

Who Qualifies?

Anyone over the age of 18 years who is charged with a minor offence may qualify at the discretion of the Crown.

How is a person referred to the Direct Accountability Program?

The Crown Attorney will notify the accused on or before their first court appearance if they are considered eligible. The accused then meets with the Community Justice Worker at the court. The Worker will gather information and complete an assessment to determine if the person meets the requirements of the Program.

Counsel or Duty Counsel can provide some information about eligibility. The accused should ask for legal advice from Counsel about their rights, the benefits of the program and the legal implications of agreeing to participate in the program.

To be considered eligible for the Program the accused must:

- Be willing to accept responsibility for the actions that led to the charge.

- Be willing to make amends to the community for their offence through an assigned task or “sanction”.
- Complete an Agreement, which outlines the terms of the sanction.

What is expected of me if I agree to participate in the Program?

The Community Justice Worker’s assessment of you will include determining your ability and willingness to make amends for the offence. The Community Justice Worker will discuss the sanctions you are to complete and set a time limit to complete them.

Some of the sanctions available through the Direct Accountability Program include:

- Restitution
- Volunteer work
- Charitable donation
- Attending a program or presentation
- An apology
- Peace Bond

By successfully completing the sanction(s) imposed, you can be held accountable for your behaviour directly and can have the charge(s) withdrawn or stayed by the Crown.

How long does it take to complete the Direct Accountability Program?

Cases referred to the Direct Accountability Program can be resolved as quickly as the same day, but some cases may require an adjournment for a period of time for participants to fulfill the terms of their sanction(s).

What are the benefits of the Program?

- It allows for the efficient resolution of some minor court matters.
- It saves on the amount of time victims and witnesses may have to spend in court.
- It recognizes that community-based sanctions can be an effective way of holding some people accountable for some minor offences.
- It holds people accountable for their actions while ensuring they also make amends for the harm caused.

Is participation in the Direct Accountability Program mandatory?

Participation is voluntary.

People who are not accepted into the Program or who don't successfully complete the Program will be returned to the formal court process.

Is there a cost to participate in the Program?

No, the program is offered at no charge.

Participants, however, may be expected to pay restitution or make a charitable donation as part of their assigned sanction.

Is a record kept?

Although there is no conviction following successful completion of the program, records of participation are kept for two years and can be brought forward if the accused re-offends during this period.

**Serving
Ontario Court of Justice**

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For more information, please contact:

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THE DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM

For Adults 18 Years & Older

What is the Direct Accountability Program?

The Direct Accountability Program is an alternative to formal prosecution for people who have been charged with minor criminal offences. The program involves accused persons being held accountable through community-based sanctions.