LawNow

relating law to life in Canada

GUIDE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you for your interest in writing for LawNow!

LawNow's mission is to relate law to life. We are a Canadian public legal education magazine. We publish six issues per year and rely completely on volunteer contributors like you to provide thoughtful and engaging content.

To make sure our readers are getting the most out of their LawNow experience, here are some guidelines we ask our contributors to follow:

1. Make it relevant.

All articles must have a legal angle and must be of general relevance to Canadian society. We are a non-partisan publication.

2. Get to the point.

Focus on what the reader is looking for and offer it up quickly. Be concise.

We encourage our contributors to work within the following word count parameters:

- Articles: 1200-1400 words
- Columns: 800 words

If you send us something long and wordy, don't be surprised if we trim it down!

3. Make titles interesting.

Create a title using primary keywords. Your title should be short, clear and descriptive. It shouldn't be longer than 4-5 words. You can use a subtitle to provide extra information that doesn't fit in the title.

4. Write in plain language.

Many of our readers are not lawyers! LawNow aims to be an accessible resource on the law, written at around a grade 10 reading level.

We encourage you to choose your words wisely:

- Avoid legal jargon. And if you have to use it, explain what the term means.
- Use simple words. For example, use the word "use" instead of "utilize."

Writing in plain language goes beyond your word choice. It also means making the article as a whole easier to scan and read. You can do this by:

- using headings and sub-headings;
- keeping paragraphs short;
- keeping sentences short;
- using bullets or number lists;
- choosing gender-neutral terms ("they" instead of "him or her"); and
- using the same terms consistently throughout the article.

5. Write in the active voice.

Search engines prefer content written in the active voice. And your readers engage more with the active voice over the passive voice.

In Microsoft Word, you can change your proofing settings to measure how much of your content is written in the passive voice. When writing content, stay under 20% passive voice.

6. Add hyperlinks.

LawNow is an online publication. Use hyperlinks strategically to:

- keep your article focussed and your readers moving;
- link to references or additional information (instead of in-text references or footnotes).

Integrate hyperlinks into the text, rather than writing about the reader's movement. For example:

- Avoid: Click here to read J.R.R. Tolkien's biography.
- Use: Tolkien's bio is fascinating to read.

Choose your hyperlinks wisely. Don't overwhelm your reader – show them only what is important and relevant.

7. Send us a Word document.

We may edit your article to conform to these guidelines. We also transfer the text to web and design programs.

All articles are subject to approval by LawNow editorial staff.

If you have any further questions, please contact us.

Thank you again for your interest in contributing to LawNow!