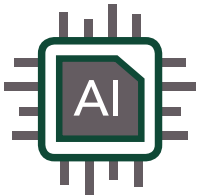


# SALI

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Saskatchewan Access  
to Legal Information

## Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Tools to Obtain Legal Information



Public use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is commonplace and GenAI outputs are increasingly embedded in digital technologies, including the GenAI summaries at the top of every internet search.

It is important that the public understands how to use GenAI tools when finding legal information.

### What is GenAI?

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GenAI is artificial intelligence that creates new content (text, images, audio and video) by analyzing large datasets and predicting patterns. It does not think independently but **generates outputs based on learned structures and predictions**. While GenAI tools have the potential to increase the accessibility of information and assist the public with legal information navigation, concerns about accuracy, currency, hallucinations (made-up information) and privacy exist.

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# Key Points

Considerations **before**, **during**, and **after** using GenAI tools to obtain legal information.

## Before Use

1. Understand what makes legal information credible.
2. Determine whether the tool generates information from large uncurated datasets or curated datasets:
  - **Curated tools, purpose-built for legal information (e.g., a British Columbia tool called Beagle+ or a national tool called CanLII) lessen risks, but the information generated should be verified as credible.**
  - Uncurated, general-purpose tools (for example, ChatGPT, CoPilot, and Perplexity) are not purpose-built for legal information and carry higher risks.
3. Consider the risks of using a GenAI tool.



## During Use

4. Prompt the tool with clear and specific questions and statements to generate the most accurate results. Please see the examples of prompts below.
5. Understand that while clear prompting or using a curated purpose-built tool may reduce the risks, the output may still be incomplete, inaccurate, or hallucinated.
6. Often, the first prompt or question does not yield the desired information. Ask new prompts based on the initial output from the tool to get more detail or clarity or to have the information presented in alternate ways.



## After Use

7. Review and analyze the results.
8. **Verify that the content generated by the tool is credible:**
  - Review SALI's companion Quick Reference Guide to Legal Information and Assistance Sources to learn about the sources of credible Saskatchewan legal information that may be consulted.
  - Members of the public may want to speak to a legal professional to verify that the information generated by the tool is credible. Legal professionals are best qualified to assist someone experiencing a legal issue. Information about finding legal assistance can be found in the Quick Reference Guide.

## Learn More



### What is Legal Information and What Makes it Credible?

Legal information is general information about the law and legal procedures. Regardless of format (digital or print), consider these factors when looking for credible legal information:

- **Source:** the source (author or organization responsible for creating the content) of the legal information and its authority, purpose, and objectivity.
- **Currency:** legal information must be up-to-date as the law changes regularly.
- **Jurisdiction:** legal information must relate to the jurisdiction (country, area, or province) where the legal problem arose.

Learn more by reviewing [Saskatchewan's Legal Information Guidelines](#).

## Risks of Using GenAI Tools to Obtain Legal Information

The risks of using GenAI tools to obtain legal information include:

- **Accuracy:** GenAI tools may provide inaccurate, hallucinated, or vague legal information, mainly because they pull from large datasets without jurisdictional borders. They also struggle to incorporate legal authorities, stay fully updated on legal changes, or account for jurisdictional differences.
- **Confidentiality:** GenAI tools learn from each interaction, raising concerns about privacy and the security of sensitive legal information.
- **Cost:** Submitting inaccurate or hallucinated content generated by a GenAI tool to a court may result in a judicial warning or financial consequences if the court orders a cost award. Learn [more](#).
- **Currency:** GenAI tools need to be updated, and there is no set structure for how often this happens, so the tool may not have access to the most current law.
- **Jurisdiction:** GenAI tools may provide legal information that is not relevant to Saskatchewan or a specific location.
- **Limitations:** GenAI tools cannot provide reliable legal advice as they cannot think or understand a user's unique situation.
- **Verification:** Responses from GenAI tools may lack links to sources, making it difficult to verify or trace the origin of the information.

### Curated Purpose-built GenAI Tools

Some GenAI tools are curated, meaning they are limited to searching content from selected sources or are purpose-built for legal information. Examples include CanLII's GenAI plain language law summaries. Closed or purpose-built tools may provide additional safeguards that reduce, though not eliminate, these risks. The information generated should still be verified as credible.

### Uncurated General Purpose GenAI Tools

Some GenAI tools, like ChatGPT or CoPilot, are uncurated, general-purpose tools. This means that they are trained on huge datasets that are not limited by source. These tools can provide broad answers to many types of questions. The outputs may be incomplete or outdated. Some of these tools have the ability to browse the internet, while others respond based solely on their training data.

# Prompting GenAI Tools

How a question is worded can impact the accuracy and quality of AI-generated information. Well-structured prompts (questions) may reduce, though not eliminate, the risks.

**Legal information prompts should be clear and specific and reflect the following factors:**

- **Area of Law:** Define the area of law for which the legal information is sought. Additionally, the sub-area may also be defined.

*For example: "I want information on family law, specifically divorce."*

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- **Jurisdiction:** Specify the area, country, or province where the legal problem or need for legal information arose. Additionally, the specific court level or legal jurisdiction involved could be indicated.

*For example: "The case is being handled in the Saskatchewan Court of King's Bench."*

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- **Current:** Specify that the most up-to-date legal information, including recent developments, is being sought.

*For example: "I am seeking the most up-to-date information regarding divorce law in Saskatchewan, including any recent legislative changes or court decisions in the past year."*

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- **Type:** Specify the type of legal information sought. For example, commentary that explains the law, court cases, legislation, step-by-step guides, or assistance with forms.

*For example: "I would like legal commentary explaining the divorce process in Saskatchewan. Additionally, a summary of any relevant recent court cases would be helpful."*

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- **Context:** Include relevant background, facts, or circumstances surrounding the legal problem or need for legal information.

*For example: "I am filing for divorce. I have been married for 12 years, have two children (ages 8 and 10), and there is a disagreement about the division of property. We have no prenuptial agreement."*

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- **Clear:** Structure the question so it is easy to understand, flows logically, uses direct language, and avoids unclear, vague, or broad language. Additionally, provide clear instructions regarding output.

*For example: "Please provide a clear, step-by-step explanation of the divorce process in Saskatchewan."*

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- **References:** Request references to credible sources for the information generated. Examples may include citations to legal commentary, court cases, legislation, or authoritative websites.

*For example: "Please include references to authoritative sources such as Saskatchewan family laws, recent court cases on divorce, the Public Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan website, and Saskatchewan government websites."*

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**GenAI tools can be prompted individually (as above) or with one piece of longer text containing multiple prompts.**

## Further Learning/Works Cited

SALI encourages further learning about GenAI. The following sources that SALI reviewed may be helpful:

- Federal Court of Canada. (n.d.). *Artificial intelligence (AI) and the judiciary: Considerations, risks, and safeguards*. Federal Judicial Affairs Canada. <https://fja-cmf.gc.ca/COVID-19/Artificial-Intelligence-Intelligence-artificielle-eng.html>
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The **Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information (SALI) initiative**, a group dedicated to making it easier to connect with credible legal information, has created a guide to support informed GenAI tool use. Legal information providers can help build legal information literacy among the public by explaining how GenAI works, the risks of relying on legal information produced by GenAI, the markers of credible legal information, and directing to reliable legal information sources.

This guide [cites](#) and builds on several sources and was drafted with the help of ChatGPT, Co-Pilot, and Grammarly.

GenAI technology is changing rapidly. This information will be updated as the technology evolves. Please contact SALI at [sali\\_project@usask.ca](mailto:sali_project@usask.ca) to discuss this topic further or for additional guidance.