

## **Selection Guidelines for *Law Books for Libraries: Recommended Titles for Public Libraries***

The criterion below guides our decision making in curating our recommended list of titles for public libraries. These guidelines have been created in support of the [Courthouse Libraries BC \(CLBC\) Strategic Plan](#) as well as the [BC Library Association Values Statement](#). We share this document in the interest of transparency and to assist our public library partners select materials for their communities that are not included on the Law Books for Libraries list. The CLBC strategic plan is included here for reference:

**Vision:** Everyone in BC has ready access to the legal information & resources they need.

**Mission:** We provide the legal community and public with legal resources, Librarian expertise & Informed referrals, to help people research and manage their legal issues.

**Values:** Accountability, Excellence, Service, Equity & Inclusion, Adaptability, Kindness

**Strategic Goals:**

1. Expertly curate and protect the quality of our legal information & resources
2. Invest in the acquisition & sharing of staff expertise
3. Reduce barriers to accessing high quality legal information & resources
4. Empower people to effectively research and manage their own or client legal issues

### **LawMatters Selection Criteria**

Please use these criteria when considering materials for purchase that are not on the Law Books for Libraries list. **Before buying**, please share your list with the LawMatters program coordinator for review and approval. If you have any questions about these criteria or the rationale used in applying them, please contact us.

- 1. Jurisdiction:** BC/Canadian law.

To ensure the quality and reliability of legal information in public libraries, all content must be relevant to residents of British Columbia and/or Canada. Selecting materials created for this jurisdiction is of critical importance as resources created for other jurisdictions (e.g., USA, etc.) could contain information that is inaccurate and misleading.

- 2. Currency:** Published within the last 5 years.

Like jurisdiction, currency is critical to ensuring reliability and quality of legal materials. Keeping your selections current to the latest five years will help reduce the likelihood of someone finding misleading information. However, keep in mind that this is a general guideline, not a fixed rule. Depending on the topic and content, some older legal materials are still reliable. See our Retention and Weeding List for a more detailed explanation.

- 3. Practical:** Legal resources for individual citizens rather than legal theory and analysis.

To ensure the accessibility of legal collections, we prioritize plain language practical resources intended to help reduce barriers in understanding and applying legal information. However, this is an ideal and not always possible. Where practical plain language material about *this*

*jurisdiction* is unavailable, it is best to select material that is more advanced from BC or Canada versus something written in more accessible language for another jurisdiction (e.g., USA, etc.).

- 4. Legal:** Resources to include a significant legal component, for example:
- For non-profit organizations and small businesses, there must be a significant legal component and **not** be a resource for a specific business such as *Start and Run a Bed and Breakfast*.
  - Estate planning (primarily law based) but **not** wealth planning (accounting based).

Ensuring significant legal content in each source works towards establishing a carefully curated and relevant collection that will better inform users of the legal dimensions of any given topic, and better empower them to avert or seek solutions to legal issues they may face in their lives.

- 5. Foundational:** Resources that promote a greater understanding of the Canadian justice system overall, with particular focus on truth and reconciliation, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

In the interest of equity, lifelong learning and social responsibility, we encourage a focus on materials that inform BC residents about our fundamental charter rights and freedoms, when they have not been recognized, how past and present systemic racism manifests in our justice system, and efforts made to redress these injustices and build a more equitable and accessible model of justice.

- 6. General Reference:** Legal research/legal procedure/legal dictionaries.

These resources can help explain the basic building blocks of the legal system and the language used within it. As such, they are an important part of reducing barriers to understanding and therefore accessing the justice system.

- 7. Varied:** Where possible avoid duplication of similar titles by several publishers.

If you have suggestions to add to the core list, or comments and questions about these selection guidelines, please contact me anytime.

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