

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- Proclaimed in 1982, as a part of the Constitution Act
- Protects the interests of Canadians, both as individuals and as members of society, by providing a way to challenge perceived abuses of these basic rights and freedoms
- Seven categories:
 - Fundamental freedoms
 - Democratic rights
 - Mobility rights
 - Legal rights
 - Equality rights
 - Official language rights
 - Minority language rights
 - Educational rights

“In a free and democratic society, it is important that citizens know exactly what their rights and freedoms are, and where to turn for help in the event that those rights and freedoms are denied or infringed. In a country like Canada – vast and diverse, with 11 governments, two official languages, and a variety of ethnic groups – the only way to provide equal protection to everyone is to enshrine those basic rights and freedoms in the constitution.”

Jean Chretien, Minister of Justice, 1982

Rights Guaranteed By The Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Rights/Freedom	What you can do
Section 2: Fundamental Freedoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Worship as you like - Believe what you want - Express your opinions - Associate with whomever you like - Gather together peacefully
Section 3-5: Democratic Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vote in elections - Run as a candidate in elections - Elect a new government at least every 5 years <i>(except, possibly, in times of war)</i>
Section 6: Minority Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enter, remain in, or leave Canada - Live and work wherever you wish within Canada
Section 7-14: Legal Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enjoy life, liberty, and security of the person - Be protected against unreasonable search, arrest, detention, or imprisonment - Be informed without reasonable delay, if you are charged with an offence - Be advised and represented by a lawyer if you are charged with an offence\have a fair trial if you are accused of a crime
Section 15: Equality Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Live and work and be protected by the law without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability
Section 16: Language Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate with, and receive services from, any federal government office in either English or French - Use either English or French in any federal court - Have your children educated in either English or French where numbers warrant
Section 24: Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take the matter to court if any of the above rights and freedoms have been denied
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Native peoples retain their rights (s. 25) - The Charter should be interpreted to enhance Canada's multicultural heritage (s. 27) - The Charter applies equally to males and females (s. 28) - References in the Charter to provinces also includes territories (s. 30) - The Charter applies to actions of government, not private individuals (s. 32)