

Did you know?

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BEING A WITNESS

You have received a summons to appear as a witness in a court case. It may ask you to bring relevant documents with you. You are a little nervous because you do not know what to expect. Normally, you are called as a witness because you have important knowledge about the case.

After being served with a subpoena

- Check the name of the lawyer on the subpoena. That is the person who is requesting your presence. In many cases that lawyer has already been in touch with you to review your evidence. The subpoena makes sure that you are legally required to be in court on that specific date. If you do not attend, the lawyer can ask the judge to have you arrested.
- If you think you have a good reason not to be a witness, call the court registry and let them know you want to ask the judge to set aside the subpoena.

Preparing for court

- √ In most cases the lawyer will explain the court procedure to you, if you ask.
- √ Review the events that you witnessed in your mind and try to remember details about descriptions, exactly what was said, and dates.

The Court Date

Bring your subpoena with you when you go to the courthouse lobby. Ask what courtroom you will be in and wait outside until you are called in. You are not allowed to watch the trial until after you have given your evidence and been excused by the trial judge. **Do not discuss your evidence with any other witness.**

Testifying

Make sure you understand the question and think carefully before you answer. Be honest and do not guess. It is perfectly okay to say "I don't know, I can't remember." The lawyer who gave you the subpoena will ask you questions first. Then the opposing lawyer can cross-examine (question) you about the evidence you have given.

For More Information

1. Call the Law Courts Education Society. In Vancouver, call: **604-660-9870**
2. Visit your local courthouse and watch a trial to learn more about the procedure. Most trials are open to the public.
3. If you are a victim (as well as a witness) phone VictimLink at: **1-800-563-0808**