

If I'm charged with a crime

Words with dotted underlining are links to definitions. The definitions are also on page 2.

The Crown attorney reviews your charge.
(This happens throughout the process)

Does the Crown attorney continue with the charge?

NO

YES

Your charge is stayed, withdrawn, or dismissed

OR

Your charge is withdrawn because the Crown attorney cautions you or offers you conditions like taking part in community service or an informal program

OR

The Crown attorney refers you to extrajudicial sanctions and you agree

You complete the program

You don't complete the program

Your charge is stayed, withdrawn, or dismissed

You're found *not guilty*, which is also called acquitted

You might have to go to court several times before your trial

About bail

You'll have a bail hearing if the police keep you in custody after they arrest you

A bail hearing must happen within 24 hours of when you're arrested

At a bail hearing, a judge or justice of the peace decides if the police can keep you in custody or must let you go

About pleading guilty

You can plead guilty at any point in this process

Your trial

You're found guilty

A pre-sentence report might be prepared for the judge

You have a sentencing hearing

You get a sentence

The court can order more than one type of sentence. Examples of youth sentences are probation, a reprimand, a fine, and a custodial sentence, which is sometimes called time in jail.

Definitions

Acquitted	Acquitted means that the court found you not guilty of the crime you were accused of.
Crown attorney	The Crown attorney , who is sometimes called a prosecutor, is a lawyer who presents the case against you in court.
Crown caution	A Crown caution is when the Crown attorney, who's the lawyer who presents the case against you, explains the impact of what you've done and what the law could do to you if you're caught doing the same thing again. They might tell you this or put it in a letter. You're not found guilty and don't get a youth court record.
Custodial sentence	If you get a custodial sentence , this means that you've been sentenced to stay in a youth custody facility, which is often called jail.
Custody	Being held in custody means that you're not free to go. You might be held in custody by the police. For example, you're in police custody if the police arrest you and are taking you to the police station. Or, the court might order that you be held in custody. This might happen if you're found guilty and sentenced to stay in a youth custody facility, which is often called jail.
Dismissed	If your charges are dismissed , this means that your case is over and you're not found guilty.
Extrajudicial sanctions	Extrajudicial sanctions are special programs that a young person can take part in as a way to take responsibility for a crime without pleading or being found guilty. They're sometimes called "diversion". They aren't offered in every case. They're usually only for minor crimes. If they're offered, you have to decide if you want to take part. If you finish the program, your court case is over and you won't have a youth court record.
Pre-sentence report	A pre-sentence report is a written report that recommends what your sentence should be. It's usually written by a probation officer. The report is based on interviews with you and, if possible, interviews with your family members and the victim of the crime.
Probation	Probation is a sentence where a probation officer supervises you and you have to follow certain conditions, such as reporting to the probation officer and staying out of other legal trouble.
Reprimand	Reprimand is a sentence where you get a warning or lecture from a judge.
Screening by the Crown (reviews your charge)	Screening by the Crown means that the Crown attorney, who's the lawyer who presents the case against you, reviews the criminal charge to see if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there's a reasonable chance that they can prove the case against you • it's in the interest of the public to continue with the criminal charge in court When dealing with young people, the Crown attorney also looks at whether there are other ways to deal with the case without having a trial.
Sentence	A sentence is the punishment that the court gives you if you're found guilty.
Stayed	Stayed means that the judge orders that the court process pause or end. If it's paused, this means that the court process could start again within a year. And if it isn't started again, the court process ends. If it's ended, this means you're not found guilty.
Withdrawn	Withdrawn means that the Crown attorney, who's the lawyer who presents the case against you, decides not to continue with your charges. They can't bring the same charges back. So your case ends and you're not found guilty.