ Before you receive medical treatment, health workers must ensure that you are consenting to the treatment. You can ask questions about your treatment, what risks are involved, and if there are any other options. If you are unconscious, staff can provide you with treatment if it is an emergency and your life is at risk, and they are not aware of prior wishes on your part not to be given the treatment in question.

The nurse or doctor should explain to you the consequence of refusing treatment. If you refuse medical treatment, then you will be asked to complete a *Refusal of Medical Treatment Form*. If you refuse to sign the form, the staff will complete the form. Once completed, the form will be placed in your file and a copy will be forwarded to health care.¹⁸⁷

Although you have a right to refuse treatment, you may be placed in isolation without your consent, or treated without your consent, in rare circumstances relating to communicable disease where a danger is presented to public health. *See the section on infectious diseases.*

What if I Require Medication?

General

The Central Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority is responsible for the distribution of medication in Nova Scotia's provincial prisons.¹⁸⁸ This means that while you are in custody you are not allowed to use or keep any of the medication that you received before being admitted to a correctional facility.¹⁸⁹ Any medication that you bring with you to a correctional facility will be processed by admitting staff and listed on your *Personal Property Declaration Form*.¹⁹⁰

If you need medication, you should mention this when you are first assessed by health care staff. Any required medication must be re-ordered by the doctor who is responsible for the correctional facility.¹⁹¹ They will do this after they confirm that you had a valid prescription before you were admitted to a correctional facility.¹⁹²

The Central Zone of the Nova Scotia Health Authority restricts access to certain medications according to a drug formulary that is different from the one that applies in the community. Because of this, they might prescribe you different medication than you are used to.¹⁹³ If you are not responding well to the medication that has been prescribed to you, fill out a *Health Care Request Form* and speak with the doctor.

Any prescription or non-prescription medications that were not issued by staff will be considered contraband.¹⁹⁴ The *Correctional Services Act* states that everyone who possesses contraband in a correctional facility is guilty of an offence.¹⁹⁵ If you are caught possessing medications that are not on your list of prescribed medications, you may be subject to criminal or disciplinary charges related to possession of contraband.

If you are caught “cheeking,” hoarding, trading or using medication for a reason other than the prescribed reason then health care, health care staff may review your prescribed medications,¹⁹⁶ and in some circumstances may decide to wean you off that particular medication. Under Correctional policy, weaning will be completed within a few days, up to a maximum of four weeks.

This is potentially a human rights issue. If you require access to medication to maintain your health, taking you off that medication may breach your right to security of the person under section 7 of the Charter and/or your right not to be discriminated against under section 15 of the Charter and Nova Scotia human rights law. Consult a legal aid lawyer, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, the Nova Scotia Ombuds Office, or (if you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans*) a representative from Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Over the Counter Medications, Vitamins and Dietary Supplements

Prisoner Health Services will not provide you with over the counter medications, vitamins, or dietary supplements unless the particular product is recommended to you by a physician for a diagnosed medical condition.¹⁹⁷

If you require over the counter medications, vitamins or dietary supplements, you must complete a “Health Care Request Form” in order to see a health care staff member. When health care staff receive the completed form, they will interview and assess you. If health care staff decides that you require an assessment by a General Practitioner, you will be placed on the General Practitioner list. After your assessment and diagnosis, the General Practitioner will complete a *Physician Order Sheet* with a complete order for the required over the counter medication, vitamins, or dietary supplement.¹⁹⁸

Benzodiazepine Restriction

Benzodiazepine is commonly prescribed to treat anxiety, insomnia, agitation, seizures, muscle spasms, or alcohol withdrawal. Policies of the Nova Scotia Health Authority limit the number and list of medications that will be available to you. The types of benzodiazepines that are available for use in correctional facilities are Diazepam and Clonazepam.

If you have a valid prescription for benzodiazepine medication, correctional facility health care staff should contact the on-call physician when you are first admitted. The physician will decide if you require this medication and, if so, will provide a medication order for an equal amount of Diazepam or Clonazepam.¹⁹⁹ If you are used to taking a different type of benzodiazepine, make sure you talk to health care staff about how Diazepam or Clonazepam will affect you differently.

Substitutions of certain drugs for others may or may not be justified. In some cases, **this may be a human rights issue** affecting your fundamental interest in making choices about treatment and your security of the person under section 7 of the Charter. Again, talk to a legal aid lawyer, the Human Rights Commission, Nova Scotia Ombuds Office, and/or representatives of Elizabeth Fry Societies.

Methadone Administration

If you are admitted to the Central Nova Scotia Corrections Facility and you are currently taking Methadone, you will have your prescribed regime adjusted and maintained while in custody.

It is important to know that the Prisoner Health Unit only continues Methadone treatment where treatment has already been started in the community. **This is arguably a human rights issue:** denying you treatment for a serious health condition (addiction) threatens your physical and psychological well-being as well as your ability to make choices about health care. These are rights protected under section 7 of the Charter. It may also be discrimination under both NS statutory human rights law and section 15 of the Charter to deny you this necessary treatment.

If you are already on a Methadone treatment program in the community, then in order to continue your treatment you will need to be assessed by health care staff.²⁰⁰

The maximum dose of Methadone that can be distributed to you under provincial correctional policy is 120mg/day, except in very rare situations. If your normal dose of methadone is more than 120mg/day, a formula will be applied to determine the proper amount that you should be given. If that number is more than 120mg/day then you will be weaned down to 120mg/day over time. If you are serving time on weekends or if you are serving an intermittent sentence, you should be given your full dose of Methadone without the formula adjustment.²⁰¹

This blanket rule of reduction in dosage raises human rights concerns, that prisoners are being denied their right to access health care without discrimination or arbitrary restrictions while in jail. You may wish to talk to a legal aid lawyer, Human Rights Commission, Ombuds or representative of Elizabeth Fry Societies if this has happened to you.

If you are accepted to the correctional facility Methadone Program, health care staff will get a urine sample from you for drug screening and to determine baseline vital signs. While you are under the care of the health care unit team, health care staff may also get random urine samples for drug screening on a monthly basis.²⁰²

Before you can participate in the Methadone Program, you must read and sign the “Methadone Treatment Plan.”²⁰³ You should be informed that any breach of the agreement will result in your Methadone treatment being stopped. There is no appeal process for the discontinuation of Methadone as a result of a clear breach of the treatment agreement.²⁰⁴ Denying you the right to **appeal a decision that threatens your physical and psychological well-being also raises concerns about human rights and safety.**

Narcan (Naloxone) Nasal Spray for Suspected or Confirmed Opioid Overdose

Corrections staff are responsible for administering Narcan Nasal Spray to anyone who is experiencing, or suspected to be experiencing, an opioid related medical emergency. The nasal spray is a synthetic drug that can temporarily reverse the opioid’s effect in anyone who is experiencing an overdose. **If you or anyone else is showing signs of a possible overdose, such as slow or irregular breathing, blue or purple fingernails and lips, deep snoring or gurgling, vomiting, or loss of consciousness or responsiveness, staff will call an emergency response.** They will contact Health Care or EHS and administer the Narcan Nasal spray. Staff will also provide appropriate First Aid and CPR if needed, monitor and provide support until further help arrives, and let medical staff know about any First Aid and Narcan Spray dosage that has been provided. Staff will then submit a report about the incident.²⁰⁵

The superintendent is responsible for ensuring that Narcan Nasal Spray kits are stored in a readily accessible location.²⁰⁶

Allergies/Epipen Administration for Severe Allergic Reaction

Health care staff must communicate in writing to the jail's dietician all of your food allergies. Your allergies will also be recorded in the "allergy space" on the "Medication Record Sheet" in red ink to alert the people giving out medication.

If you are allergic to bee stings, correctional staff will be alerted. Clearly written instructions should be given by health care staff to correctional staff for how to deal with these types of allergic reactions.²⁰⁷

Epipens should be stored and maintained in readily accessible locations throughout your correctional facility. Ask correctional staff where these locations are. If you are at risk for a severe allergic reaction and are out on a conditional release, Epipens should be carried by the staff who are escorting you.²⁰⁸

What If I Have Specific Dietary Needs?

Your dietary needs are to be assessed upon admission to a correctional facility. If it is needed, health care staff will complete a dietary referral and will forward it to Corrections Dietary. (See "*Prisoner Entitlements and Privileges: Meals.*")

Infection Control

If you present signs and symptoms of an infectious disease, as described on the Admission Health Information Form, you will be isolated in order to prevent the spread of suspected disease until you are cleared by health care staff.²⁰⁹ New policies have recently been introduced on testing, isolation and other prevention measures specific to the Covid-19 pandemic. Those policies may be subject to frequent changes over time as knowledge about Covid-19 and rates of infection in the community or facility change. These policies should be widely available to everyone in the facility and special efforts should be made to ensure everyone has access, regardless of reading ability or other issues affecting access to written materials.

All prisoners and staff should be able to take the evidence-based measures required to stop the spread of Covid-19 in facilities (e.g., frequent handwashing, and where required, access to testing, personal protective equipment, and self-isolation). It is also important that measures to combat Covid-19 are not more restrictive than is necessary to protect the health and safety of those within the facility.

If you have concerns about access to protective/preventive measures or being subject to isolation or other restrictions said to be because of Covid-19, **consult a legal aid lawyer, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, the Nova Scotia Ombuds Office, East Coast Prison Justice Society, or (if you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans) a representative from Elizabeth Fry Societies.**

Work Program Exemptions

If you are taking part in a work program and feel unable to work because you feel sick, you will need to be assessed by health care staff. If you are given a work exemption, it will stay in effect until you are reassessed by health care staff, or until the date indicated on the “Work Program Exemption Form.”²¹⁰

In order to get an exemption from a work program, you must complete the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility Health Care Request Form/Prisoner Health Care Complaint Form. When the physician receives the form, they will assess your health and give the results to the charge nurse. The charge nurse will then tell the correctional supervisor if you are unfit to work. Health care staff will then complete the Work Program Exemption Form, which will excuse you from the scheduled work.²¹¹

Pregnancies

If you are pregnant while in custody, you should let health care staff know. Those who are pregnant while at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility will have access to a Doula, through the Chebucto Family Centre. A Doula is someone from the community who is trained to support you throughout labour and delivery, as well as in the weeks before and after birth.²¹³ If you go into labour while in custody, you will be transferred to a hospital to give birth. After giving birth, you will be discharged by the hospital (usually within 3 days) and returned to prison.²¹⁴ The person designated to do so will then take custody of your child (see “*Mothers In Jail*”).

Mental Health Services

How Can I Receive Mental Health Treatment?

Corrections arguably owes a special duty to prisoners to facilitate their access to health care, as they cannot access health care independently. This is true of physical as well as mental health care.

If you are experiencing mental health problems you may request mental health services using the Health Care Request Form. If those services are not provided in a timely fashion, you can make a Health Care Complaint within the correctional facility, and/or a complaint to a health professional’s regulatory body (see below).

If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, you should be given timely access to an assessment by psychiatric services. Following the assessment, you may be referred to the Mentally Ill Prisoner Unit (MIOU) for treatment.²¹⁵ The MIOU is located within the East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH), which is attached to the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility.

The MIOU is classified as both a prison and a hospital. Because it is classified as a hospital, health care staff are, *in some circumstances*, allowed to force medications on you, according to the *Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act*.²¹⁶ The East Coast Forensic Hospital is designated as a psychiatric facility under the *Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act*. This means that a person may be involuntarily admitted and/or treated there or in the MIOU **only** if they are found to have a mental disorder, to be incapable of making decisions about their own treatment, and either to pose a risk of serious harm to self or others or to be facing likely physical or mental deterioration without treatment.²¹⁷ **You cannot be forcibly treated (except in very rare cases of emergency) unless health authorities have established (and can prove) that you lack capacity to make those decisions yourself.**²¹⁸

If you have been identified as having serious mental health issues, Prisoner Health Services are supposed to provide you with access to after hours and weekend emergency mental health services.²¹⁹

If you are demonstrating mental health issues after hours or on weekends, a Correctional Officer will bring you to the Prisoner Health Care Unit for an assessment. A health care provider, such as a nurse, will assess you and then contact the General Practitioner who is on call. The General Practitioner will then assess the need for emergency psychiatric referral. If the Practitioner thinks you need an Emergency Psychiatric Assessment, the on-call psychiatrist will be contacted. The psychiatrist may contact the MIOU if an urgent consultation is necessary, at which point you may be admitted to the MIOU.²²⁰

If you are thought to be at risk of hurting yourself, a health care provider may place you on suicide watch.²²¹

Suicide Watch

Health care providers will assess you and provide you with treatment if you are deemed at risk of suicide.²²² If you have been identified by health care providers as being suicidal, you will be placed on suicide watch until you are further assessed by a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist, in consultation with a mental health nurse, will determine whether or not the suicide watch will continue.²²³

When you are put on suicide watch, you will be given a “suicide gown” to wear and a “suicide blanket” to sleep with.²²⁴ You will also be given a mattress, but this can be taken away from you if staff believe you may use it to harm yourself.²²⁵ If your mattress is taken away, you will be given a “suicide mattress.”²²⁶ If you are placed in these conditions, you may insist on contacting a legal aid lawyer.

Dental Services

You should be given access to dental services in order to relieve pain and control infections.²²⁷ You can request dental services using the *Prisoner Health Dental Request Form*.²²⁸

Health care providers will assess you and document their findings in the health record before submitting the dental request form. If the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility dentist determines that you require a referral to a specialist, they must get pre-approval from the Manager before the treatment takes place.²²⁹ If you are denied access to specialist care and you believe you require it, you can make a health services complaint within the correctional facility, and/or a complaint to a professional regulatory body (*see below*).

Emergency dental services include treatment for the following:

- Abscesses;
- To reduce or control infection;
- Toothache;
- Tooth extraction; and
- Temporary filling to alleviate dental pain.

What if I have a complaint about lack of access to or quality of health care?

If you have a complaint about someone involved in health care, or about poor access to or quality of health care while in jail, you can file a complaint.²³⁰ To do this, you may use your institution's Health Services complaint process. If your institution does not have a Health Services complaint process, then you can use the Correctional Services complaint process to make a health services complaint. For information about the complaint process, see '*File a complaint within the jail*' in the *Remedies* section, PART V.

You can also file a complaint with the regulatory body of the person's profession. All health care professionals (doctors, nurses, dentists, psychiatrists, etc.) have an obligation to act professionally and ethically. Each profession has its own regulatory body, which protects the public by making sure that these codes of conduct are being followed. Since health care in provincial jails is the responsibility of the province, you will be looking to Nova Scotia regulatory bodies.²³¹ Their contact information is in this section of the handbook.

You can file a complaint about a specific act by a health care worker (something they *did*), or you can complain about an omission (something they *didn't do* that should have been done). If you haven't been able to get treatment for something, or haven't received proper care from a professional, or if they are treating you unethically, you can file a complaint.

Whenever you want to file a complaint, it is important to write down all important information about what happened. Your complaint should include things like dates, times, who was involved, and what happened.

What will happen if I file a complaint about a health professional to a regulatory body outside the jail?

Once you have filed a complaint to a regulatory body responsible for overseeing the conduct of health professionals, you may have to explain your complaint to a panel of people making the decision about whether the complaint is valid. The purpose of regulatory bodies is to monitor and regulate professionals, not to compensate people who have experienced the misconduct or incompetence. So even if your complaint is valid, you will not receive any money. However, the professional may be penalized for what they have done. Possible outcomes include fines for the health care provider, training courses, or being suspended from working for a period of time. In very serious cases, the person might no longer be allowed to practice. In all cases, remember to carefully document all relevant incidents.

Even though you will not get compensated personally, filing a complaint with a regulatory body can be a very useful tool in making sure that whatever happened to you stops and does not happen to anyone else. It is important to make sure that health care workers act professionally and ethically, and to ensure that you are treated with respect.

Doctors

If you have a complaint about a doctor, you can file it with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. The Canadian Medical Association's *Code of Ethics* says that doctors must take reasonable steps to avoid harm to the patient, not discriminate against any patients, respect the right of a patient to accept or reject any medical treatment, and protect the personal health information of the patient.

You can begin a complaint to the College by filing a complaint form.²³² College staff can help you to prepare the complaint. Once a complaint is received, the College forwards a copy to the physician, requesting a response. The College arranges for additional information, such as hospital records or records from other physicians, to be obtained.

Put as much information as you can in your complaint, including:

- your name;
- the name of the physician;
- any dates, times, and/or locations where the behaviour complained about took place;
- any supporting documents you might have (which may include medical records).

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia

Suite 5005 - 7071 Bayers Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada B3L 2C2

E-mail: info@cpsns.ns.ca (*note: complaints are not accepted by e-mail*)

Phone: 902-422-5823

Toll-Free: 1-877-282-7767

Fax: 902-422-7476

Investigations Department

Fax: 902-422-XXXX

The College will investigate the complaint and present the evidence to its Complaints Investigation Committee. This Committee will then review the material and make a decision. It is made up of four physicians and one member of the public. It can recommend: no further action, counselling, or a reprimand. If it is serious enough, they can refer the complaint to the Hearing Committee.

In a hearing, evidence is given under oath, there must be full disclosure of documents and the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses. In the end, the Hearing Committee makes a finding on the guilt or innocence of the physician.

The Committee has the authority to impose one or more of the following orders: revocation of license; suspension of license; fine; or, reprimand. Various conditions may also be imposed. Physicians have the right to appeal any order from Council to the Court of Appeal.

Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists are also regulated by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. If you have a complaint about a psychiatrist, you can file a complaint using the same process as you would for physicians.

Nurses

Complaints against a nurse can be sent to the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia. A complaint must be in writing and signed. It can be about the nurse's conduct, actions, competence, character, fitness, health, or ability. You should include:²³³

- your name;
- the name of the nurse(s);
- details of the alleged misconduct, including dates, times and locations;
- any other supporting documents.

CEO/Registrar Sue Smith

College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia

Suite 300

120 Western Parkway

Bedford, Nova Scotia B4B 0V2

Email: conduct@crnns.ca

Telephone: 902.491.9744 (1.800.565.9744) ext. 232

When you file a complaint, Professional Conduct Services (PCS) will decide whether to investigate. If they decide to investigate, you will be given the name of the investigator and the nurse will be sent a copy of the complaint. The nurse will be invited to respond. PCS will look at the written evidence and decide to either: dismiss the complaint or refer it to the Complaints Committee. If the complaint implies a serious health issue related to the nurse's actions, it will be sent to Fitness and Practice.

These committees decide what will happen to the nurse(s). They can either dismiss the complaint, order that conditions be imposed on the nurse, or they may order a reprimand, fine, or any other order that they see fit. In the alternative, either Committee may dismiss the complaint.

Psychologists

If you have a complaint against a psychologist, you can file it with the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP).²³⁴ The required complaint form can be obtained by contacting the NSBEP.

The Registrar (Please mark your envelope: Complaint Issue)

Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

Suite 455, 5991 Spring Garden Road

Halifax, NS B3H 1Y6

Telephone: (902) 423-2238

Once you've filed your complaint, the registrar will notify the psychologist named in the complaint (provided you signed the release that is mailed to you with the complaint form). The psychologist can submit a response, including any explanations or representations. The investigation committee will investigate the matter, and their decision be given in writing to the Registrar.

The Committee is responsible for evaluating the merits of any complaint brought against a licensed member. If the Committee determines that there are enough grounds to initiate proceedings against a member, the matter shall be referred to a formal hearing.

The formal hearing will assess the validity of allegations of professional misconduct or incompetence against any member and to determine the remedy where it finds the member has committed an act of professional misconduct or has demonstrated incompetence.

Dentists

If you have a complaint about the care provided by a dentist or dental assistant, you can file it with the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia²³⁵. A written, signed complaint must be submitted by mail to:

Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia
Suite 103
210 Waterfront Dr.
Bedford, NS B4A 0H3
Tel: 902-420-0083

You should include:

- Your name and contact information
- The name and address of the dentist involved
- The issues of your complaint
- The name and address of any and all other dentists you consulted
- Any dental records you may have in your possession

Complaints are acknowledged by letter.

A copy of your complaint letter is sent to the licensee, requesting your dental records including radiographs, photographs and any other information, a typed version of the progress notes, and a letter of response to the allegations from the licensee. You will be given the opportunity to review and reply to the licensee's letter of response to your complaints.

The results of the investigation will be reviewed by the Complaints Committee, which will render a decision for the case. The committee may dismiss the complaint; refer the complaint to the Discipline Committee; or caution, reprimand, or counsel the practitioner. Once the Committee makes a decision, they will give you and the practitioner a copy of the decision.

Other Regulated Health Professionals

The Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network provides a complete list of all 22 regulated health professions in Nova Scotia, with links to each profession's website where further information can be found on how to file a complaint against a health professional. This list of health professions can be found at www.nsrhpn.ca/member-listing/

PART IV: RESTRICTIVE MEASURES



Beyond the obvious restrictions on your rights and liberties that prison necessarily imposes, there are ways your rights and/or liberties can be further restricted. This section outlines some of those, and begins to suggest what you can do to protect yourself and your peers.

Use of Force

Correctional staff must restrict the use of force to that which is necessary to carry out their duties, and any use of force must be reasonable.²³⁶ Corrections staff may use force in order to:

- Maintain custody and control over you, e.g. to prevent you from escaping;
- Maintain order and control of a correctional facility, e.g. if you attempt to assault a staff member or another person;
- Prevent you from committing self-destructive behaviour, e.g. if you are trying to harm themselves or others;
- Conduct a search, e.g. for the search and seizure of contraband;
- Prevent the destruction of property, e.g. if a prisoner is attempting to break something.²³⁷

If force is used, it still has to be reasonable in the circumstances. Whenever force is used against you or another prisoner, the staff must file a report with the superintendent. The superintendent must then review the report to determine if the force was reasonably necessary.²³⁸ **If you make an allegation of excessive use of force by a staff member, an investigation will normally be required.**²³⁹

Close Confinement

What is close confinement?

Close confinement is also known as “segregation,” “the hole” and “solitary confinement.” **Close confinement is a status, not just a place.** If you are placed into close confinement, you are separated from the general prison population and isolated in a cell. Your freedom inside the prison is restricted. Segregated prisoners do not have the same level of access to the rest of the prison, programs, yard, gym, etc.

A few years ago, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia ruled that **any individual who is kept in their cell for twenty-three hours a day should be considered to be in “close confinement”, regardless of whether they are moved to a special “segregation cell”.**²⁴⁰ In that case, federal prisoners kept in their cells for 23 hours a day (while held in a provincial correctional facility) made *habeas corpus* applications. The applications were successful. The court held that the prisoners were in close confinement / segregation despite being in their own cells, *and* that their confinement was illegal because they were denied proper review and/or a reasonable justification for the close confinement.

While that decision dealt specifically with federal prisoners on remand in a provincial facility, others in similar conditions may argue, similarly, that they are subject to “close confinement” to challenge their treatment by way of *habeas corpus* (see chapter VI), or to seek other remedies described in chapter VI.

Recent changes in the law on close / solitary confinement

Courts of appeal in other provinces (British Columbia and Ontario) have ruled that conditions in federal prisons similar to “close confinement” violate prisoners’ constitutional rights under sections 7 and 12 of the Charter.²⁴¹ These courts held that laws permitting “prolonged and indeterminate” confinement for **22 hours or more a day** without meaningful human contact, in federal prisons were unconstitutional. In part, this was because there was no adequate system of independent review of decisions to place prisoners in solitary. The Ontario Court of Appeal held that even with independent review, solitary confinement longer than 15 days is “cruel or unusual treatment.”

Both the BC and Ontario courts also indicated that solitary confinement may be illegal even when it is for less than 15 days, where the person being held has pre-existing mental health conditions likely to be seriously worsened by solitary – a matter to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The federal government has decided not to appeal the BC and Ontario decisions to the Supreme Court of Canada. The BC and Ontario rulings about the unconstitutionality of solitary confinement in federal prisons do not have a direct impact on Nova Scotia’s provincial jails. However, those decisions may support arguments that aspects of Nova Scotia’s “close confinement” policies are also unconstitutional.

Therefore, if you are kept in a cell for more than 22 hours a day, whether or not it is called a segregation cell, a court may recognize this as “close confinement” and look into whether there is legal justification for such severe treatment. It may inquire, also, into whether there is a process of review that is sufficiently independent of correctional authorities. Where you are confined these conditions for 15 days or more, this is arguably “cruel and unusual treatment” prohibited under section 12 of the Charter. If you have concerns that you have been subject to illegal solitary confinement, you should contact a legal aid lawyer.

Even if in some very limited circumstances close confinement may be constitutional, **people in close confinement have a right to be treated in a safe and humane manner and to be subject to the least restrictive measures possible. Close confinement is an extreme measure and should only be used when there are no other reasonable alternatives.**²⁴² Because of its severity, correctional staff have a duty to return people in close confinement to the general population at the earliest possible time.²⁴³ Section 7 of the Charter places a “least restrictive intervention” principle onto the interpretation of correctional law and policy.²⁴⁴ Moreover, as has been established in the court challenges in the federal prison context described above, certain procedural protections are required where solitary/close confinement is used, like periodic independent review of a decision to place someone in solitary/close confinement. If you have questions, contact a legal aid lawyer.

When might I be placed in close confinement?

Disciplinary versus administrative close confinement

According to Nova Scotia law, you can be placed in close confinement for a few different reasons. Some of these are administrative reasons, meaning that they have to do with the order or security of the jail, and/or the safety of individuals (those confined or those in general population). You could alternatively be placed in close confinement for disciplinary reasons (as a punishment).

Administrative close confinement

You may be placed in administrative close confinement for the following reasons:

- If, in the opinion of the superintendent, you are in need of protection; ²⁴⁵
- If, in the opinion of the superintendent, you must be placed in close confinement in order to protect the security of the correctional institution or the safety of others. ²⁴⁶
- If you request to be placed in close confinement. ²⁴⁷

Alternatively, you may be placed in administrative close confinement where it is alleged (but has not yet been decided, i.e. this is not yet “discipline”) that you have breached a rule of a “serious” nature, for instance:

- Where it is alleged that you have committed assaults or threats to assault another person, and/or have been smuggling or in possession of contraband. ²⁴⁸

Disciplinary close confinement

According to the law in Nova Scotia, you can also be placed in close confinement if you have received a **disciplinary ‘penalty’** of close confinement. This is to be reserved for serious misconduct and is to be strictly time-limited according to the seriousness of the offence (*see below*). ²⁴⁹

Dry celling

Another type of close confinement is “dry celling”. You may be ‘dry celled’ on suspicion of hiding contraband in your body. In a dry cell, everything you eat and excrete is monitored by jail staff, often by video as well. ²⁵⁰

Staff are only allowed to dry-cell you if they have reasonable suspicion that you have contraband hidden in your body. **Staff are not allowed to dry cell you for punishment.** If this has happened to you, please see the *Remedies* section in Part VI.

How long can I spend in close confinement?

Disciplinary Close Confinement

According to NS correctional policy, if you are in disciplinary close confinement, the maximum period you can spend in close confinement is determined by the level of infraction: ²⁵¹

- For level one infractions, the maximum is 3 hours;
- for level two, it is 7 days; and
- for level three, it is 10 days.

If you are placed in close confinement as a result of being found to have committed misconduct, you may be placed in close confinement for no more than 10 days, unless the Executive Director, Correctional Services, approves further confinement up to 15 days.²⁵² After that, a further continuous period of close confinement is prohibited unless approved by the Executive Director (or someone who has been delegated this power by the Executive Director).²⁵³

See the description of Ontario and BC Court of Appeal cases above, indicating that solitary / close confinement beyond 15 days is unconstitutional.

Administrative Close Confinement

According to Correctional policy, you can be put in administrative close confinement for an undefined period of time.²⁵⁴ This conflicts with international standards: see, e.g., *Mandela Rules* 43-45. More important, as discussed above, it conflicts with decisions of courts of appeal in other provinces that prolonged and indefinite solitary confinement (according to the Ontario Court of Appeal, past 15 days) conflicts with human rights protected under sections 7 and 12 of the Charter. Nova Scotia law and policy relating to close confinement arguably must change. If you are held in close confinement for any period while suffering from mental health problems, and in any case if you are held beyond 15 days, you should contact legal aid.

What procedures must be followed, and what rights do I have while in close confinement/ segregation?

Under the current laws and policies, regardless of whether you are in close confinement for administrative or disciplinary purposes, **the superintendent must review your situation after 24 hours to determine whether or not close confinement should be continued.**²⁵⁵ **After that, the superintendent must continue to review close confinement at least once every 5 days.**²⁵⁶ **The superintendent must request permission from the Executive Director for continuation of close confinement beyond 10 days (7 days for youth).**²⁵⁷ You should ask staff, the deputy superintendent or the superintendent to see the documents produced through these mandatory reviews.

For both administrative and disciplinary close confinement

- Because close confinement is such an extreme restrictive measure, there are numerous rules governing its use.
- You should receive at least 30 minutes each day outside of your cell for recreation and exercise. If you are denied this exercise you are entitled to written reasons for the denial.²⁵⁸
- You should be permitted to shower.²⁵⁹
- You can receive and send letters, although your writing materials will usually be removed when you're finished writing.²⁶⁰
- Even if you are not under self-harm watch, administration may implement a "no sharps" behaviour management strategy, which must be reviewed daily.²⁶¹

While you are placed in disciplinary close confinement, your visiting privileges will be suspended.²⁶² Your visitors should be notified of the suspension by the shift supervisor. When you are in administrative (non-punitive) close confinement, you may receive visitors if correctional authorities allow it.²⁶³

- **You always retain the right to contact your lawyer, whether or not you are in close confinement. You should not be denied access to your lawyer while in close confinement.**²⁶⁴
- **If you have medical concerns, you must receive timely medical attention even if the jail demands that you remain in close confinement.** If a health professional is on duty, they are required to visit you daily.²⁶⁵

Rights specific to being placed in administrative segregation

- Your placement in administrative segregation must be approved by the captain or unit supervisor.²⁶⁶
- If you are being placed in segregation for non-disciplinary reasons, you still should be provided with clothing and amenities, meals, exercise, library access, ability to see the superintendent upon request, canteen and personal visits.²⁶⁷ Reasons must be documented by correctional staff when access to the same programs or privileges as the general population are denied.²⁶⁸

Things staff must do when placing you in administrative segregation:

- Correctional Services staff must notify the captain or unit supervisor if they think you require administrative segregation;
- Correctional Services staff must document on an information report the reasons they are requesting you be placed in administrative segregation. These reasons must be forwarded to the unit supervisor or captain and also placed in your file.²⁶⁹

What can I do if my rights have been violated?

Ordinarily, where you suspect your rights have been violated, you must use the internal complaint process in place at the jail before you consider taking the matter to court. In other words, a court is unlikely to grant you a remedy if you have not gone through the internal remedy procedure first.

However, placement in close confinement, and/or a change to your security level resulting in more restrictive conditions may be challenged by way of a *habeas corpus* application without the need to first make an internal complaint. This is the case where you can establish that the internal complaints process does not offer an “adequate alternative remedy” to a court-based *habeas corpus* challenge. In addition, where institutional conditions present a serious or urgent threat to your health or well being (for instance, in a case where prisoners in a Temporary Detention Unit were regularly exposed to extreme cold temperatures in winter),²⁷⁰ a court may allow you to pursue your rights on judicial review, without the need to exhaust the internal complaints process first. (See the section on *Remedies* for more information).

If you wish to explore the options for asserting your rights, there are a number of steps you can take for help. See pages 100-110 for contact information for the following resources:

1. Contact your lawyer if you have retained one.
2. If you do not have a lawyer and there are charges pending, you should put in a request to see Legal Aid.
3. Notify the Ombuds Office to inform them of any suspected violation of your rights.
4. Contact the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.
5. For women, non-binary and trans* prisoners, contact the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies' information line at 1-844-379-7624, or Elizabeth Fry Societies of Mainland Nova Scotia at (902) 454-5041 or Cape Breton at (902) 539-6165.
6. Inform representatives of the East Coast Prison Justice Society so that they can gather information for systemic (institution-wide) human rights advocacy.

By sharing your situation with East Coast Prison Justice and/or Elizabeth Fry Society representatives, you can be part of our wider efforts to ensure correctional law and policy respects prisoners' human rights (“systemic advocacy”).

Transfers

What do I need to know about transfers?

You can be transferred to another correctional institution for a number of reasons including the following: if there are too many people at your current institution; for security; for health care purposes; for humanitarian or rehabilitative purposes; or because of a relationship with a staff member.²⁷¹ You can also be transferred to a hospital or psychiatric facility for treatment.²⁷²

If you are transferred to a hospital or psychiatric facility, you are still considered to be in custody. The time that you spend there will be counted the same way it would if you were in jail. **You do have the right to refuse treatment unless you have been deemed incapable of making treatment decisions because you are unable to understand and appreciate the information relevant to the decision.**

What kinds of transfers are there and can I object to a decision to transfer me involuntarily?

All types of transfers fit into one of three categories – voluntary, involuntary, and emergency. However, there are a number of factors that further subdivide transfers into two basic categories. The law takes some of the differences into account, and sometimes different rules can apply to these.

Voluntary transfers: Transfers that are initiated by you when you request to be moved to a different jail, usually in another region but, in some cases, even in another country of which you are a citizen.

International transfers: These transfers are not the same as extraditions or deportations. They are an example of a type of voluntary transfer to which a distinct set of legal rules apply. You will likely need legal, consular and/or government assistance in order to apply for this type of transfer.

What can I do if my rights are violated?

You have the right to receive in writing from the institutional head the appropriate complaint procedure related to transfers. It is important that you use this complaint process if you feel the decision is wrong.

Ordinarily, a court is unlikely to grant a remedy to you if you have not exhausted the institution's internal remedy procedure first. However, if you are facing transfer to a higher security environment, more restrictive of your liberty, then you may be able to challenge this by way of a *habeas corpus* application without exhausting the internal complaints process first. (See PART VI)

Other steps for help:

Contact legal aid for advice. Or, contact the Ombuds Office (1-888-465-1100) and inform them of the violation. If you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans*, contact the CAEFS Nova Scotia information line at 1-844-379-7624, or Elizabeth Fry Societies of Mainland Nova Scotia at (902) 454-5041 or Cape Breton at (902) 539-6165.

Disciplinary Charges

What is the purpose of the disciplinary system?

The disciplinary system is in place as a tool for the jail administration to ensure order, security and effectiveness.²⁷³ According to Correctional Services, the disciplinary system is designed to make sure your behaviour meets reasonable expectations of the correctional facility, to encourage personal growth and to impact your behaviour and development.²⁷⁴

Staff must try to deal reasonably with a situation before charges are laid for misconduct. But they are legally allowed to take more severe disciplinary action if they consider the misconduct to be serious enough.²⁷⁵

What are disciplinary offences?

In Nova Scotia, offences are listed in the ***Correctional Services Regulations***.²⁷⁶ They include, among others:

- bribery,
- gambling,
- assaults, and
- contraband.

Offences are categorized into three levels by their seriousness and the degree of responsibility.²⁷⁷

- **Level One** offences are “minimal” breaches of the rules or regulations (neither serious nor malicious).
- **Level Two** offences are “more serious” breaches..
- **Level Three** offences are “the most serious” breaches, said to show blatant disregard for security, rules or property and to often amount to offences under the criminal code.²⁷⁸

For example, a contraband offence can range from possession of more than the allotted amount of food (Level One) to selling weapons or drugs (Level Three).²⁷⁹ Even if an offence is criminal, it still may be subject to disciplinary action.²⁸⁰

What happens if I am charged with an infraction or misconduct?

After every alleged breach of rule, a disciplinary report must be filed and **you have a right to get a copy of this disciplinary report that should explain which rule you are charged with breaching.**²⁸¹ This information can only be withheld from you if there is good reason to believe the information will jeopardize safety or disrupt the running of the correctional facility.²⁸² Also, you cannot be given a formal disciplinary penalty for misconduct in the correctional facility other than by the superintendent in accordance with the *Correctional Services Act and Regulations*.²⁸³

If you are charged with an offence (Level Two or Level Three), you:

1. Must be informed by the Superintendent of the nature of the charge and then conduct a hearing to decide whether or not you committed the infraction or misconduct with which you are charged.²⁸⁴
2. The matter will be referred to the disciplinary adjudicator, the deputy superintendent.²⁸⁵
3. An adjudicator will then hear your case where you can explain your actions.
 - a. Your case should be heard within 24 hours, when possible.²⁸⁶ Where the investigation and adjudication cannot be done within 24 hours, and you are being held in close confinement, the period of your close confinement might be extended.²⁸⁷
 - b. You have the right to be present at all stages of the hearing.²⁸⁸ You may be denied this right where there are reasonable grounds to believe that your presence would threaten the safety of someone present at the hearing. Moreover, you may be removed from the hearing if your presence is deemed disruptive.²⁸⁹ You must be given written reasons for a decision to exclude you from the hearing.²⁹⁰ You should demand such reasons. Exclusion from your hearing is a very serious limitation on your basic rights and should only occur on the clearest of justifications.
 - c. The following procedures must apply when conducting your adjudication hearing:²⁹¹
 - i. the charge(s) must be read to you and the adjudicator must take the action necessary to ensure you understand the charge(s).
 - ii. a guilty or not guilty plea must be entered on the charge(s). When you plead not guilty, all evidence pertaining to the incident must be presented, allowing you to make a statement, call a witness, and cross examine a witness (unless cross examination is deemed a threat to the safety of the witness or disruptive to institutional security or order).

4. If you plead 'not guilty,' the adjudicator may postpone the hearing until the reporting staff or other witnesses are interviewed and based on the review, it will make a determination about your guilt.
 - a. The adjudicator (the deputy superintendent)²⁹² must make a determination as to your guilt or innocence based on all evidence presented, measured by the standard of "a balance of probabilities." This standard means "more likely than not."²⁹³
5. If you plead guilty or are found guilty, the adjudicator must make a recommendation about the appropriate disposition or disciplinary penalty, based on the circumstances of the offence and your background and character.²⁹⁴ Review and approval of recommendations made by the adjudicator is restricted to the superintendent.²⁹⁵ This means that only the superintendent can make the final decision about your penalty.
6. All decisions of the adjudicator and the reasons for the decisions must be recorded and include: ²⁹⁶
 - a. summary of details of the hearing
 - b. suggested penalties to be imposed by the superintendent

Disciplinary Penalties

The range of penalties that can be imposed include:

- Withdrawal of privileges, such as ²⁹⁷
 - recreation (but the right to exercise outside for at least 30 minutes per day is not a privilege, but a right, and cannot be taken away from you)
 - canteen
 - visits (see section 95(3) of the Correctional Services Regulations)
 - telephone calls (but the right to telephone calls with your spiritual advisor, your lawyer, a representative of the Office of the Ombuds, a representative of the Human Rights Commission, is not a privilege, but a right, and cannot be taken away from you.)
 - correspondence
- Performance of work
- Close confinement ²⁹⁸
 - you may be placed in close confinement for no longer than 10 days. After that, special authorization for further confinement up to 15 days must be obtained from the Director of Correctional Services. Close confinement beyond 15 days can only occur with further approval of the Executive Director or their delegate (see the discussion of close confinement, including Charter rights issues, above);
 - you may be placed in room confinement in your dormitory or cell, or designated segregation areas;
 - if you have already been in close confinement prior to the adjudication, you must have those days counted towards any close confinement penalty imposed by the adjudicator;

- All requests for extensions of close confinement up to and/or beyond 15 days must be accompanied by copies of the 24 hour and five-day reviews.²⁹⁹
- Restorative justice³⁰⁰
 - this can include paying to repair damage you have caused, a letter of apology, and written recognition of your inappropriate actions and a plan for change.
- Forfeiture of remission³⁰¹
- Assignment of extra work duties that are not a part of the regular routine³⁰²
- Having to pay for damages to facility or property of staff or other prisoners that resulted from misconduct. Payment can come from your trust account.³⁰³

Limits on withdrawal of privileges following disciplinary adjudication: ³⁰⁴

- under Level I, the loss of privileges must not exceed three hours
- under Level II, the loss of privileges must not exceed five days
- under Level III, the loss of privileges must not exceed ten days for adult prisoners and seven days for youth
- usually only one disciplinary charge will be laid against you for a single incident of rule-breaking.

Will the police be involved in my charge?

If you are alleged to have committed a serious offence, such as an action that is defined as criminal by the *Criminal Code of Canada*, then police may be called and a Crown prosecutor may proceed with 'outside' charges against you. If police do become involved, the decision to proceed with an internal disciplinary charge may be delayed in order to allow the police time to investigate. You may also be segregated while the investigation is being completed.

If you are charged in court with committing an offence within the institution, even if you are already serving a provincial sentence, you may also be considered a remand prisoner until your court appearances are finished in relation to the new charge.

How can I appeal the outcome of a hearing?

When a penalty is imposed, you have 10 business days to write to the superintendent to request a review of the penalty. To do so, you require form 5.04.00 – A (speak to an officer about beginning the process).³⁰⁵ If the penalty was imposed by the superintendent, then an appeal can be written to the Executive Director.³⁰⁶ The Superintendent or the Executive Director will have 10 business days to submit a response.

Reasons for an appeal must include one or more of the following:

- The decision was not made in accordance with regulations, policies or procedures.
- The penalty is disproportionate to the misconduct committed.
- The penalty consists of a forfeiture of currently accumulated remission days. (This means that some of your early release days that you have earned have been taken away; you may argue, for instance, that this was an inappropriate penalty, disproportionate to the misconduct.)
- There is an error in the report.
- There are facts that, if they had been known at the time, would have affected the decision.³⁰⁷

Temporary Disciplinary Measures

Correctional staff may enforce, change or withdraw temporary measures to address situations where you/others in jail are thought to have broken a rule or regulation.³⁰⁸ According to Correctional Services, these temporary measures are used to teach self-control.³⁰⁹

Temporary measures which may be taken when you breach a rule are:³¹⁰

- verbal warnings (these will only be used to address Level 1 misconduct);
- written warnings (these will only be used to address Level 1 misconduct);
- temporary removal of any or all privileges for up to three hours;
- cell or room confinement for up to three hours.

An ADSO, unit supervisor, OIC or Captain may, as a response to Level II or III report of conduct:³¹¹

- revoke or modify a temporary measure;
- impose another temporary measure;
- pending the outcome of the disciplinary investigation, lengthen the time you are placed in close confinement, including in segregation if the allegation is of a serious nature.

Your rights in relation to temporary disciplinary measures taken against you:

- a. At the time the temporary measure is enforced, you must be informed by the correctional staff of the rule you are being charged with breaching.³¹²
- b. Staff must record the relevant incident and their response in a disciplinary report.³¹³
- c. Any changes to your temporary measure punishment must also be documented on the disciplinary report.³¹⁴
- d. Any extension in room or cell close confinement, including segregation, must be reviewed.³¹⁵
- e. If you have reached or are likely to reach the usual or maximum close confinement penalty prior to an adjudication, you should be released from close confinement prior to the adjudication and the disciplinary report updated accordingly.³¹⁶

Searches

What is a search?

There are several different kinds of searches of your body.³¹⁷

A Frisk Search: A hand search of a clothed person where the hands of the staff member are run over the clothing of the person.

A Hand-Held Detector Search: A search of a clothed person where an approved hand-held detector (portable scanning device) is run over the person in close proximity without touching the person. The search technique for the hand-held detector is the same as the frisk search.

A Pat Search: A hand search of a clothed person where the hands of the staff member are run over the clothing of the person. The person is required to raise, lower, and open outer garments to permit visual inspection, and the person is required to open their mouth, run their fingers through their own hair, display the soles of the feet, and present open hands.

A Strip Search: A visual inspection of your naked body. During the course of a strip search, the staff member may also require you to open your mouth, show the soles of your feet, open your hands and arms, and allow the staff member to run their hands through your hair. You may be required to lift folds of skin and to bend over to allow for a visual inspection of your anal area.

Your rights in relation to strip searches: A strip search can only be performed in a private area out of sight of everyone except the staff member of the same gender performing the search and one other staff member who acts as a witness. Men cannot strip search women. During a strip search, the witness should only be observing the staff member, if they can see you, they should be of the same gender as you.³¹⁸ Strip searches must avoid undue embarrassment or humiliation and must be recorded.³¹⁹

Elizabeth Fry Societies and East Coast Prison Justice Society recognize that being strip searched is difficult, particularly if you have experienced trauma in the past. Strip searching must be limited to situations where it is reasonably justified by concerns about institutional safety and security.

A Body Cavity Search: An examination of rectal / vaginal body cavities.

Your rights in relation to body cavity searches: Body cavity searches can only be undertaken by a qualified medical practitioner acting under a court order.³²⁰

When and how can I be searched?

Before your first search, **staff owe to you an explanation of search policies and procedures**, which includes an instructional video.³²¹ You are initially strip searched when you enter a provincial jail.³²² You will also usually be required to shower and you will be given institutional clothing to wear.³²³

Routine searches without individualized suspicion can be undertaken in certain circumstances. These must be limited to what is reasonably required for safety and security purposes. **It can only include strip searches if there is reasonable suspicion that you had likely access to contraband that can be hidden on the body.**³²⁴

Any authorized staff member is allowed to approve a search at any time after the initial strip search, **if they have reasonable grounds to believe you are hiding contraband, weapons or evidence to an offence on your person or in your belongings.**³²⁵

Who can search me?

Only woman staff are allowed to search woman prisoners and only staff of the same gender as you can perform a strip search (whether you identify as a man or a woman).³²⁶

All searches require another staff member to be present as a witness, except in emergency situations. For non-strip searches, the staff member who acts as a witness does not have to be the same gender as the prisoner being searched. However, where the search is a strip search, the witness must be of the same gender as the prisoner being searched, unless it is possible “to position themselves to observe the staff member completing the search” without seeing the prisoner.³²⁷

Can jail staff search everyone?

An authorized staff member can allow a search of any staff member, officer or visitor, and any of their property that is on the premises, if they have reasonable grounds to believe that that person is carrying evidence relating to the commission of an offence or attempting to bring an unauthorized substance into the jail.³²⁸ That means that if someone is visiting you, there is a possibility that they could be searched.³²⁹

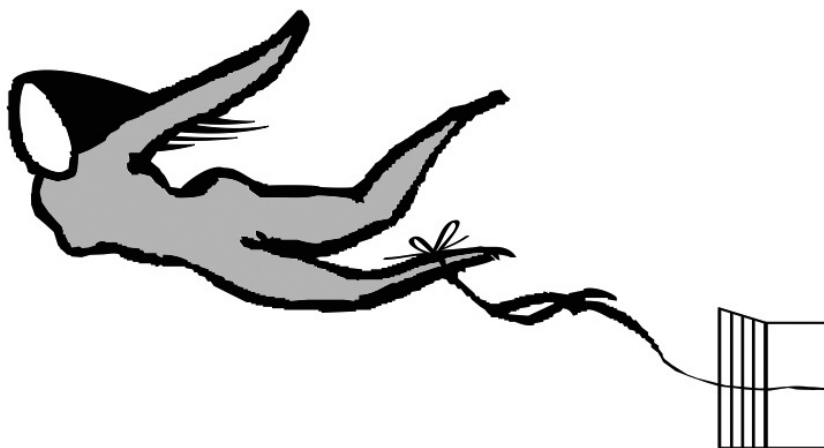
You should ensure that your visitors also know search procedures, in case they are asked to be searched prior to a visit. If the superintendent decides to search your visitor(s), they are not required to submit to it. **Visitors may refuse any search.** You should ensure they know, however, that if they do not agree to a search, the visit will likely be denied.³³⁰

What should you do if your rights have been violated?

The same advice that applies to violations of rights with respect to issues discussed earlier in the manual applies to this issue. Steps you can take for help:

- Contact a lawyer,
- Contact the Ombuds Office,
- Contact the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission,
- If you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans*, contact a representative of the Canadian Elizabeth Fry Societies (Mainland or Cape Breton),
- Inform representatives of the East Coast Prison Justice Society so that they can gather information for systemic (institution-wide) human rights advocacy.

PART V: CONDITIONAL RELEASE



Overview

What is Conditional Release?

There is a lot to know about getting back into the community after you have been released. This part of the manual will cover some of the issues related to releases from jail after you have served part of your provincial sentence. **This section does not apply to those who are remanded in provincial jails while they await trial or sentencing.**

Conditional release/temporary absence is any authorized absence from jail during the term of a jail sentence. Absences can range from brief emergency hospital visits to being permitted to leave jail and complete your term of imprisonment by reporting to a parole officer while living in your own community. Temporary absences are intended to help your rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

While much of the discussion so far may seem geared towards trying to make sure your rights are not violated in jail, everyone working on this project is interested in assisting people to get out as soon as possible with their rights respected and spirits intact.

Temporary Absences

A temporary absence is the commonly used term for a “conditional release”, granted to a person in custody. A temporary absence is required whenever you leave the grounds of a correctional facility for a specified time.³³¹ Temporary absences may be escorted or unescorted. An escorted temporary absence will include as a condition that one or more peace officers accompany you during the absence. An unescorted temporary absence is where no escorting staff accompanies you during the release.³³² If you are on an unescorted temporary absence you may be required to check in with a parole officer periodically.³³³

Are There Conditions Attached to a Temporary Absence?

If you are approved for a temporary absence, there will be a number of conditions that you will have to follow while you are off-site. You will receive a temporary absence certificate, which you must read and sign to acknowledge the understanding and acceptance of these conditions.³³⁴

Can a Temporary Absence be Cancelled?

Temporary absences can be revoked or suspended when the conditions outlined on your certificate are breached.³³⁵ If this happens, you will have to return to jail immediately. If you do not go back to jail immediately, correctional authorities can issue a warrant of committal, which is an order to have you arrested and returned to jail.³³⁶ If you think that you were complying with the conditions, you should file an appeal saying so.³³⁷ This could lead to an investigation. If the investigation finds that you have not violated any of the conditions of your temporary absence, then the absence may be re-instated.

Your temporary absence can also be taken away if the grounds for authorizing the absence have changed or no longer exist, or if the case has been reassessed based on information that could not reasonably have been provided when the absence was authorized.³³⁸

Your temporary absence can also be suspended for disciplinary reasons. In that case, the temporary absence can be taken away as a result of a misconduct, infraction or further charges. The temporary absence can be given back to you if you are found not guilty of the disciplinary charge, or it can be given back to you with stricter conditions.³³⁹

Types of Temporary Absences and Eligibility Requirements

Facility staff should provide you with relevant information, including information on the types of leaves available, the applications process, and eligibility criteria.³⁴⁰

The three types of temporary absences are for:

1. Medical purposes;
2. Humanitarian purposes; and
3. Reintegration or rehabilitative purposes, including education and employment.³⁴¹

To get a temporary absence, you must meet the eligibility requirements and your sentence must be less than two years. **If you are being held under the *Immigration Act*, if you are on remand, or if you are serving a federal sentence within a provincial jail, you are not eligible to apply for temporary absence.**³⁴²

Rehabilitative Releases

Rehabilitative temporary absences are supposed to help your reintegration into the community through participation in program opportunities such as education, employment, volunteer work, or addiction treatment.³⁴³ To be eligible for a rehabilitative temporary absence, you must have served at least 1/3 of your sentence.³⁴⁴

Humanitarian Releases

Humanitarian temporary absences are meant to give you the opportunity to strengthen personal or family relationships, to participate in events to assist with your reintegration into the community, or to help with difficult or emergency situations within your immediate family, such as a death or serious illness.³⁴⁵ You are eligible to apply for a humanitarian temporary absence at any time during your sentence if the purpose is to attend to special or emergency situations within your immediate family.³⁴⁶

Medical Releases

A medical temporary absence is available when it is necessary for you to be released from a correctional facility in order to maintain your physical or mental health if the correctional facility cannot provide the required treatment.³⁴⁷ You are eligible for medical temporary absences at any time during your sentence. Unless the temporary medical release is for an elective medical procedure, you are not required to complete a written application for medical releases.³⁴⁸

A medical temporary absence is available when you have a medical reason to remain in a hospital for an extended period of time, or where you have a serious or terminal medical diagnosis and are requesting at home care.

How Long Can a Temporary Absence Be?

There are many types of authorized temporary absences in Nova Scotia.³⁴⁹ They are:

- **A Portion of a Day:** permitting you to be away from the jail for up to 24 hours.
- **Daily:** requires you to return to the jail each day.
- **Continuous Days:** require you to have a place to stay outside the jail.
- **60 Days:** the maximum limit for humanitarian or rehabilitative temporary absence.³⁵⁰ However, the absence can be renewed indefinitely.
- **Unlimited/Medical Release:** permits you to be absent for medical reasons. The release is for an unlimited period.³⁵¹

How do I Apply for Temporary Absence?

Once you are eligible for a temporary absence, you will still need to submit an application in order to be considered. When applying for a temporary absence, you must complete your own application using the approved *Temporary Absence Request Form*. Correctional facility staff or probation officers will provide assistance in completing the form where required.³⁵²

Your application for a temporary release must be in writing and must state:

- the reason for the application,
- the length of time requested for the temporary absence,
- the expected start date,
- where you intend to go or stay during the temporary absence, and
- any other information that the superintendent may require.³⁵³

Applications should be made at least three weeks prior to the requested start date for the temporary absence; however these processing deadlines can be shortened in exceptional circumstances.³⁵⁴ Where a temporary absence is requested for emergency humanitarian purposes, such as a funeral of an immediate family member, the application process will be accelerated so that a decision will be available within 24 hours of the application.³⁵⁵

Your application for temporary absence will be presented to the unit review board along with other information, such as your history of previous incarceration, the assessment of your general behaviour and attitude, your risk assessment etc.³⁵⁶

You must be given the chance to make your own presentation to the unit review board to explain why you should get the absence.³⁵⁷

What Are My Options If I Am Denied Temporary Absence?

The person in charge of temporary absences has the ability to refuse your application.

If you are refused temporary absence, you have the right to appeal the decision to the Executive Director. The appeal must be in writing, must state the reasons for the appeal, and must be forwarded to the Executive Director no later than 10 business days after the date that you receive the decision. After receiving the appeal, the Executive Director has 10 business days to notify you in writing of their decision.³⁵⁸

Earned Remission

What is Earned Remission?

Earned remission is a way to shorten your sentence through good behaviour and participation in programs.

How Does Earned Remission Work?

You should be credited with 15 days of remission for your sentence for every month that you spend in custody.³⁵⁹ This time will be given based on your obeying jail rules and conditions governing temporary absence and by actively participating in programs, which are designed to promote rehabilitation and reintegration.³⁶⁰ The first credit of earned remission should be made no later than the end of the month after you arrive at the jail, and then at intervals of no more than three months.³⁶¹

This means that based on the amount of remission that you have earned, you can be released from jail before the expiration of your sentence.³⁶²

Can I Lose Earned Remission?

You can lose your remission in a number of ways. You can lose remission as a penalty for a disciplinary charge. You can lose your remission in whole or in part for breaking a rule in the jail.³⁶³ The institutional head (i.e. the Superintendent) or the parole board can re-credit your remission.³⁶⁴ If you lose some or all of your earned remission, the superintendent must inform you of the amount of remission lost and your new release date.³⁶⁵ **You have the right to appeal any disciplinary charge that leads to a loss of remission.**³⁶⁶

When Should I Begin Preparing for Conditional Release?

Start preparing for conditional release from the first day of your sentence.

Document the things you do and issues that arise during your time in jail.

This will also be important if disciplinary charges are ever filed against you or if incorrect information is inserted in your file. Keep track of everything you do: courses, programs, work reports, education, evaluations, community supports, volunteer projects (i.e. making and donating things to community-based charities or events, planning and organizing an event or speaker).

Always keep a paper copy of all your documents, including:

- correspondence about your release applications (i.e. requests for information from schools, half-way houses, employers, child care arrangements);
- any documents or notices presented to you by correctional staff about your prisoner record; and
- any correspondence with your lawyer, the Ombuds Office or other agency working on your behalf.

When in doubt, keep the document.

Keep all of your documents and records in a safe place. However, you will be subject to cell searches on occasion. If you are afraid that some things might get 'damaged or accidentally destroyed' during cell tosses, you might want to consider sending your documents to a person that you trust outside of jail to keep them for you.³⁶⁷

Can I appeal a decision relating to a temporary absence?

If you are not satisfied with a decision on your temporary absence application (whether to deny, suspend, or revoke temporary release, or to impose conditions you believe are unnecessarily restrictive), you can appeal to the Executive Director or a designated staff member.³⁶⁸ Their decision is final. You only have 10 business days to appeal a decision starting from the time you receive it. The Director then has 10 business days to notify you and the superintendent in writing of their decision.³⁶⁹

PART VI: REMEDIES



Introduction

This handbook is intended to give you information about the laws, regulations and policies that apply in provincial correctional facilities in Nova Scotia (“Corrections law and policy”). Unfortunately, staff do not always follow Corrections law and policy.

Knowing what the Corrections law and policy says about your situation is the first step towards claiming your rights while in jail.

If you have been denied what you legally deserve under Corrections law and policy, you can take legal steps to assert your rights. For instance, you may be able to file a Complaint using the jail’s internal Complaint process (see below).

However, in some situations, a Complaint will not fix the problem. This may be the case where the policies or procedures used by Correctional authorities in making decisions about you are unfair or illegal. If you feel a policy, procedure, or decision is degrading, humiliating or otherwise violates your rights, or if Correctional authorities have made a decision that you think is wrong or unfair, you need to consider how best to assert your rights. This section provides information to assist you in doing that.

The main topics in this section include information about:

- The Internal Complaints Process;
- Judicial Review;
- Complaints to the Ombuds Office;
- Complaints to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission; and
- Complaints to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioner.

It is also important to consider a complaint to the regulatory bodies overseeing the conduct of health professionals, where professional misconduct is at the root of your concerns (see Chapter III).

The Remedies

There is no guarantee that these remedies will resolve the issue you are facing but **trying these remedies and reaching out for help is your best chance.**

What are remedies?

Remedies are solutions to problems. There are a number of different remedies (and different routes to remedies) available to you. These include:

- a. making a request for something that you are not getting,
- b. filing a complaint or grievance,
- c. filing a complaint to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission,
- d. filing a complaint with the Ombuds Office,
- e. attempting to have your case reviewed by a Court, or
- f. filing a complaint with various regulatory bodies for issues concerning professionals such as doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists or lawyers, as discussed previously in the section “Protecting your Rights”.

While this chapter briefly covers the entire range of ways that you can seek a solution to a problem, the chapter focuses on filing complaints, the most accessible way of attempting to solve an issue. We explain:

- a. how to file a complaint,
- b. the different types of complaints available to you, and
- c. the information that you should include in the complaint.

What can I do if I feel I am being treated badly?

Though you are in jail, you still have all of the rights that you had before you were in jail, except those that need to be restricted in order to enforce your sentence (for example, liberty).

You have the right to complain when you feel you have been badly treated and to seek solutions/ remedies for actions and decisions made by jail staff that you feel are unfair. This could mean anything from being denied your allotted hour of yard time to being physically assaulted by a staff member, to being denied dish soap.

What is a problem that I can try to solve/ remedy?

Any decision or action by a staff member that affects your dignity may be a problem. Any decision or action that denies your rights or further restricts your liberty is almost definitely a problem. Here are some examples:

- Poor treatment by a staff member;
- Denial of your rec/yard time;
- Denial of access to your documents;
- Denial of telephone calls, especially if it is to your lawyer;
- Jail placement;
- Mistake(s) in your file(s) or report(s);
- New (higher) security classification;
- Reduction of your visiting rights;
- Disciplinary charge(s);
- Being dry-celled as punishment;
- Not being allowed to see a medical practitioner -- for mental and/or physical health (nurse, doctor, dentist);
- Not being given items that you need to be clean and healthy (toothpaste, soap, shampoo, hairbrush, dish soap);
- Not being given medication when you need it;
- Not being given access to your child;
- Placement in administrative close confinement; or
- Involuntary transfer

There are many things that are not on this list. If it is not on this list, it still can be a problem you should address.

There are a number of ways to have your voice heard.³⁷⁰ For instance, **you ALWAYS have the following rights:**

- The right to file a complaint regarding an action or decision of a staff member without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences;
- The right to legal assistance and reasonable access to reading materials about the law;
- The right to a fair hearing protected by procedural safeguards including;³⁷¹
 - The right to notice of a hearing or a case;
 - The right to a hearing, be it oral or written;

- The right to a lawyer when you are accused of “serious matters,” particularly matters in which a decision against you could mean further restrictions on your liberty, such as loss of earned remission or close confinement;
- The right to know the case against you and present a defense;
- The right to cross-examine witnesses if there is a hearing against you (except in very rare cases where authorities can establish a serious risk to witness or institutional security);
- The right to reasons for decisions affecting your significant interests;
- The right to review and challenge inaccuracies in your file;
- The right to make a complaint to the Freedom of Information and Privacy Commissioner;
- The right to make a complaint to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission;
- The right to make a complaint to the Ombuds Office.

Document everything. In order to make sure that all these rights (listed above) are protected, it is important that you keep careful records of any incidents you might wish to bring up, and of any and all ways and times that you try to solve your problems. If you have an interaction with a staff member that upsets you, write it down and include the date and time that it happens. If you make a request to a staff member, do the same.

If you file a complaint, keep a copy of it for your records. If you receive any written documentation from jail staff, Corrections, an outside organization, the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, the Courts, or anybody else – keep it in as safe a place as possible. This will help solve your problem. You may also want to give copies of your paperwork to someone outside of the jail if you think the papers are not safe inside.

Why should I seek a solution to my problem?

One reason to seek a remedy for your problem is that if it works you will get an immediate improvement in your personal situation. **You have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. One of the best ways to keep your rights is to exercise them.**

If you are uncertain about how to advocate for your rights, contact one or more of the organizations listed on pages 100-110.

You may be able to get assistance from a Legal Aid lawyer (it is always a good idea to reach out for help in case there are resources available to you).

Getting Legal Aid

Nova Scotia Legal Aid is a government service set up to provide legal advice, information, and in some cases representation, for all Nova Scotians. **Even if you do not qualify for a lawyer, you may still be given information or summary advice.**

Determining whether or not you qualify for a lawyer is a three-part test: ³⁷²

1. Is the applicant for Legal Aid financially eligible to receive Legal Aid?
2. Does Legal Aid work within the area of law in which you need help?
3. Is there legal merit?

Is the applicant financially eligible?

You are considered financially eligible if you qualify for benefits from Income Assistance, or if paying for a lawyer would otherwise reduce your income to the level of qualifying for Income Assistance.

Does Legal Aid provide representation in that area of law?

Legal Aid provides representation for family, criminal, and social justice issues. For example, Criminal legal aid is available where the applicant is charged with an offence for which there is a reasonable likelihood that a conviction would result in a sentence of custody or imprisonment.

Is there legal merit?

In deciding whether you meet this requirement, the Legal Aid Commission has flexibility in their judgment. You will explain why you need legal help in the application form.

Most of the court forms that you need in any legal matter can be found and downloaded from the internet. Although you personally will likely not be able to access the information if you are in jail, you can ask your case management team or (if you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans person) an Elizabeth Fry support worker to download and print the information for you. A list of forms can be found at: http://novascotia.ca/just/Court_Services/forms.asp

In regards to a family law matter, the forms you need depend the location of you and your child(ren) as well as on the specific court you are applying with.

You may have to complete an affidavit. An affidavit is a written statement you make about your situation. An affidavit for custody or access must include:

- a. your name and that of any other parent;
- b. where you and your children lived;
- c. where you are living now;
- d. the nature of your relationship with the other parent (never lived together, common law or married, separated, divorced);
- e. the length of your relationship with the other parent;
- f. the date you separated from the other parent, if you separated;
- g. the full names, dates of birth and ages of all of your children; and
- h. the reasons that it is in the children's best interests for you to have custody and/or access.
- i. You should include any other relevant information, such as when you entered the jail and when you are scheduled to be released.

Filling out the forms yourself may be confusing or difficult. If you do not have a lawyer, you might want to ask someone you trust to help you fill out the forms.

You might also be able to get some support from the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia. While they cannot offer legal advice, they can give you legal *information* that might help. They can be reached at:

Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia

1741 Brunswick Street, Suite 150B

Halifax, NS B3J 3X8

Tel: (902) 455-3135

Website: www.legalinfo.org

If you have a court date and are able to go to the courthouse, **you may be able to get help from duty counsel lawyers.** Duty counsel lawyers are available free of charge at many court houses. If you have a lawyer, you can ask them to ask the judge to issue a court order to bring you from jail to the hearing. Not all judges will do this, but some will.

How do I apply for Legal Aid?

In order to get legal aid, you will need to fill in an application form. Begin by asking a staff member for an application. If they do not provide one, you will need to contact the Legal Aid office in your area to get the application form. The phone numbers for these are listed below.

When you apply, you must provide financial information such as monthly income, monthly expense, and any debts or assets (for example, a car) that you possess. Eligibility is determined based on your assets, liabilities, income, and expenses. If you have a spouse, their financial situation will also be considered. Consideration

is also given to the number of dependents you have. Even if you are eligible for Legal Aid, you may still be required to make some financial contribution to the cost of legal services.³⁷³

There are five ways to apply:

1. In person at the regional Legal Aid office that is nearest to the area where your case is being heard.
2. In person at any Legal Aid office, to complete an application and have it sent on to the office which will actually deal with the issue. (For example, if you live in Halifax but the court matter is in Truro).
3. By faxing your application directly to the Legal Aid Office.
4. By regular mail.
5. By email, using the online Application form.

If you are denied legal aid, you can appeal that. Legal Aid will provide you with information on how to make the appeal.

Nova Scotia Legal Aid

2830 Agricola Street

Halifax, NS B3K 4E4

Telephone: 902-420-3450

Toll Free: 1-866-420-3450

Fax: 902- 420-2873

Legal Aid Offices and Numbers:

- Amherst: (902) 667-7544
- Annapolis Royal: (902) 532-2311
- Antigonish: (902) 863-3350
- Bridgewater: (902) 543-4658
- Liverpool: (902) 354-3215
- Dartmouth: (902) 420-8815
- Halifax: (902) 420-6583
- Kentville: (902) 679-6110
- New Glasgow: (902) 755-7020
- Port Hawkesbury: (902) 625-4047
- Sydney: (902) 563-2295
- Truro: (902) 893-5920
- Windsor: (902) 798-8397
- Yarmouth: (902) 742-7827

What can I do if my rights with respect to legal counsel are violated?

If you are being denied the right to access legal counsel, you can **file a complaint** (see below). More information on how and when to file a complaint is provided later in this chapter. You should also let the Ombuds Office, Elizabeth Fry Societies, and/or East Coast Prison Justice Society know about this.

What can I do if I have a complaint about my lawyer?

If you have a complaint about your lawyer – for instance, you believe that they are either incompetent, have overcharged, or have engaged in misconduct – you may **file a complaint with the Director of Professional Responsibility of the Nova Scotia Barrister’s Society**. You do this by first calling the complaint intake line, (902) 422-1491. Then you will send in a completed complaint form as well as any accompanying documents.³⁷⁴

The Director will investigate the complaint, and send details of the complaint to the lawyer, who will be asked to respond with an explanation of what happened. If staff cannot resolve your complaint, the Director may either dismiss it or refer it to the Complaints Committee. If the Committee finds that the complaint is valid, they may order disciplinary sanctions against the lawyer.

Examples of complaints that have been considered by the Complaints Committee include:

- Failure to keep the client reasonably informed;
- Failure to answer reasonable requests from the client for information;
- Unexplained failure to respond to the client’s telephone calls;
- Withholding information from the client or misleading the client;
- Failure to make every effort to provide prompt service to the client; and,
- Failure to follow the client’s instructions.

The Law Society can award funds to those who have lost money to a lawyer’s misappropriation or theft.³⁷⁵ Filing a complaint can be very useful to ensure that you receive the standard of legal service to which you are entitled.

File a complaint within the jail

While legal assistance is always of value when deciding how best to assert your rights, some pathways to asserting your rights do not *require* a lawyer. This is true, for instance, of the complaints procedure available within the jail. When you use the complaint procedure successfully, you strengthen the fact that there is a need for the formal complaints procedure and you also show that the procedure can work. If, on the other hand, you cannot get a problem resolved through the complaint procedure, you are still documenting that something is going wrong,

and therefore helping to build the argument that alternatives are needed. **You can help to maintain or even advance your rights simply by exercising them.**

Filing complaints can have an impact on the justice system as a whole and help other imprisoned people. Complaints document your concerns and the concerns of others, which in turn may help organizations fight for your rights and hold jails accountable for the way they treat you.

If you feel that you have received unjust treatment, then you can make a complaint. This way you give the Superintendent the opportunity to address the complaint.³⁷⁶

However, before filing a formal complaint, you should consider how you might resolve the problem informally - for example, through discussing it with the appropriate staff member(s). Corrections law states that your complaint may be rejected because you made “no effort to resolve the matter” before making the complaint.³⁷⁷

You may also write to the Ombuds Office at any time, whether or not you have used the internal complaint procedure, and especially if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint. *See their contact information at page 106.*

How long do I have to file a complaint?

Where you have a complaint about health care services in the jail, check to see whether the jail has a specific form for making a Health Care Complaint (there is such a form at Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (Burnside)), and also whether there are any set policies on timelines. If your complaint is to a health professional’s regulatory body, there will be timelines you must be aware of to ensure you do not miss any deadlines.

Where your complaint is about correctional decisions or policies, you must submit a signed and dated complaint form (Form 5.04.00 – A) to the superintendent. Corrections policy states that this must be done within 10 days of the action or incident about which you are filing the complaint.³⁷⁸

However, that 10-day time limit is not stated in the law or regulations. You should meet the time limit if at all possible. But, if you have good reasons for a delay beyond 10 days, you should go ahead and make the complaint and give the reasons for the delay.

For instance, if you were ill, or if you were intimidated by correctional staff or others, or if you simply did not know that the incident in question affected your rights and so presented a basis for a complaint, you should state these reasons for not filing the complaint earlier. You might argue in addition that correctional officials cannot “fetter their discretion” by rigidly applying the time limit stated

in the policy, without any room for responding to individual circumstances. That is, allowing no flexibility on a time limit might be contrary to the purposes of the *Corrections Act*, including the purpose of establishing a fair and accessible way of filing and resolving complaints.

What should I include in my complaint?

Before writing your complaint, spend some time thinking about what you want to say and why you've decided to take this course of action.

In order to write an effective complaint, there are a number of important questions you should consider:

1. **Why?** *What do you want to get out of it?* Examples:

- A decision reversed?
- A service you are being denied?
- Information?
- Creation of a record?

2. **Who?** *Whose action/inaction do you want to complain about?*

Is the problem something that N.S. Corrections can fix (is it in their jurisdiction)?

Examples of things **not** in the jail's jurisdiction include:

- how a doctor is treating you (see the section on complaints about health care);
- a decision of the parole board; or,
- the actions of a contract worker who doesn't work for Corrections (e.g. a sheriff, an Elizabeth Fry worker).

3. **What?** *What is the issue?*

If the issue involves discrimination (based on race, religion, gender, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) make that clear. This will alert Corrections to the fact that your complaint involves the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*.

What are the facts?

- Do not make them up or try to fill in missing facts.
- Keep careful records! This will allow you to give detailed and accurate facts, such as dates and times.

What are your opinions?

- Be clear that your opinion is based on your own view of the situation and is not a 'fact'.
- Ask yourself if other people were to look at the facts of the situation, is it possible they would have a different opinion than yours?

What is the relevant law or policy?

- Find out if there is a law that is relevant to your issue (from the *Correctional Services Act*), is there a regulation, or policy that applies?
- Was there a breach of this law, regulation, or policy?

What way do you want Corrections to respond to your complaint?

- What outcome would you like to achieve?

Even if you don't have all of the information above, still submit the complaint.

What happens next?

A designated staff member who receives a complaint must acknowledge the complaint in writing no later than 5 business days after the date it is received.³⁷⁹ The designated staff member or Superintendent *may*, upon receiving your complaint, schedule an investigation, and should advise you, in writing, of their actions and decision in relation to your complaint.³⁸⁰ This should occur within 10 business days of filing the complaint.³⁸¹

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you may submit an appeal, in writing, to the Executive Director within 10 days of receiving the response.³⁸² The Executive Director then has 10 days to notify you and the Superintendent of their decision in the matter.³⁸³ If you are unhappy with the decision on appeal, you may consider (and, ideally, discuss with a lawyer) the possibility of judicial review (*see below*).

File a complaint with the Ombuds Office

What is the Ombuds Office?

The Ombudsperson is an officer of the government of Nova Scotia but operates independently from government. They are not advocates. Their role is to ensure that government agencies, such as corrections, follow the law and are run fairly.

The Ombudsperson can look into complaints received from the public if they believe that a government agency has acted unfairly. The Ombudsperson can investigate a decision or recommendation made by Corrections (or a Corrections staff member), an act done or omitted by Corrections or a procedure done by Corrections.³⁸⁴ So, if you feel that a particular procedure is unfair, you can ask the Ombuds office to conduct an investigation.

How can the Ombuds Office help me?

The Ombuds office has a variety of ways to help:

- They can advise you of what steps to take. You may wish to contact the Ombuds office if you have concerns about your FOIPOP application. (*See pages 51-52 for more information on FOIPOP.*)
- They can investigate complaints of specific events, but they can also review legislation and policies to see if they are being followed and if they are fair.
- They can also look at government's decisions and actions to see if they are fair, reasonable and legal.
- The Ombuds can recommend that the government make certain changes (but they cannot order them to do so).

The Ombuds Office may refuse to investigate a complaint and can stop an investigation at any time.³⁸⁵ Some reasons they might refuse an investigation include the following: there is another way to appeal;³⁸⁶ the event giving rise to the complaint happened more than a year earlier;³⁸⁷ the person writing does not have enough personal interest in the subject matter.³⁸⁸

It is therefore important to make sure that you file a complaint as quickly as possible. Any correspondence that you have with the Ombuds Office is not supposed to be opened and read by the staff.

How do I make a complaint?

A complaint can be made to the Ombuds office in writing, by fax, over the phone, by e-mail, or in person. The complaint form is available online.³⁸⁹ Outline in as much detail as possible, what has happened to you, what you feel is unfair, and what you would like the Ombuds office to do about it.

Is my complaint confidential?

Complaints from prisoners are supposed to remain confidential.

How do I contact the Ombuds Office?

You can write or call the Ombuds Office at:

Office of the Ombuds

5670 Spring Garden Road, Suite 700

P.O. Box 2152, Halifax, NS B3J 3B7

Telephone: 902-424-6780

Toll-free: 1-800-670-1111

Fax: 902-424-6675

E-mail: ombudsman@gov.ns.ca

File a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Why would I file a human rights complaint?

The government of Nova Scotia runs and regulates provincial jails and must obey the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*. This means that **if your grievance or complaint involves discrimination, you can file a complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC).**

What is discrimination?

According to the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, discrimination is unfair treatment based on any of the following grounds:

- a. Age,
- b. race,
- c. colour,
- d. religion,
- e. creed,
- f. sex,
- g. sexual orientation,
- h. gender identity,
- i. gender expression,
- j. physical or mental disability,
- k. an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease,
- l. ethnic national or aboriginal origin,
- m. family status,
- n. marital status,
- o. source of income,
- p. political belief,
- q. affiliation or activity, or
- r. an association with another individual or class of individuals covered under protected grounds.³⁹⁰

You cannot be denied something in jail or treated differently because of the characteristics or “grounds” mentioned above, such as gender, race and disability. Discrimination can be *direct* or *systemic*.

Direct Discrimination: This happens when an individual or group is treated differently in a negative way based on characteristics related to the prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as gender, race and disability. This kind of discrimination is usually easy to identify. For example, when a guard uses a racial slur, or when a policy singles out prisoners with disabilities, that is direct discrimination.³⁹¹

Systemic Discrimination: This is the creation, perpetuation or reinforcement of persistent patterns of inequality among disadvantaged groups. It is usually the result of seemingly neutral laws, policies, procedures, practices or organizational structures. Systemic discrimination tends to be harder to observe.³⁹² For example, if every prisoner is allotted 1 hour of yard time per day, but the yard is not wheelchair accessible, that is systemic discrimination.

If you think you were the victim of either direct or systemic discrimination, you can file a human rights complaint with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

Can I file a Human Rights Complaint?

If you are in Nova Scotia Department of Corrections, then you can file a Human Rights Complaint under the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*.

The discrimination must take place in respect to one of the grounds listed on page 107.

How long do I have to file a Human Rights Complaint?

You have one year from the incident to file a Human Rights complaint, although in some cases, the deadline may be extended.³⁹³

How do I file a human rights complaint?

The first thing to do is contact the Human Rights Commission. They will listen to your complaint and help you to decide what to do next. Their contact information is on page 110.

When filing a complaint, it is important to include as much information as possible. This is another reason to document things very carefully!

Things that are particularly important include:

- The name of the staff member about whom you are complaining;
- The date(s) and location(s) of where and when you experienced the discrimination;
- Description of the event(s), as detailed as possible;
- The ground(s) of discrimination (i.e. race, gender, sexual orientation, and the other grounds listed above);
- The discriminatory action/ practice and an explanation of how the treatment you received is discriminatory.

What happens next?

Once you submit your complaint, it is reviewed by the Human Rights Commission. If the complaint is valid, the Commission will investigate it. They will gather evidence and might interview you and any other people involved. A report will be written, and the Commission will decide whether to dismiss the complaint, ask for further settlement or recommend that the Minister appoint a Board of Inquiry.

A Board of Inquiry is an independent tribunal that operates separately from the Commission. The Board of Inquiry holds a public hearing of the evidence to hear everyone's side of the story. The Board must issue a decision within six months of the conclusion of the hearing, unless they receive approval for more time from the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court.³⁹⁴ They may either dismiss the complaint or order a remedy, such as accommodation, reimbursement, or apology.

Decisions of the Commission about whether to dismiss a complaint or refer it to a Board of Inquiry are reviewable in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court, while decisions of the Board of Inquiry on the merits of a complaint may be appealed to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal on a question of law.³⁹⁵ Alternatively, you may ask the Ombuds office to review the process used by the Commission to investigate the complaint.

What will I get if my complaint is successful?

Filing a human rights complaint is different than suing someone in court, and is also different from filing a complaint with a regulatory body like the College of Physicians and Surgeons (*see the Health Care section at pages 66-71*). When you sue someone, there is a chance that you can receive damages, or money to compensate for what happened.

The Human Rights Commission may encourage a settlement of your case (which may include a financial component in some circumstances). A Human Rights Board of Inquiry may award financial compensation to you if you win your case, only if it thinks that a financial award is the right response to the problem. It can also order other remedies that can help.³⁹⁶ For example, a Board of Inquiry might order:

- a. that the discriminatory practice be changed,
- b. that the guard offer you an apology, or
- c. that Correctional authorities better accommodate your needs based on the ground of discrimination.³⁹⁷

So, while disciplinary complaints against a nurse or doctor serve mostly to penalize that person rather than compensate you, the Human Rights Commission looks to solve the problem and come up with a solution that addresses your needs.

Are complaints confidential?

The Commission attempts to preserve confidentiality during the complaint process. However, if the Commission decides to refer a complaint to the Board of Inquiry, the hearings of evidence are public and therefore will no longer be fully confidential.³⁹⁸

Do I need to worry about retaliation?

According to the Commission, **it is illegal for someone to retaliate against a person who has filed a complaint.**³⁹⁹ Therefore, if you do suffer from retaliation after filing a complaint, you should tell the Commission about it.

Where do I send the complaint?

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Street Address:

Park Lane Terraces
3rd Floor
5657 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, NS

Mailing Address:

PO Box 2221
Halifax, NS
B3J 3C4
Tel. 902-424-4111
Fax 902-424-0596

Sydney office:

Provincial Building
360 Prince Street
Sydney, NS B1P 5L1
Tel. 902-563-2142
Fax 902-563-5613

Digby office:

Provincial Building
84 Warwick St.
PO Box 1029
Digby, NS B0V 1A0
Tel. 902-245-4791
Fax 902-245-7103

Apply for judicial review⁴⁰⁰

Decisions of administrative bodies such as board and tribunals, and other public authorities such as NS Corrections, can be judicially reviewed in court.

One form of judicial review is based in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (discussed in Chapter 1). This means challenging a law, policy or decision on the basis that it has breached your Charter rights – for instance, the right to liberty, equality, freedom of association, or the right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. Charter claims are typically complicated (both procedurally and in terms of the arguments involved), and so they require the assistance of a lawyer. However, Charter rights are also our most fundamental rights. Therefore, the possibility of a Charter claim should not be overlooked, even where you are serving a relatively short provincial sentence. Increasingly, prisoners are looking to class actions (banding together as a group rather than bringing a case solo) as an efficient way to bring Charter challenges to Correctional laws, policies and conditions that they argue breach their Charter rights.

Another, more common form of judicial review is administrative law-based judicial review. This type of judicial review is limited to a judge's determining whether a decision or policy is in compliance with the law, including judge-made laws that require public authorities to be reasonable and fair. Administrative law judicial review is usually based on the information that was before the decision maker – it is not a re-hearing of your issue. Like Charter-based judicial review, it can be complicated and difficult to pursue without the assistance of a lawyer.

The purpose of administrative law based judicial review is to make sure that any board, tribunal, or decision-making body, has obeyed the law in reaching its conclusions. For example, if you are unhappy with the decision of the Disciplinary Review Board and have used the internal processes of appeal within the correctional system, you may have the opportunity to have a court judicially review the decision. The court then decides whether the board, tribunal, or other non-court decision maker had the authority to make the decision it made (i.e. jurisdiction) and/or used its authority properly. It will ask whether the decision-making process was **fair**, and whether the outcome was **reasonable**. Sometimes you may bring Charter arguments into administrative law based judicial review. For instance, you may argue that a decision-maker was unreasonable because of a failure to appreciate the Charter values or Charter-protected interests affected by the decision.

Administrative law-based judicial review of a decision is not an opportunity to re-argue or to improve the arguments you made before. Instead, it is for the court to decide if the decision-maker (for instance, the Superintendent in assigning a disciplinary penalty) made a mistake about the law or used an unfair process in

your case. If you are successful in establishing unreasonableness or unfairness, the court will often simply set aside the decision and send it back to correctional authorities for redetermination in light of the Court’s reasons.

Because it is complicated, if it is possible, you should retain legal advice before starting your application for judicial review. For more information, contact Legal Aid (see page 101 for contact information) and/or (if you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans*) Elizabeth Fry (see page 11 for contact information.)

Apply for *habeas corpus*

What is it?

Habeas corpus is a Latin term that means roughly ‘bring the body forward’ [out of the alleged illegal detention]. The right of *habeas corpus* existed before the Constitution or even the *Magna Carta* of 1215. It is a powerful tool for challenging the legality of detention (or “deprivation of liberty”). It is a special form of judicial review that is now expressly protected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which also guarantees the right to liberty, freedom of expression and religion, and the right not to be subject to cruel and unusual punishment, among other rights.

An application for *habeas corpus* can be brought on behalf of any detained person to show cause for detention. If you have been unlawfully detained, you may be released. Also, if your liberty has been unlawfully restricted beyond the ordinary restrictions attaching to your sentence, *habeas corpus* may be used to fight those further restrictions.

After many cases with unfavourable results, in 2005 the Supreme Court of Canada finally ruled that prisoners (including federal prisoners) can choose to challenge the legality of their detention in a provincial superior court by way of an application for *habeas corpus*, rather than having to pursue ordinary judicial review processes, which take longer and place more hurdles before applicants (for federal prisoners, this would be in the federal court).⁴⁰¹ Most importantly, in contrast to the general discretion of courts to refuse to hear applications for judicial review – for instance, because of a failure to exhaust alternative remedies – the Court said that a provincial superior court should hear an application for *habeas corpus* when requested to do so, unless it falls into one of two very narrow categories. These are: 1) where the legislature has put in place “a complete, comprehensive and expert procedure” that “provides for a review at least as broad as that available by way of *habeas corpus* and no less advantageous” or 2) in matters where an appeal court has authority “to correct the errors of a lower court and order release of the applicant if need be.”

In 2005, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the federal prison complaints process was not as broad or advantageous as habeas for dealing with alleged liberty infringements. So, federal prisoners arguing illegal deprivation of liberty could obtain near-immediate decisions on their habeas applications, instead of having to pursue lengthy appeals of internal prison complaints (and then, potentially, judicial review). The point being: *habeas corpus* is the quickest route into court prisoners have to protect their rights while in prison.

The basic idea of *habeas corpus* is that personal freedom — in particular, freedom from arbitrary detention — is important. It is so important that, if you can make a good enough argument, a hearing on whether your detention is or is not legal takes precedence over everything else a court is doing. Your case will be heard as soon as possible (typically within a week). If your detention is determined to be unlawful, you will be immediately released from the unlawful detention.

To be clear, *habeas corpus* is not a route to appealing the result of a criminal trial or other decision of a court. Those decisions have to be appealed to the next level of court. *Habeas corpus* is a way to appeal decisions of correctional authorities, as well as boards and tribunals like parole boards or immigration boards.

You may wish to make an application for *habeas corpus* if you are unlawfully placed in close confinement. As well, you may wish to consider an application if you are unfairly being classified as higher security or being transferred to a penitentiary with a higher security rating.

If you wish to make an application for *habeas corpus*, it is important that you immediately contact your lawyer if you have one. If you do not have a lawyer, you should contact Legal Aid about the possibility of their providing you with services. That said, prisoners often prepare *habeas corpus* applications themselves, and have sometimes been successful in their applications. Be careful though: courts have in some provinces begun awarding “costs” against prisoners (making them pay government’s legal bills) where they think that the legal argument is lacking.

Who can use it?

Any person under detention may require the court to review the legality of the detention by filing a *Notice for Habeas Corpus* [see Appendix A].

When can I use it?

Applications can be made at any time. Simply give your application to the superintendent or other responsible party and they are required by law to forward it to the court.

What happens when I use it?

As noted, the law places heavy emphasis on protecting the liberty of the individual. The application for *habeas corpus* takes precedence over all other judicial procedures. In short, you can jump the line.

Once a motion is filed, the court must immediately set a date for a review of your detention.

If the motion is heard, the Attorney General of the relevant jurisdiction (Canada or Nova Scotia) will be automatically called upon to defend the detention.

The party detaining you is required to bring you before a competent court, unless the judge decides otherwise, considering unnecessary delay, expense or inconvenience. If they do not, they may be subject to a charge of “contempt of court.”

The court has broad discretion in a *habeas* proceeding. It can compel the production of any document relevant to the detention. It can also require any witness to testify.

To be successful in a *habeas* application, you must first establish that you have been detained (or deprived of liberty), and that there is “a legitimate ground upon which to question” the legality of that detention. Any evidence that the detention was unreasonable, or procedurally unfair, will assist. If you succeed at this first stage, then it is government’s turn to try to demonstrate that the detention was legal (i.e., reasonable and fair). If it does not demonstrate this, then your *habeas* application has been successful.

For instance, say you have been placed in close confinement after a disciplinary hearing in which you were not given a chance to review the charges or evidence against you. Depending on the circumstances, this raises a legitimate ground for questioning the procedural fairness of the hearing. Government will then be expected to justify the process, or to establish its legality, despite the apparent procedural unfairness. Alternatively, say the decision to place you in close confinement did not take account of key evidence or arguments. This is potentially a form of unreasonableness, again forming a basis for a *habeas* application. In response, government may try to establish that it did (implicitly) take account of the evidence or argument in question. In both cases, you have a chance of succeeding in your *habeas* application.

What if the judge accepts the application?

The remedy on a successful *habeas corpus* application is an order that the illegal deprivation of liberty stop. For instance, the judge can order that your security classification be reduced and/or that you be released from close confinement.

What if the judge refuses the application?

Any denied application for *habeas corpus* can be appealed to the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal. These appeals should also be expedited/made more quickly than in ordinary cases.

You can't just re-apply to the same judge or court. If there is no new ground for an application or the detention has already been determined to be legal, you could be accused of abusing the judicial process. In such a case, you might be ordered to pay costs (i.e., to cover part of the government's legal fees).

How do I apply?

To apply for *habeas corpus*, you must file a **Notice for Habeas Corpus** using Nova Scotia Civil Procedure Form 7.12 [form included at end of document]. The *Notice of Habeas Corpus* must

- Be dated and signed by you, your lawyer or an agent approved by a judge
- Unless you can't get the information, include all of the following
 - a. the name and place of detention;
 - b. the names of, or offices held by, individuals holding you for the government;
 - c. any reasons given to you for the detention;
 - d. information about what prevents you from leaving the place of detention;
 - e. the request for *habeas corpus*;
 - f. the grounds on which you contend that the detention is illegal;
 - g. a statement that you have told the chief court clerk (called the prothonotary) how to get in contact with you and the government

Special Considerations

What if I am detained under IRPA?

Persons may be detained under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* [IRPA] for a variety of reasons. Past court decisions have held that “in immigration matters, where a complete, comprehensive and expert statutory scheme provides for a review that is at least as broad as and no less advantageous than habeas corpus, *habeas corpus* is precluded.” Recently however, the Ontario Court of Appeal has held that where immigration detainees are arguing that their detention “has become illegal because of its length and the uncertainty of its continued duration,”⁴⁰² they should be able to exercise their Charter right to *habeas corpus*. In such cases, immigration detainees have the right to choose whether to have their detention-related issues heard in the Federal Court through judicial review of the Immigration Detention decisions, or in the Superior Court through *habeas corpus* applications. The Supreme Court of Canada recently upheld this principle.⁴⁰³

Because it is complicated, if it is possible, you should retain legal advice before starting an application for judicial review. For more information contact Legal Aid (*see page 101 for contact information*) or, if you identify as a woman, non-binary or trans*, Elizabeth Fry (*see page 11 for contact information*).

RESOURCES

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETIES [CAEFS] is an association of self-governing, community-based Elizabeth Fry Societies that work with and for women and girls, non-binary and trans* individuals in the justice system, particularly those who are, or may be, criminalized. Together, Elizabeth Fry Societies develop and advocate the beliefs, principles and positions that guide CAEFS. The association exists to ensure substantive equality in the delivery and development of services and programs through public education, research, legislative and administrative reform, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)

Telephone: 613-238-2422 (collect)

Toll free: 1-800-637-4606

E-mail: caeifs@web.ca

www.caeefs.ca

Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia

1 Tulip Street, Dartmouth NS

Telephone: 902-454-5041

E-mail: ed@efrymns.ca

www.efrymns.ca

Elizabeth Fry Society of Cape Breton

16 C Levatte Crescent, Sydney NS

Telephone: 902-539-6165

Fax 902-539-1683

E-mail: efrycb@eastlink.ca

www.efrycb.com

EAST COAST PRISON JUSTICE SOCIETY brings together legal, academic, health care and activist communities to work for justice, fairness, and community-based alternatives to incarceration for criminalized and imprisoned persons in Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region. We do not provide direct legal, health or social services. Instead, we emphasize education, scholarship, systemic advocacy, and sharing perspectives and strategies among differently-situated individuals, including persons with experience of criminalization and incarceration, their families and friends, and public and grass-roots service and advocacy organizations.

East Coast Prison Justice Society [ECPJS]

6061 University Ave, PO Box 15000, Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

E-mail: eastcoastprisonjustice@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDS

For information, see pages 105-106.

5670 Spring Garden Road, Suite 700
P.O. Box 2152
Halifax, NS B3J 3B7
Telephone: 902-424-6780
Toll-free: 1-800-670-1111
Fax: 902-424-6675
E-mail: ombudsman@gov.ns.ca

NOVA SCOTIA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

For information, see pages 107-110.

Street Address:

Park Lane Terraces, 3rd Floor
5657 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, NS

Mailing Address:

PO Box 2221, Halifax, NS, B3J 3C4
Tel. 902-424-4111
Fax 902-424-0596

NOVA SCOTIA LEGAL AID**Halifax**

402-5475 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, NS B3J 3T2
T 902-420-7800
F 902-420-6561

Sydney

401-15 Dorchester Street
Sydney, NS B1P 5Y9
T 902-563-2295
TF 1-877-563-2295
F 902-539-0489

Dartmouth

300-99 Wyse Road
Dartmouth, NS B3A 4S5
T 902-420-8815
TF 1-877-420-8818
F 902-420-6562

Yarmouth

204-164 Main Street
Yarmouth, NS
B5A 1C2
T 902-742-7827
TF 1-866-742-3300
F 902-742-0676

New Glasgow

116 George Street
New Glasgow, NS
B2H 2K6
T 902-755-7020
TF 1-877-755-7020
F 902-752-8733

JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY

541 Sackville Dr., Suite #1
Lower Sackville, NS B4C 2S1
T 902-429-6429

APPENDIX A:

Form 7.12

20_____

No.

Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

Between:

[complete heading as required by Rule 82 – Administration of Civil Proceedings]

[name]

Applicant

and

[name]

Respondent

Notice for *Habeas Corpus*

Applicant is detained

The applicant is detained at _____
[name and address].

The applicant is detained by _____
[name and title].

The applicant is detained _____
[because.../without reasons having been given].

It is impossible for the applicant to leave detention because [reasons].

Applicant requests review

The applicant says the detention is illegal.

The applicant requests an order directing the respondent, and any other person who has control of the applicant and receives notice of the order, to bring the applicant and all documents relating to the detention before the court.

Grounds for review

The applicant says the detention is illegal because:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Contacting applicant

The prothonotary has been informed of all means of communications with the applicant. The authority or persons detaining the applicant may be contacted at the place of detention, and through other addresses, telephone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses given to the prothonotary.

Signature
Signed

, 20

Signature of applicant
Print name:

[or]

Signature of counsel
[name] as counsel
for [name]

[or]

Signature of agent approved by judge
[name] as approved agent for

[name]

Prothonotary's certificate

I certify that this notice for *habeas corpus* was filed with the court on
, 20

Prothonotary

ENDNOTES

1. *The Constitution Act, 1867*, 30 & 31 Vict, c 3; *The Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), 1982, c 11.
2. Some provinces allow federal prisoners to stay in provincial jails to serve their sentences, especially where the closest federal prison may be in another province or territory; also you may be temporarily placed in a provincial jail if you are required to attend court where there is no federal penitentiary close by.
3. *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Part 1 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (UK), 1982, c 11: < <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>>.
4. *Stewart v. Nova Scotia (Social Assistance Appeal Board)* 2001 NSSC 65.
5. This section was informed by: Canadian Lawyers.Ca, “An introduction to Canadian Law”, <http://canadian-lawyers.ca/Legal-Help-and-Resources/An-Introduction-to-Canadian-Law.html#five>
6. S.N.S. 1989, c. 37 [cited as: *Correctional Services Act*].
7. R.S.C. 1985, c. C-46 [cited as: *Criminal Code*].
8. S.N.S. 1990, c. 5 [cited as: *Children and Family Services Act*].
9. R.S.N.S. 1989, c. C-214 [cited as: *Human Rights Act*].
10. S.C. 1992, c. 20.
11. N.S. Reg. 99/2006 [cited as: *Correctional Services Regulations*].
12. *Stewart v. Nova Scotia (Social Assistance Appeal Board)* 2001 NSSC 65.
13. Nova Scotia Public Safety, *Correctional Services Policy & Procedures*.
14. This section was informed by: Canadian Lawyers.Ca, “An introduction to Canadian Law”, <http://canadian-lawyers.ca/Legal-Help-and-Resources/An-Introduction-to-Canadian-Law.html#five>
15. LISNS, “Courts and Court forms”, online: <www.legalinfo.org/legal-help-the-legal-system/courts-ns.html#1>.
16. United Nations, Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2015: < https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/GA-RESOLUTION/E_ebook.pdf> [cited as, “*Mandela Rules*”].
17. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, Res. 217 A (III).
18. *United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* 1465 U.N.T.S 85; 8 C.F.R. § 208.18.
19. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* 19 December 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, Can. T.S. 1976 No. 47, 6 I.L.M. 368 (entered into force 23 March 1976, accession by Canada 19 May 1976).
20. *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 18 December 1979, entry into force 3 September 1981 in accordance with article 27(1), Res. 34/180.
21. *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27.
22. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49.
23. UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), *UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2010/16: United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Prisoners (the Bangkok Rules)*, 22 July 2010, E/RES/2010/16, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d92e5392.html> [accessed 30 August 2016].
24. UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), *UN Economic and Social Council Resolution 2010/16: United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Prisoners (the Bangkok Rules)*, 22 July 2010, E/RES/2010/16, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d92e5392.html> [accessed 31 August 2016].
25. *Mandela Rules*, supra note 16.

26. Michelle M. Mann, “Good Intentions, Disappointing Results: A Progress Report on Federal Aboriginal Corrections” (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2009).
27. *Summary of Issues and Challenges in the Management of Prison Self-Injury* (Ottawa: Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2013).
28. *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at the Prison for Women in Kingston*, (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1996) [cited as: *Arbour Commission*].
29. *Protecting Their Rights: A Systemic Review of Human Rights in Correctional Services for Federally Sentenced Women*, (Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, December 2003) [cited as: *CHRC Report*].
30. *Stewart v Nova Scotia (Social Assistance Appeal Board)* 2001 NSSC 65.
31. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “34.00.00—Facility Case Management--Orientation and Assessment—Adult Custody” (1 October 2009), ss 1.1, 2.1.
32. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “34.00.00—Facility Case Management--Orientation and Assessment—Adult Custody” (1 October 2009), s 1.2.
33. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 45(2).
34. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “34.00.00—Facility Case Management--Orientation and Assessment—Adult Custody” (1 October 2009), s 3.2.
35. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 41(1).
36. *Correctional Services Policies and Procedures*, “34.05.00—Facility Case Management--Trans and Gender Variant Offenders” (19 May 2017), s 7.1.
37. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.03.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Security Risk Assessment—Institutional Security Assessment” (2 November 2015), s 1.1-1.2.
38. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.03.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Security Risk Assessment—Institutional Security Assessment” (2 November 2015), s 4.2-4.3.
39. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.03.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Security Risk Assessment—Institutional Security Assessment” (2 November 2015), s 3.1.
40. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.03.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Security Risk Assessment—Institutional Security Assessment” (2 November 2015), s 5.
41. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.00.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Risk & Needs Assessments—General” (14 September 2009), s 1.2.
42. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.01.00—Risk & Needs Assessments--Level of Services/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI)” (16 April 2018), s 2.3.
43. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.00.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Risk & Needs Assessments—General” (14 September 2009), s 3.2.
44. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.00.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Risk & Needs Assessments—General” (14 September 2009), s 3.3.
45. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “28.00.00—Risk & Need Assessments--Risk & Needs Assessments—General” (14 September 2009), s 2.
46. *R v Starr*, 2001 MBQB 108 [No obligation to speak; no privilege].
47. *R v Starr*, 2001 MBQB 108.
48. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “38.02.00—Admitting and Discharge--Adult Prisoner Personal Property” (17 October 2018), ss 4.1, 4.7, 4.11.
49. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “38.02.00—Admitting and Discharge--Adult Prisoner Personal Property” (17 October 2018), s 8.1.
50. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 95(1)(a).
51. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 55.
52. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “45.00.00—Food Services--Menu Planning and Food Service” (27 July 2009), s 3.6.
53. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 58(2). For bases on which to argue that special diets are an entitlement, not a privilege, see Chapter VI, “Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission” and sections 15 and 2(a) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (above).
54. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “45.00.00—Food Services--Menu Planning and Food Service” (27 July 2009), s 6.1.
55. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “45.00.00—Food Services--Menu Planning and Food Service” (27 July 2009), s 7.1.
56. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 57.
57. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 56.
58. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “42.05.00--Prisoner Disciplinary System--Disciplinary Penalties” (31 March 2016), s 5.1.
59. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 57.

60. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “44.00.00--Prisoner Services--Clothing, Amenities, Bedding and Towels” (15 May 2009), s 4.1-4.3.
61. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “44.00.00--Prisoner Services--Clothing, Amenities, Bedding and Towels” (15 May 2009), s 3.1.
62. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 54(4).
63. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 54(1).
64. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “34.00.00--Facility Case Management--Orientation and Assessment—Adult Custody” (1 October 2009), s 3.1.13.
65. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 37.
66. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 40(1).
67. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “44.01.00—Prisoner Services--Prisoner Entitlements” (1 December 2007), s 9.1.
68. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “37.14.00—General Facility Operations--Prisoner Communication” (8 March 2018), s 1.1.
69. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 60(1), (2) & (3)
70. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 60(4) & (5)
71. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 59(1)
72. Nova Scotia Department of Justice, “Prisoner Telephone System: Frequently Asked Questions”, online: <novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/_docs/OffenderPhoneSystem.pdf>.
73. Nova Scotia Department of Justice, “Prisoner Telephone System: Frequently Asked Questions”, online (pdf): <novascotia.ca/just/Corrections/_docs/OffenderPhoneSystem.pdf>.
74. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 56.
75. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 61(1).
76. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 95(3).
77. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 59
78. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “31.01.00—Programs--General” (1 July 2008), ss 3.1-3.3.
79. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “31.01.00—Programs--General” (1 July 2008), s 2.2.
80. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “31.01.00—Programs--General” (1 July 2008), s 2.3.
81. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “32.01.00--Prisoner Education--Adult Prisoners” (1 December 2007), s 2.1.
82. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “31.01.00—Programs--General” (1 July 2008), s 2.4.
83. Lori Bower, Manager of Prisoner Programs, May 26, 2016
84. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “44.01.00--Prisoner Services--Prisoner Entitlements” (1 December 2007), s 6.1.
85. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “42.01.00—Prisoner Disciplinary System--Breach of Rules and Disciplinary Reports” (8 August 2016), Appendix A, Section (o)
86. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “31.01.00—Programs--General” (1 July 2008), s 3.4.
87. *The Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS, 1990, c. 5.
88. *Parenting and Support Act*, RSNS, 2015, c. 44.
89. *Divorce Act*, RSC, 1985, c 3 (2nd Supp).
90. *The Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS, 1990, c.5, s.17
91. Part I of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, being Schedule B to the *Canada Act 1982* (U.K.), 1982, c.11, s.7.
92. *Maintenance and Custody Act*, RSNS 1989, c 160, s 18(4).
93. *Ibid* at s.18
94. *Newfoundland (Director of Child, Youth and Family Services, St. John’s Region) v. N.B.*, [2001] N.J. No. 74.
95. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 3(2).
96. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 22(2).
97. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 22(2).
98. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 9(d).
99. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, e.g., s. 3(1), 36(3) & (4A), 78A.
100. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5 s. 39.
101. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 39.
102. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 43(4).

103. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5 s. 46(1), 46(4)(c).
104. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, s. 47(5).
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112. *Children and Family Services Act*, RSNS 1990, c 5, 44(1).
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259. Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoner (The Mandela Rules) E/ CN.15/2015/L.6/Rev.1, rule 18. However, correctional policy only states that prisoners in disciplinary (not administrative) segregation have a right to shower – a right that may be suspended where there are “security issues”. See *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “43.00.00 – Close Confinement – Administrative and Disciplinary Close Confinement” (22 June 2018), ss 5 - 7 & 10, esp 10.2.9.
260. Correspondence with Sean Kelly e-mail, former Director of Correctional Services Nova Scotia. See also *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “43.00.00 – Close Confinement – Administrative and Disciplinary Close Confinement” (22 June 2018), s. 10.2 & 10.3.2. Section 7 of this policy is far less explicit in according rights to correspondence or other matters to persons in administrative or “non-punitive” close confinement, and gives considerable discretion to authorities.
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324. *Correctional Services Act*, s 61.
325. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 62.
326. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “39.01.00--Searches and Contraband--Searches of Prisoners, Staff and Visitors” (23 December 2014), ss 5.4-5.6; *Correctional Services Act* s. 63.
327. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “39.01.00--Searches and Contraband--Searches of Prisoners, Staff and Visitors” (23 December 2014), ss 5.7-5.9.
328. *Correctional Services Act*, s. 62.
329. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s. 34.
330. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “39.01.00--Searches and Contraband--Searches of Prisoners, Staff and Visitors” (23 December 2014), s 7.
331. *Correctional Services Act*, ss 79-80; *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.00.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Legislative Authority” (25 January 2017), s 1.2.
332. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.15.000—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Supervision” (1 December 2007), s 2.3.
333. *Correctional Services Act*, s 35(b).
334. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.14.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Certificates” (27 July 2009), s 1.
335. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.16.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Suspensions and Revocations” (27 July 2009), s 4.1.3.
336. *Correctional Services Act*, s 84. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 106.
337. *Correctional Services Act*, s 81, *Correctional Services Regulations*, s.107.
338. *Correctional Services Act*, s 78 & *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.16.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Suspensions and Revocations” (27 July 2009), s 4.
339. *Correctional Services Act*, s 78 & *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.16.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Suspensions and Revocations” (27 July 2009), s 4.
340. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures*, “35.01.00—Conditional Release--Temporary Absences—Guiding Principles” (28 May 2009), s 3.2.1.

341. *Correctional Services Act, s 79 & Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 1.1.
342. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.03.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Eligibility”* (9 December 2016), s 2.1.
343. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 2.1.
344. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.03.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Eligibility”* (9 December 2016), s 4.1.
345. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 2.2.
346. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.03.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Eligibility”* (9 December 2016), s 5.1.
347. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 2.3.
348. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), ss. 1.1, 2.1.
349. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 3.3.
350. *Correctional Services Regulations, s 102. Prisons and Reformatories Act, s. 7.4(1).*
351. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.02.00—Conditional Releases—Temporary Absences—Types of Duration”* (25 January 2017), s 3.2
352. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), s 2.1.
353. *Correctional Services Regulations, s. 101*
354. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), s 3.1.
355. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), s 3.3.
356. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), s 4.2.
357. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedures, “35.04.00—Conditional Release—Temporary Absences—Application Process”* (5 November 2015), s 4.3.
358. *Correctional Services Regulations, s. 107*
359. *Correctional Services Act, s 76.*
360. *Prison and Reformatories Act, section 6(1).*
361. *Prison and Reformatories Act, section 6(2).*
362. *Prison and Reformatories Act, section 6(5).*
363. *Prison and Reformatories Act, section 6(4).* *Correctional Services Regulations, s 95(1)(f).*
364. *Prison and Reformatories Act, section 6(8) and 6(9).*
365. *Correctional Services Regulations, s. 96(2)*
366. *Correctional Services Regulations, s 99(1)(c).*
367. This person might need to be a family member so you can give them the documents during contact visits. If due to disciplinary charges, you are no longer able to have contact visits (or if you are generally having difficulty getting the documents out of the prison), argue that this person is who you have chosen to help assist and represent you at your parole hearings and therefore needs to have access to the documents.
368. *Correctional Services Act, s. 81.*
369. *Correctional Services Regulations, s 107.*
370. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure, “5.04.00—Investigation, Inspections and Audits—Prisoner Complaint Process”* (9 December 2016), s 1.
371. See Chapter 1.
372. ‘Do I Qualify?’, Legal Aid Nova Scotia, <http://www.nslegalaid.ca/qualify.php>;
373. Legal Aid Nova Scotia Web Site: < <http://www.nslegalaid.ca/>>.
374. Nova Scotia Barrister Society, <http://nsbs.org/complaint-form>
375. Nova Scotia Barrister Society, http://nsbs.org/for_the_public/client_compensation_fund
376. *Correctional Services Act, s 24; Correctional Services Regulations, s 27.*
377. *Correctional Services Regulations, s 28(1)(c).*

378. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “5.04.00—Investigation, Inspections and Audits--Prisoner Complaint Process” (9 December 2016), s 4.1.
379. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 26
380. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “5.04.00—Investigation, Inspections and Audits--Prisoner Complaint Process” (9 December 2016), s 4.4.
381. *Correctional Services Policy and Procedure*, “5.04.00—Investigation, Inspections and Audits--Prisoner Complaint Process” (9 December 2016), s 4.4; *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 29.
382. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 30(2).
383. *Correctional Services Regulations*, s 30(3).
384. *Ombudsman Act*, s. 11(1).
385. *Ombudsman Act*, section 14(1).
386. *Ombudsman Act*, section 14(1)(a).
387. *Ombudsman Act*, section 14(1)(d).
388. *Ombudsman Act*, section 14(1)(e).
389. Nova Scotia Office of the Ombuds, <https://www.novascotia.ca/ombu/publications/ComplaintForm.pdf>
390. *Human Rights Act*, s. 5(1).
391. *CHRC Report*.
392. *CHRC Report*.
393. *Human Rights Act*, s 29(2), 29(3).
394. *Human Rights Act*, s 34A
395. *Human Rights Act*, s 36.
396. *Human Rights Act*, s 34(8).
397. *Human Rights Act*, s 41.
398. *Human Rights Act*, s 34.
399. *Human Rights Act*, s 11.
400. Further information on judicial review can be found at: Human Rights Legal Support Centre, “An Applicant’s Guide to Judicial Review”, <http://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/publications-resources/information-sheets-guides/applicants-guide-judicial-review>
401. *May v. Ferndale Institution*, [2005] 3 S.C.R. 809.
402. *Chaudhary v. Canada (Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness)*, 2015 ONCA 700 (CanLII), <<http://canlii.ca/t/glp6s>>
403. *Canada (Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness) v. Chhina*, 2019 SCC 29