

# Information for Victims of Crime

How the Downtown Community Court works

## What is Downtown Community Court?

- A new approach to addressing crime in our community
- A problem-solving court
- Part of the Provincial Court of British Columbia
- A partnership among justice and social and health care services

## What types of cases does the Downtown Community Court handle?

The Downtown Community Court receives a range of offences that take place within the area outlined on the map at the end of this fact sheet. For example, the community court handles provincial offences such as aggressive panhandling and offences under the Controlled Drug and Substance Act such as simple possession of drugs.

The community court also receives cases involving criminal code offences. Offence types can range from shoplifting and causing a disturbance to more serious crimes such as assault, assault causing bodily harm and impaired driving.

## What will happen when a case you're involved in is heard at the Downtown Community Court?

The process will vary depending on the circumstances of each case. If the accused person accepts responsibility for the criminal charge or pleads guilty, the matter will be dealt with in the Downtown Community Court.

A Community Court victim service worker is available to assist you. The victim service worker can provide you with supportive and practical assistance, which may include:

- information about the Community Court and the criminal justice process;
- information specific to the case you are involved in, including case status updates;
- emotional support;
- assistance with forms, such as a Crime Victim Assistance Program application and Victim Impact Statement;
- assistance with safety planning and registration for victim notification;
- referrals to a victim service program in your community and other support services.

To reach the Community Court victim service worker, you can contact Vancouver's Downtown Community Court at 604-660-9722 and ask for victim services.

For more information about how an accused person proceeds through Community Court, please see the Information for Accused Person fact sheet.



**RESPONSIVE. CONNECTED. COLLABORATIVE.**

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Fax 604 660-9714

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www.communitycourt.ca

### **If a person pleads guilty and is sentenced at Community Court, what kind of sentence can they receive?**

Sentences in the community court focus on holding the offender accountable for their behaviour and managing their risk of re-offending. Much like sentences in Vancouver Provincial Court, Community Court sentences can range from community service to community supervision (e.g., probation, conditional sentence order) to jail time.

In determining sentences the community court judge takes into consideration the type and severity of the crime, and the offender's history. This will include, where possible, the reasons for involvement in criminal activity and the impact of the crime on the victim, including safety issues.

Some offenders coming to Community Court may not be sentenced by the court. If they accept responsibility for their offences they may be dealt with outside the formal court process through "alternative measures." They may be required to make restitution, perform community service or attend educational sessions. The victim service worker is still available to assist victims, even if the offender is dealt with in this manner.

### **Can a victim have a say in the sentencing?**

It is up to the Judge to determine the appropriate sentence. You may wish to complete a Victim Impact Statement for the Community Court judge's consideration prior to sentencing. A Victim Impact Statement is a description of how the crime has affected you. Crime can cause physical, emotional or financial harm. The degree of harm is a factor the judge may consider in determining an appropriate sentence. If you do not wish to do a written statement, but would like the judge to know how the crime has affected you, contact the Community Court victim service worker or Crown counsel.

A victim service worker can assist you with providing victim impact information or completing a Victim Impact Statement. A victim service worker can also provide you with information about the conclusion of the case and refer you to the Victim Safety Unit for post-sentence information.

### **If an accused person pleads not guilty at Community Court, what happens next?**

If the accused person chooses to plead not guilty and to have a trial regarding the charge, the matter will be sent to Vancouver Provincial Court at 222 Main Street for the trial.



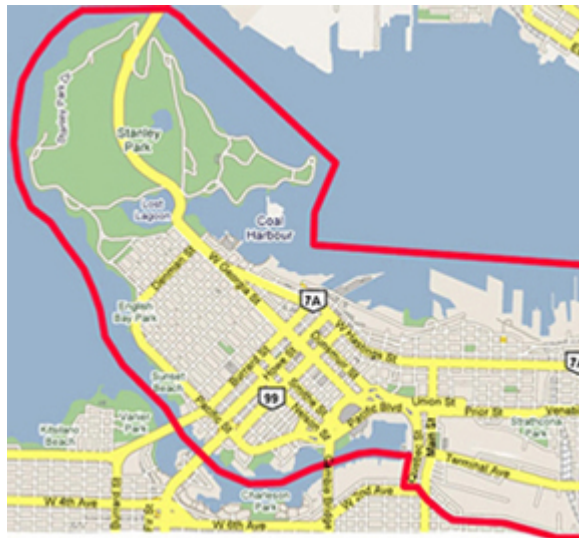
## What will happen when a case you're involved in is moved from the Downtown Community Court to the Provincial Court at 222 Main Street?

If the matter is moved to the Provincial Court at 222 Main Street and a trial date is set you may be required to testify in court as a witness. If your testimony is needed you will receive a notice or subpoena advising you of the date and time of the hearing and courtroom number. The notice will also provide you with a contact number for the witness notifier. You may contact the witness notifier or the Crown counsel office at 604-660-9722 if you have any questions about your attendance at court.

You may have many questions about the trial process and your role as a witness. Crown counsel or a victim service worker can answer your questions and provide you with further information. The Community Court victim service worker can help you connect with a victim service program for assistance and support through the trial process or you can contact VictimLINK at 1-800-563-0808 to locate a victim service program nearest you.

### Jurisdiction – Neighbourhoods Served

- Central Business District  
(including entertainment district)
- Chinatown
- Coal Harbour
- Downtown Eastside
- Gastown
- Strathcona
- Yaletown
- West End  
(including Stanley Park)



The catchment area of the court is downtown Vancouver from Clark Drive on the east to Stanley Park on the west, with Great Northern Way as the southern boundary and the Inner Harbour and Coal Harbour of Burrard Inlet as the northern boundary.

### Downtown Community Court Contact Information

Vancouver's Downtown Community Court  
211 Gore Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. V6A 0B6  
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