

[www.canada.ca /en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-against-law.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/cyberbullying/cyberbullying-against-law.html)

Cyberbullying can be against the law. (2021, February 2). Government of Canada.

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Cyberbullying can be against the law

Public Safety Canada : 3-4 minutes

Cyberbullying can have serious consequences

Cyberbullying hurts other people, and can change lives. Some of the actions taken when cyberbullying occurs can also be against the law. Cyberbullies can face jail time, have their devices taken away, and may even have to pay their victims.

Possible criminal charges

Depending on the conduct of the cyberbully, those involved could be charged with the following offences under Canada's *Criminal Code*:

- [Sharing intimate images without consent](#)
- [Criminal harassment](#)
- [Uttering threats](#)
- [Intimidation](#)
- [Mischief in relation to data](#)
- [Unauthorized use of computer](#)
- [Identity theft](#)
- [Extortion](#)
- [False messages, indecent or harassing telephone calls](#)
- [Counselling suicide](#)
- [Incitement of hatred](#)
- [Defamatory libel](#)
- [Public incitement of hatred](#)
- [Offence against the person and reputation](#)

Sharing intimate images without consent

Sharing intimate or sexual images or videos of a person without their consent is a crime. This law is in place to protect privacy and applies to everyone's privacy and applies to everyone — not just people under 18.

Distributing intimate images and videos without the consent of the person in them is a common form of cyberbullying. It often appears as a form of revenge after a fight or breakup. No matter the reason, this kind of cyberbullying can be devastating to a person's self-esteem, reputation, and mental health. In extreme cases, these acts have played a part in suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

Judges have the authority to order the removal of these images from the internet.

Anyone convicted of distributing an intimate image without consent could face serious legal consequences. For example:

- They could be imprisoned for up to five years.
- Their computer, phone or other device used to share the image could be taken away.
- They could be ordered to pay the victim back for the costs involved in removing the intimate image from the internet or elsewhere.

Legal definition of an intimate image

An “intimate image” is defined as an image that depicts a person engaged in explicit sexual activity or that depicts a sexual organ, anal region or breast. Furthermore, the image would have to be one where the person depicted had a reasonable expectation of privacy at the time of the recording and had not relinquished his or her privacy interest at the time of the offence.

Learn more about privacy and preventing of crime

- [Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada](#)
Information on Youth Privacy and tools to help advise youth about the relevance and importance of privacy when using digital technologies.
- [RCMP's Centre for Youth Crime Prevention](#)
Provides Canadians with age-appropriate crime prevention messages, information, tools and programs to prevent youth crime and victimization.