

Guide to Youth Criminal Court

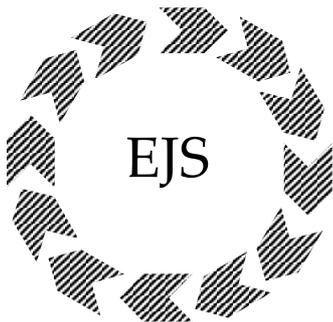


When the police **arrest** you, they can either take you to jail to wait for a bail hearing, or they can release you and tell you when to go to court for your first “set date”.

ARREST

BAIL HEARING

Not everyone has a **bail hearing** – only people the police take straight to jail will have a bail hearing. The only decision made at a bail hearing is whether you will stay in jail until your trial. If you don’t have a bail hearing, the first time you go to court will be for a “set date”.



Extrajudicial Sanctions (EJS): these are special programs that let you take responsibility for your actions without pleading guilty. You might do community service, attend a meeting to discuss your actions, write a letter of apology, or do something else relevant to your case. You can only get EJS if you agree to participate. You should always talk to a lawyer first - EJS can impact your future. If you complete the EJS, your court case will be stopped.

A **set date** is a court appearance. The justice makes sure the court process is going smoothly and decides what date you need to return to court. The prosecutor might give you a copy of all the evidence against you (called “disclosure”). Keep your disclosure safe and give it to your lawyer. There can be many set dates before your trial.

A **Crown meeting** is also called a “Crown pre-trial” (CPT). It is a meeting between your lawyer and the prosecutor. Sometimes a judge will be involved, and this is called a judicial pre-trial (JPT). If you don’t have a lawyer Duty Counsel (free lawyers in court) can have the meeting for you. The lawyers will discuss what options are available, including pleading guilty, going to trial, and extrajudicial sanctions (EJS). After the meeting there will usually be another set date to update the justice.



Never **plead guilty** until you speak to a lawyer. Even if you did what the police say you did, you might have a defence and be not guilty according to the law. Family and friends may want you to plead guilty but they may not understand the impact it can have on your future. Only a lawyer can tell you if pleading guilty is a good option. Pleading guilty can seriously impact your future.

SENTENCING

You always have the right to **a trial**. If you have a trial the prosecutor will have to show the judge enough evidence to prove that you are guilty. If there is not enough evidence, or if the judge does not believe the evidence, then you will be found not guilty.

If you are found guilty at trial, or if you plead guilty, the judge will then decide what punishment or **sentence** you should get.

If you are found **not guilty** then you are free to leave court and there will be no more court appearances.



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