

## GUIDE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you for your interest in writing for LawNow!

LawNow's mission is to relate law to life. A CPLEA publication, we post articles weekly and rely completely on volunteer contributors like you to provide thoughtful and engaging content. We welcome up to four articles from each contributor for each editorial year (September to August).

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

### **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. Be clear when expressing opinion.**

If you are expressing an opinion in your article, we may label the article or section of the article as such. We welcome varying and respectful perspectives though we reserve the right to refuse to publish articles that we believe do not serve our mission and audience.

### **3. Get to the point.**

Focus on what the reader is looking for and offer it up quickly. Be concise. Articles should be between 800 and 1000 words. We will consider longer articles on a case by case basis. If you send us something long and wordy, don't be surprised if we trim it down!

### **4. 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. Don't be afraid to use catchy titles, such as "Five things you should know about ..." Use a sub-heading (a short sentence) to include more info. We will create a sub-heading for you if you do not provide one.

### **5. 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 8 to 10 reading level. We encourage you to choose your words wisely:

- Avoid legal jargon. And if you must use it, explain what the term means.
- Use simple words. For example, use the word "use" instead of "utilize."
- Write in the active voice. For example, use "the police charged him with an offence" instead of "he was charged with an offence". In Microsoft Word, you can change your

proofing settings to measure how much of your content is in the passive voice. We recommend staying under 10% passive voice.

Writing in plain language goes beyond your word choice. It means making the whole article 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.

## **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 (We do not publish 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. Avoid charts and tables.**

Charts and tables are hard to format for web and mobile. Instead, integrate the content into your article.

## **8. 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. We may exercise our discretion and refuse to publish an article for whatever reason.**

If you have any further questions, please contact us. Thank you again for your interest in contributing to LawNow!