



The Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is entrenched within the Constitution, which means it is a permanent part of the Constitution and cannot be easily changed or ignored by any level of government in Canada.

The *Charter* defines the fundamental freedoms and rights of people in Canada and prohibits governmental officials and agencies from infringing upon the following rights and freedoms.

Fundamental freedoms (section 2)

- Freedom of conscience and religion
- Freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression; and freedom of the press
- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association

Democratic rights (sections 3-5)

- Right for every citizen to vote
- Right to have elections at least every five years

Mobility rights (section 6)

- Right to enter, remain in, or leave Canada
- Right to live, work, or study in any province or territory in Canada

Legal rights (sections 7-14)

- Right to life, liberty, and security of person
- Secure from unreasonable search and seizure
- Right to not be arbitrarily arrested and detained
- Right to a fair trial if accused of a crime
- Right to receive humane treatment

Equality rights (section 15)

- Right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical ability

Official languages of Canada (sections 16-22)

- Right to communicate and receive communication in French or English for any governmental service including the court system

Minority language education rights (section 23)

- Right to be educated in either French or English where sufficient numbers of students exist

Enforcement (section 24)

- Right to take the matter to court should any of the above rights and freedoms be denied

None of these right and freedoms are absolute, which means they may be overridden if there are strong reasons for doing so. Section 1 of the *Charter* contains a clause dealing with reasonable limits which explains the criteria that must be met to justify overriding the rights outlined in the *Charter*.