when you turn 18

A Survival Guide for Teenagers

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Congratulations. At age 18, you’ve reached an important milestone. You are now an adult in the eyes of the law. You can rent your own apartment, take charge of your finances and even buy a car on your own—all without a parent’s consent or assistance. You can now enter into legal contracts and vote in elections. In short, you now have the right to make many important decisions about where you live, what you do and how you shape your future.

But adulthood also brings new responsibilities and consequences. Your parents no longer have to support you. You can now be sued personally. You are responsible for paying your own income taxes. You must register for the military if you are a young man. And if you commit a crime, you will not have the protection of the juvenile court and laws; you could wind up in jail for something that, at a younger age, might have resulted in no more than a stern lecture and a ride home in a police car.

This guide touches on some of the laws that may apply to you at this turning point. Keep in mind that laws are constantly subject to change. If you have a specific legal problem, you may want to consult an attorney.

Reaching the Age of Majority

You may already have a driver’s license. (You were eligible for a provisional driver’s license at age 16.) But now that you are 18, the law allows you to drive differently. For example, you can now be employed as a driver. On the other hand, being caught with a beer or other alcoholic beverage—whether you are in a car or far from one—could still result in the temporary loss of your driving privileges.

The greatest change may be that the law now holds you (not your parents) responsible for your actions. At age 18, you assume liability for your actions. At age 18, you assume liability for your driving privileges.

Do I need my own car insurance?

It depends on your circumstances. By law, the car that you drive must be insured. And you must carry proof of insurance or certain other financial responsibility when driving. (VC § 16020) Typically, your parents could simply add you to their policy if you are living at home and will be driving the family car. But if you plan to move out or go away to college and take the car with you, your parents should contact their insurance agent or company to discuss the change. Depending on the situation, you might need to purchase your own insurance at that point.

If you buy a car on your own, you will need your own insurance. And it is a good idea to bring proof of it (or certain other financial responsibility) with you to the DMV when you register your car. Also, when you buy a car, you will receive the California Certificate of Title commonly known as the pink slip) as your proof of ownership. The seller is required to sign the pink slip and notify the DMV within five days to finalize the transfer and be discharged from liability. You would have to have the pink slip recorded with the DMV as well within 10 days. (VC §§ 4000, 4150, 5600, 5900, 5902). For more detailed information on California’s car insurance requirements and low-cost automobile insurance program, go to dmv.ca.gov or insurance.ca.gov.

If I don’t already have a driver’s license at age 18, how do I get one?

First of all, you no longer have to meet the special requirements and restrictions that apply to younger drivers. For example, you do not have to complete formal driver’s ed or training or to apply for a driver’s license. Instead, you must simply:

- Give your full name.
- Give a fingerprint scan.
- Pass a vision exam.
- Provide your Social Security number.
- Verify your birth date and legal presence.
- Have your picture taken.
- Fill out an application and pay a fee.

Key Code Abbreviations

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Note: The symbols § and §§ refer to “section” and “sections” in the laws cited throughout the guide.
A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS

in which a tenant can be evicted.

should know your rights and obligations if you plan to rent a place to live.

in college and leasing an apartment with other students. Or you may be saving up for the day when you can afford to move out on your own. In any case, you must be sitting close enough to grab the steering wheel if necessary. Then, you will have to have the permit for six months before such a license could be issued. Also, keep in mind that you must wear a approved helmet when riding a motorcycle—either as the driver or passenger—or you would be breaking the law. (VC §§ 22059.5, 27803)

What could happen if I drive after drinking a beer or two?

You would be putting yourself and others in danger. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15- to 20-year-olds. And statistics suggest that one in three young drivers killed in car crashes had been drinking alcohol beforehand.

In addition, it is illegal for anyone to drive under the influence of alcohol. If you are under 21, you cannot drive with a blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.01 percent or higher. Drivers who are 21 or older cannot have a BAC of 0.08 percent or more. (VC §§ 23123, 23123(b))

If a police officer stops you for driving under the influence, he or she can administer a breath, blood or urine test to determine your blood-alcohol level. If you refuse to take the test, you will face serious penalties. You could be fined or jailed and have your license suspended or revoked for up to three years. (VC §§ 23534, 23136, 23120)

Also, you could still be convicted of DUI even if a breath, blood or urine test is not performed. A chemical test is not required for a conviction if the judge or jury concludes that the person under age 21 drank alcohol and drove a vehicle. And if you are convicted, it could mean a stiff fine, jail time and even suspension or revocation of your driver’s license. (VC §§ 23140, 23536)

What could happen if police catch me drinking alcohol at a party?

If you are under 21 and are cited, you could wind up with a suspended driver’s license—even if you were nowhere near a car at the time. Young people between 13 and 21 can have their licenses suspended, restricted or delayed for up to one year for each offense related to the possession, consumption or purchase of alcohol. (BAPC §§ 25658, 25662; VC § 13202.5)

Do bicycle riders have to follow the same traffic laws as motorists?

Yes, for the most part. Bicycle riders must stop at stop signs and red lights, ride on the proper side of the street, use bicycle lanes and give the right-of-way to all pedestrians. In addition, it is illegal to ride a bike while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Nighttime bicyclists must have a bike equipped with a front light, red rear reflector, pedal reflectors and side reflectors or reflectorized tires. Wearing a radio headset is prohibited while riding a bike. And the number of people who can ride on a bike is limited to the number of seats. It is against the law to ride on someone’s handlebars or center frame bar or over the rear tire. (VC §§ 22100, 22104)

You may be renting your first apartment. You may be going away to college and leasing an apartment with other students. Or you may be saving up for the day when you can afford to move out on your own. In any case, you should know your rights and obligations if you plan to rent a place to live.

Are all rental agreements alike?

No. You might sign a lease—a contract that sets the conditions for renting the apartment—for a specific time period. Or the landlord may rent the apartment to you on a month-to-month basis. (Even with a month-to-month rental, however, your landlord must give you 30 days’ advance notice if he or she plans to raise your rent or ask you to move out.)

In addition, check the local rules for rental housing. Some cities have special ordinances limiting how much the rent can be raised and the situations in which a tenant can be evicted.

Must a lease be written to be enforceable? Not unless the lease is for longer than one year.

Laws that Young Drivers Should Know:

Reckless driving: California law prohibits driving a vehicle on a highway or in an off-street parking facility in willful or wanton disregard for the safety of others or property. It also provides for more severe punishment for reckless drivers who cause injury or death. (VC §§ 23103, 23104)

Speed contests: Speed contests are against the law. A judge can suspend or restrict a first-time offender’s driver’s license for up to six months, impound the vehicle for 30 days and send the driver to jail for 90 days, as well as impose fines and community service. And if someone else other than the driver is injured, the driver could face additional penalties. (VC §§ 23169-23109)

Littering and throwing objects at or from a vehicle: California law makes it a misdemeanor to throw anything at or from a moving vehicle, and a felony to do so if the intent is to seriously harm someone. The law also prohibits littering or throwing objects at or from a moving vehicle. (VC §§ 23234, 23234.5)

Hit and run: In California, you must stop after any accident in which someone is injured or another person’s property is damaged. You also must exchange names, addresses, driver’s licenses, vehicle license numbers and other relevant information. If anyone is injured or dies in the collision, the accident must be reported within 24 hours to the California Highway Patrol (CHP) or to police. When property damage alone is involved, the maximum penalty for failing to report such damage or notify the property owner is six months in jail and/or a $1,000 fine. If someone is injured, the penalty could be as stiff as a $10,000 fine and/or one year in jail, in addition to any liability for the injury. (VC §§ 20061-68)

Driving without a license: It is a misdemeanor to drive without a valid driver’s license or permit in California. (VC §§ 23101, 23102)

Cell phones and driving: It is against the law to use a cell phone while driving unless you are at least 18 and your cell phone is set up for hands-free use, or you are making an emergency call (to law enforcement, for example). And it is illegal for anyone to use an “electronic wireless communications device” to text or write, send or receive any other type of electronic communication while driving. (Simply entering a phone number or name to make or receive a call would be an exception.) (VC §§ 23212, 23212.5, 23214)

Seat belts/child passenger restraints: It is illegal to operate a motor vehicle unless the driver and all passengers are properly restrained by safety belts. (VC § 27315) Violators can be fined. Children must be seated in federally approved safety seats until they are either 6 years old or weigh 60 pounds. They must sit in a back seat, if there is one, and unless all rear seats are already occupied by children under 12. Children who are under a year old or are restrained in a rear-facing car seat or weigh less than 20 pounds are not permitted to ride in the front seat with an air bag. (VC §§ 27320, 27360.5) Note: Legislation still pending in 2011, however, would change the law and impose certain car seat requirements up to age 8. For more information, call the Vehicle Safety Hotline at 1-800-424-9393 or go to safecar.gov.

Unattended children: It is against the law to leave a child (age 6 or younger) unattended in a motor vehicle if the child will be at risk if or until the engine is running and the keys are in the ignition. In such situations, the child must be supervised by a responsible person age 12 or older. (VC § 15620, PC §§ 192, 273a)

Road rage: A driver might cut you off and nearly cause an accident, but avoid taking matters into your own hands. Road rage can result in a six-month suspension of your driver’s license or other driving penalties for “road rage” course, and could even land you in jail. Or you could be charged with assault with a deadly weapon and face up to four years in prison and a $10,000 fine. (VC § 13201, PC § 245(a))

Smoking, cars and kids: Do not smoke a pipe, cigar or cigarette in a vehicle—whether it is moving or parked—if anyone under 16 is in the car. If you light up with an underage youth on board, you could be cited for an infraction and fined up to $100. (HS&C §§ 118047-118049)

Blaring music and loud horns: Think twice before cranking up your car’s sound system or missing your horn while on the road. Such noise could lead to a ticket or even, in some instances, misdemeanor charges. Generally, the car horn can only be used as a warning “when reasonably necessary to insure safe operation” of the car or as a theft alarm system. And your music (or other sound amplification system) is too loud if it can be heard from 50 feet away. This would not apply to certain sound systems, such as those used for emergencies, advertising or political events. (VC §§ 27001, 27007; PC § 415)

Passengers in the trunk: Riding in the trunk of a car is illegal. In recent years, teens have been hurt and, in some cases, killed while riding in trunk cars. If a driver allows someone to ride in the trunk, he or she has broken the law as well. (VC § 21712)

Obscuring your license plate: It is illegal to use or sell any product (such as a special coating) intended to obscure the reading of a car’s license plate by certain electronic devices. Such electronic devices, for example, are those operated by law enforcement and those used in connection with toll roads, high-occupancy toll lanes and toll bridges. Selling or using any such product could lead to a fine. (VC §§ 5201(g), 5201(j))

Driving with a Global Positioning System (GPS): Mount that GPS carefully. If placed on the dash, it could only be placed in a seven-inch square in the lower corner farthest away from the driver or in a five-inch square in the lower corner of the windshield closest to the driver. (VC § 26708(b)(12))
What is a security deposit?

It is money that the landlord holds as security against property damages, unclean conditions and unpaid rent. A written lease usually outlines the way in which a security deposit will be handled and what the tenant—the person renting the apartment—needs to do to get it back. (CC § 1950.5) Check your local ordinances; they may regulate security deposits.

The owner must return all of your security deposit no later than three weeks after you move, or tell you in writing why you did not get it back. Also, he or she must account for how your money was spent.

What if I don’t pay my rent on time?

If you do not pay your rent when it is due, your landlord can give you a notice to pay up or leave within three days.

Is the landlord required to keep my apartment in good shape?

The landlord’s general duty, unless your lease says otherwise, is to keep the premises in a “reasonable state of repair.” However, if something is damaged and the damage was your fault, you would be responsible for the repair. (CC §§ 1941.1, 1941.2)

You cannot be legally evicted for simply reporting building code violations to your local building inspector. When conditions are so bad that the premises are “uninhabitable,” you should consult an attorney about possible claims against the landlord and about whether you can move out and avoid further rent. (CC §§ 1941-1942.5; H & S C § 17920.3)

Can my landlord enter my apartment without asking me?

Yes, but only to protect the premises in emergencies or unusual situations. If a bathtub overflows in the apartment above yours, for example, the owner could check your apartment for water damage even if you are not home. The owner could enter your apartment during normal business hours for certain other reasons as well if he or she has provided a 24-hour written notice. For example, if you plan to move, the owner has a right to show the apartment to prospective tenants. Or the owner might need to have an electrician check the wiring. Any other such entry (without your permission or without advance notice) may be trespassing. (CC § 1954)

If I decide to move, do I have to give the landlord any advance notice?

Yes. You must give reasonable notice before the end of a rental period—in most cases, that’s a month’s notice. However, if you would be breaking your lease by moving out, the requirements would depend on the terms of the lease. You could wind up liable for the period that the apartment remains unoccupied. (CC §§ 1946, 1951.2)

What if I break a lease, can I be sued?

You can probably be sued for:

• All unpaid rent.
• Any physical damage, including unusual cleaning expenses.
• Advertising expenses and other costs of re-renting the apartment.
• The landlord’s attorney fees, if the lease provides for it. (CC § 1717)

Can a landlord legally refuse to rent to me because of my race or disability?

No. It is against the law to discriminate in renting, leasing or selling housing on the basis of race, national origin, sex, marital status, color, religion, sexual orientation or disability. (CC §§ 51-53, 1940.3; Govt.C § 12955)

As a young adult, you will have many new opportunities for fun and games. Keep in mind, however, that there are legal limits. For example, if your parties “disturb the peace,” a police officer may be knocking on your door. If you disrupt a professional sporting event by throwing something onto the field, you could face a fine. And if you are subjected to dangerous rituals during your initiation into a college fraternity, someone could wind up in jail.

When would a party be disruptive enough to illegally disturb the peace?

Police officers could break up your party—and, depending on the circumstances, make arrests—if the festivities include: fighting, loud music, rowdiness and/or loud, unreasonable noise. (PC § 415)

What can I do if strangers “crash” my party?

You can ask police to kick them out. Crashing a party is trespassing and is illegal. (PC §§ 403, 602.5)

Are there legal limits to what can happen during a college fraternity initiation?

Yes. It is against the law for any initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization to involve hazing. Hazing is any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization which causes (or is likely to cause) physical danger or harm, or personal degradation or disgrace resulting in physical or mental harm to any student or other person attending any educational institution in California. If you participate in hazing, you could be fined up to $5,000 and/or sent to jail. (PC § 245.6) You could also be liable for civil damages.

What could happen if I’m caught spray-painting graffiti?

Expressing yourself with spray paint on someone else’s property could land you in jail, or even prison, and could cost you as much as $50,000 in fines, depending on the extent of damage. You also could be required to pay for repairing the damaged property and be forced to work on a work crew to remove graffiti in your area. (PC § 594(b))

Do I need a special license to operate a motorboat?

No. But take the time to learn the speed limits and right-of-way rules. And if you plan to tow a water-ski, know where and how to do it. As the boat operator, you could be held responsible for any accidents. And while alcohol may be present on a boat, it is illegal for the driver to be under the influence. If a drunken boat operator is at the helm when a fatal accident occurs, he or she could be charged with gross vehicular manslaughter. (PC §§ 191.5-193.5) If you are under 21, you cannot operate any recreational vessel or water ski with 0.01 percent or more blood-alcohol concentration. (H & D N C § 655.6)

What are the advantages of putting it in writing?

With a written lease, you will have:

• A better idea of your rights and obligations.
• Some protection against dishonesty.
• Some protection against poor memory.

Printed-form leases, however, often favor the landlord. Keep in mind that you don’t have to use the forms as printed. If your landlord agrees, you can modify the form to suit your situation. And if any outdated, legally invalid rules do appear in the signed lease, you are not bound by them.

If I sign a lease with three friends and they move out, do I have to pay the full rent or only my share?

It depends on what your lease says. You will probably have to pay the full rent. You would then have a claim against your friends and could sue them.

If I decide to move, do I have to give the landlord any advance notice?

Yes. You must give reasonable notice before the end of a rental period—in most cases, that’s a month’s notice. However, if you would be breaking your lease by moving out, the requirements would depend on the terms of the lease. You could wind up liable for the period that the apartment remains unoccupied. (CC §§ 1946, 1951.2)
associated with “date rape” in which a drug is slipped into an unsuspecting victim’s drink to pave the way for a sexual assault (see Sex and the Law). And in a recent survey, a troubling number of teens—one in 16 high school seniors—admitted using marijuana every day or almost every day.

When I turn 18, can I legally buy any type of alcoholic beverage?

Yes. When I turn 18, can I legally buy any type of alcoholic beverage?

Yes. Either way, you would be breaking the law. Also, the person who provided you with the false identification would also be committing a crime as well. You cannot lend, borrow or alter a driver’s license or other identification in any way. (B&PC §§ 25660.5, 25661; VC § 144610)

Are there laws that address underage drinking at parties?

Yes. A police officer (who lawfully enters the gathering) can seize alcoholic beverages from anyone under 21 at an unsanctioned social gathering. Under California law, an unsanctioned social gathering is a public event or event that is attended by 10 or more people under age 21 and is not supervised by a parent or guardian of any of the participants. (B&PC § 25626.5)

The punishment for violating liquor laws varies. The offender may be found guilty of an infraction or a misdemeanor. For example, the offense is an infraction if the young person is under 18. For the offense of possessing open alcoholic beverages in a place; carry liquor in a car; or be a passenger in a car carrying liquor unless you’re accompanied by a parent, responsible adult relative or any other adult designated by the parent or legal guardian—even if the container is sealed. (B&PC § 25662 & VC § 21224)

If I call 911 because one of my friends needs medical help after a night of drinking alcohol, could I be arrested for underage drinking? No. If someone needs help, call 911.

Could I get in trouble for using someone else’s driver’s license or altering my own to make it appear that I am 21?

Yes. Even convicted of a second or subsequent receiving one.

Alcohol and the law

It is illegal to:

- Drink while driving, or to possess any open alcoholic beverage in the car (or off-highway vehicle) or drive while under the influence of alcoholic beverages (VC §§ 23152, 23220-23226).
- Be drunk or under the influence of drugs in public or on a public highway and be a condition that poses a threat to oneself or others. (PC §§ 647(f); VC §§ 23152, 23220)
- Possess or drink liquor or sell or give it to anyone else at any public school or on public school grounds, with some exceptions. (B&PC § 25608)
- Allow anyone under 21 to hang around a location where liquor is sold (except for a restaurant). (B&PC §§ 25567(b), 25665)
- Have any open alcoholic beverage in any city- or county-owned park or certain other public places without a special license or unless you are recycling the container. (For this law to be in effect, the city or county must have its own local rule—also called an ordinance—prohibiting open alcoholic beverages in specific areas.) (B&PC § 25620)

And if you are under 21, you cannot:

- Possess liquor or any roadway or in any public place; carry liquor in a car; or be a passenger in a car carrying liquor unless you’re accompanied by a parent, responsible adult relative or any other adult designated by the parent or legal guardian—even if the container is sealed. (B&PC § 25662 & VC § 21224)
- Enter and remain in a bar without lawful business. (B&PC § 25665)
- Be hired to work in any establishment whose main business is selling alcoholic beverages for use on the premises. If you are under 18, you cannot work anywhere in which alcoholic beverages are purchased for take-out (a liquor or convenience store, for example) unless you are under the continuous supervision of someone who is at least 21 (B&PC § 25663)
- Possess a controlled substance to a minor. And if you
  convicted of distribution, you could face imprisonment and a fine.

Could I lose my driver’s license if I’m convicted of drug possession? Yes. All non-medical use of anabolic steroids is illegal. And if you are convicted of drug—because you are being used illegally if you are participating or assisting others in their use. (HSC §§ 110145, 11364-65)

If I use steroids to build up my muscles and improve my game, am I breaking the law?

Yes. Unless you have permission or are on the zoo staff or are a public officer doing your job, you would be guilty of an infraction or a misdemeanor.

If I get caught selling drugs at a school, would I face a stiffer penalty?

Yes. California law imposes severe penalties on anyone 18 or older who illegally sells or gives a controlled substance to another person, especially a minor. And if you do so at a school or within 1,000 feet of one during school hours, you could face as much as nine years in prison. (HSC §§ 11353.1, 11353.6)

Is it against the law to possess a controlled substance prescribed for someone else?

Yes. The unauthorized possession of certain types of prescription drugs, including anabolic steroids, could land you in jail or even prison. Also, keep in mind that the use of someone else’s prescription drugs can be just as dangerous—and illegal—as using illegal street drugs. (B&PC § 4006; HSC §§ 11007, 11350-353.7)

Sex and the Law

Yes. Possession of drug paraphernalia—any equipment designed to help grow, make or use a controlled substance—is illegal. Also, it is against the law for you to be present anywhere (a party, for example) where controlled substances are being used illegally if you are participating or assisting others in their use. (HSC §§ 110145, 11364-65)

Could I get in trouble just for holding a friend’s roach clip or drug pipe?

Yes.

When I turn 18, can I legally buy any type of alcoholic beverage?

Yes. State law imposes severe penalties on anyone 18 or older who illegally sells or gives a controlled substance to anyone under 21. In prison and a $50,000 fine, depending on the type of drug and the quantity. (HSC §§ 11351-11352.5)

A drug conviction could endanger your future schooling as well. If you are convicted of possession or distribution of a controlled substance, you could be barred from receiving benefits—including student grants and loans—from any program using federal funding, except for certain long-term drug treatment programs. (21 USC § 860)

For more information on the nature of misdemeanors, felonies and other crimes, see the section entitled Crimes and Consequences.

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- Possess or drink liquor or sell or give it to anyone else at any public school or on public school grounds, with some exceptions. (B&PC § 25608)
- Allow anyone under 21 to hang around a location where liquor is sold (except for a restaurant). (B&PC §§ 25567(b), 25665)
- Have any open alcoholic beverage in any city- or county-owned park or certain other public places without a special license or unless you are recycling the container. (For this law to be in effect, the city or county must have its own local rule—also called an ordinance—prohibiting open alcoholic beverages in specific areas.) (B&PC § 25620)

And if you are under 21, you cannot:

- Possess liquor or any roadway or in any public place; carry liquor in a car; or be a passenger in a car carrying liquor unless you’re accompanied by a parent, responsible adult relative or any other adult designated by the parent or legal guardian—even if the container is sealed. (B&PC § 25662 & VC § 21224)
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- Be hired to work in any establishment whose main business is selling alcoholic beverages for use on the premises. If you are under 18, you cannot work anywhere in which alcoholic beverages are purchased for take-out (a liquor or convenience store, for example) unless you are under the continuous supervision of someone who is at least 21 (B&PC § 25663)
- Possess a controlled substance to a minor. And if you are convicted of distribution, you could face imprisonment and a fine.

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You can now sign legal contracts, open bank accounts and apply for loans on your own. Such independence, however, could also make it easier to get in over your head. Many young people do. And if you are 18, your parents do not have to bail you out financially—it’s your choice. You have many options these days in how you handle your money—from debit cards to online banking to money transfers via your smart phone. Before you make any financial decisions in these tough economic times, learn the benefits, pitfalls, rules and restrictions.

What is a contract?

A contract is an agreement between two or more competent parties. Contracts may be oral or written and must be legal. A contract could, for example, involve a large purchase, such as a new car, for which you agree to make installment payments. Or you might sign a contract to lease an apartment for a year or to buy an insurance policy with annual premiums or to make installment payments. Or you might sign a contract to lease an apartment for a year or to buy an insurance policy with annual premiums or to make installment payments. Or you might sign a contract to lease an apartment for a year or to buy an insurance policy with annual premiums or to make installment payments.

Who can make a contract?

You can—if you’re at least 18 years old and of sound mind. When considering any contract, however, take some precautions:

- Read the contract completely before signing it.
- Do not sign anything until you fully understand the agreement.
- If you don’t agree with something in the contract, talk to the other party about altering or removing it.
- Do not sign a contract with blank spaces—fill them in or cross them out.
- Be sure to keep a signed copy of the contract.

What happens if I break a contract because I didn’t understand it?

Not understanding a contract generally is not an excuse for breaking the agreement. It’s up to you to understand the terms of the contract before you sign it. Breaching a contract—failing to pay a debt according to the contract’s terms, for example—can lead to serious consequences:

- You could be sued and be required to appear before a judge. If you lose your case, you may have to pay the judgment plus interest and, in some cases, the other side’s costs and attorney fees if the contract requires it.
- If you have an unpaid debt, you may work out an agreement to pay your debt over time. If so, make sure it is in writing. (CC §§ 1691-1701)
- You could file for bankruptcy, which may allow you to dismiss your obligation to pay certain debts and allow you to rearrange debts and work out payment plans. Bankruptcy may give you a fresh start. But it would also have a bad effect on your credit rating and make it harder for you to get a loan in the future.

What should I ask before opening a bank account?

First, find out what types of accounts are available and what type of account would be right for you. You might choose an account geared for students, for example. Ask about the account’s terms, fees and services available on the account. Ask about online banking and the bank’s overdraft program. And ask if you would be required to maintain a minimum balance in the account.

Also, before you consider applying for any bank product online, make sure you’re dealing with a legitimate financial institution. For guidance, call the FDIC.

money matters

Steroids and Your Health

Warning: Use of steroids to increase strength or growth can cause serious health problems. Steroids can keep teenagers from growing to their full height; they can also cause heart disease, stroke and damaged liver function. Men and women using steroids may develop fertility problems, personality changes and acne. Men can also experience premature balding and development of breast tissue. These health hazards are in addition to the civil and criminal penalties for unauthorized sale, use or exchange of anabolic steroids.

- By law, this notice must be posted in all locker rooms in athletic facilities, including health studies, colleges and schools with middle and high school-aged students. (CC § 1812.97)

Strengthening Belly Muscles

A strong core helps with everything from your ability to lift weights to your posture. It provides a firm base for all your movements. To get a stronger core, try these exercises:

- Plank Hold. Get on your hands and knees with your hands directly under your shoulders. Straighten your legs and come up onto your toes. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat for 3 sets.
- Swiss Ball Crunch. Sit on a Swiss ball with your back against the ball. Keep your feet on the floor and knees bent. Keep your abs tight and lift your torso up toward your knees. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat for 3 sets.

Strengthening Thigh Muscles

Squats are a great way to tone your thighs and glutes. You can do them at home or at the gym. Here’s how:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Keep your knees over your toes.
2. Bend your knees and lower your body as if you were sitting down into a chair. Try to get your thighs parallel to the ground. Hold for 2 seconds.
3. Return to an upright position. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 reps.

Strengthening Leg Muscles

Leg press exercises are a great way to tone your leg muscles. You can do them at home or at the gym. Here’s how:

1. Sit on a leg press machine with your feet flat on the footrest.
2. Lower your body until your lower legs are parallel to the ground. Hold for 2 seconds.
3. Return to an upright position. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 reps.

Strengthening Back Muscles

A strong back is essential for good posture and can help you avoid back pain. Here are some exercises to strengthen your back:

- Plank. Get on your hands and knees with your hands directly under your shoulders. Straighten your legs and come up onto your toes. Hold for 30 seconds. Repeat for 3 sets.
- Superman. Lie on your stomach with your arms out to your sides. Contract your abs and lift your arms and legs off the ground at the same time. Hold for 5 seconds. Repeat for 3 sets of 10 reps.
seven years (or 10 years for bankruptcies). You may obtain your file to review what has been collected from your credit history. In California, if you have been denied credit based on credit report information, you can get a free copy of the report from the credit bureau if you ask for it within 60 days. And if it contains mistakes, you have the right to ask for corrections. (CC §§ 1785.15-1785.16)

What is collateral?
Collateral is an item of value that is accepted by the lender as back-up payment in case you are unable to repay your loan. (CC § 1812.2) If you buy a car, for example, and agree to installment payments, the car itself may be the collateral. The lender could then repossess the car if you fail to make your payments.

Can a lender have different rules for making loans to women, men or minorities?
No. It is unlawful for a creditor to discriminate against any applicant on the basis of race, sex or marital status. Lenders can only make distinctions based on the applicant’s credit rating. (CC § 1812.30)

At age 18, you no longer need a special work permit to get a job. At the same time, however, child labor laws no longer protect you from exploitation. Still, as an employee, you do have certain rights as well as responsibilities. In most cases, for example, your employer must pay you California's minimum wage. And with some exceptions, your employer must give you regular breaks, overtime pay, workers' compensation insurance and unemployment insurance.

Will I be offered a written contract with a job?
Probably not. Most employment contracts are oral.

Is there any guarantee that I can keep my job if I do my best?
Probably not. Most employment contracts are oral.

Unfortunately, jobs don’t come with warranties. Generally, an employer can fire an employee without providing a reason. There are exceptions. An employer may not fire or discriminate against someone based on race, sex, color, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or religion. (Govt. C §§ 12940, 12948; Civil Rights Act of 1964 Title VII)

What is sexual harassment?
It is another form of illegal discrimination prohibited by federal and state law. In general, it is unwelcome sexual behavior on the part of a supervisor, co-worker or client. Such conduct could be sexual comments, pressure for sexual favors, inappropriate touching or even a sexual assault. Or it might be one woman or men.

Is there any guarantee that I can keep my job if I do my best?
Probably not. Most employment contracts are oral.

You may not realize the consequences. You may see it as love. But having sex with anyone under age 18—even if it is with your consenting 17-year-old girlfriend—is against the law. It would only be legal if the two of you were married. Otherwise, at age 18, you could be charged with statutory rape. And depending on the circumstances, you could be in serious trouble. Or maybe you were the victim of a date rape. Or you think your sister was groped inappropriately. Or your best friend is pregnant and hiding it from her family. As a young adult, you could face a variety of difficult situations involving sex and the law.

What is sexual assault and battery?
It is any type of sexual activity to which you did not consent—and it is illegal. Assaulting or aiding in the assault of another with the intent to commit rape, sodomy or oral copulation is felony sexual assault. (PC § 220)

What is “date rape”?
It is any type of sexual activity to which you did not consent—and it is illegal. Assaulting or aiding in the assault of another with the intent to commit rape, sodomy or oral copulation is felony sexual assault. (PC § 220)

What could happen if I’m charged with statutory rape?
The victim may have little or no reason to suspect that anything is amiss. Such drugs are often colorless and tasteless. And they may leave the victim unable to recall what took place. (See page 8 for tips on how to protect yourself.)

Some drugs, also called “club drugs,” include: GHB (gamma hydroxybutyric acid); Rohypnol (flunitrazepam); and Ketamine (ketamine hydrochloride).

Those convicted of using such drugs to force sexual acts face stiffer punishment. If someone slips you such a drug without your knowledge and then rapes you—or tries to do so—he or she could face up to 20 years in prison. (21 USC § 841)

What is “date rape” drugs?
They are drugs that may be slipped into an unsuspecting victim’s drink to render him or her physically helpless—and pave the way for a sexual assault. The victim may have little or no reason to suspect that anything is amiss. Such drugs are often colorless and tasteless. And they may leave the victim unable to recall what took place. (See page 8 for tips on how to protect yourself.)

Special deductions that you previously gave written authorization to the employer to make.

Do I need a Social Security number to get employment?
Yes, but only for certain purposes. For example, your employer could deduct funds for:

Tax withholdings.
Union dues.
Any losses caused by your dishonesty, willful misconduct or gross negligence.
Specific deductions that you previously gave written authorization to the employer to make.

What is F.I.C.A.?
Federal Insurance Contributions Act (F.I.C.A) taxes, also known as Social Security, are payroll taxes that provide retirement, disability and death benefits to workers. The employer pays half of the premium and you pay the other half.

Do I need a Social Security number to get employment?
Yes, unless you are ineligible for a Social Security number. Then you would need an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) instead. A U.S. resident who is not a citizen and a foreign national filing a U.S. tax return are examples of individuals who might need an ITIN.

Your employer is required to report your wages to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)—the agency that collects federal taxes from taxpayers. The IRS, in turn, uses your Social Security number or ITIN to process your federal tax payment. For more information, contact your local Social Security office or go to ssa.gov. Or call 1-800-772-1213 (TTY-1-800-325-0778).

What is workers’ compensation insurance?
It is insurance—paid for by employers—that provides compensation and medical benefits to workers who are injured on the job. By law, employers must buy workers’ compensation insurance. (Lab.C §§ 3400-3543)

Such insurance is also intended for workers who develop occupational diseases caused by their jobs. It is not meant to replace a worker’s personal insurance plan. (IC §§ 11630, 11630-11664)

Will I get back any of the tax that I pay?
Maybe. You (or your accountant) must complete an income tax return each year and mail it to the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board no later than April 15. If it turns out that you paid too much tax for your level of income, you would be entitled to a refund. (26 USC § 6402; RTC § 19002) For more information on employment issues, see the State Bar pamphlet What Are My Rights as an Employee? (available in English and Spanish). Information on ordering the State Bar pamphlets can be found on page 15.

Affordable Health Insurance: You may now be able to get health insurance coverage through your parents’ insurance policy until you turn 26. In past years, health plans could typically remove enrolled children once they turned 19 or, in the case of a full-time student, sometimes older. Under recent federal legislation (the Affordable Care Act), however, such coverage now extends to age 26 if the parent’s plan covers dependents. And that extension could, in some circumstances, apply even if you are married, financially independent and/or eligible for your employer’s health insurance plan—with one exception. Until 2014, “grandfathered” group plans will not have to offer such coverage to age 26 if the young person is eligible for group coverage outside of his or her parents’ plan. (HASC § 1373; IC § 102277(b)) For more information, go to HealthCare.gov.
guilty of a misdemeanor. This could mean up to a year in jail. If the age difference is greater, however, you could face a felony charge and land in prison. For example, if you are over 21 and you have sex with someone younger than 16, you could be sentenced to two to four years in prison. (PC § 265.5(d))

In addition to jail or prison time, you could also be liable for up to $10,000 in civil penalties if the minor is three years younger than you. And if you are over 21 and the minor is under 16, you could face up to $25,000 in penalties. (PC § 265.1)

A separate California law prohibits lewd or lascivious acts (child molestation) with a child under 14. It need not involve sexual intercourse, and consent is not an issue. Such conduct could lead to eight years in prison. If the minor is 14 or 15, and you are 10 years older, a conviction for lewd or lascivious acts could land you in prison for up to three years. (PC §§ 288(a), 288(c)(3))

If my girlfriend becomes pregnant, am I legally required to support the baby?

In general, yes. It does not matter whether or not you and the baby’s mother are married. You are both responsible for such support until your child finishes high school or turns 19 (whichever occurs first). If one of you fails to provide the required support and health insurance, the other parent can take the case to court. Also, if the county winds up caring for the child, a judge could order you to pay the county’s attorney fees and court costs if the county takes the case to court. (FC §§ 3900, 3901, 4000-4006; PC § 270)

A judge can also order that your wages—or a portion of them—be deducted from your work paycheck and used for child support payments. (FC § 5208; CCP § 706.030)

What is the baby drop-off law?

It is a law aimed at deterring mothers—often young and desperate—from abandoning their unwanted newborns in dumpsters, cardboard boxes or other unsafe locations. A newborn’s parent (or other individual with legal custody) can voluntarily surrender the infant to any “safe-surrender site” and are responsible for taking custody of the newborns. (PC § 271.5; H 11658C § 1255.7)

You now have a greater opportunity to make a difference. You can vote for those who will lead your community, state and nation. You may be asked to take part in the justice system by serving on a jury. And while no draft is in effect, it is your duty, if you are a young man, to register for military service.

Who can vote?

When you turn 18, you have the right to help decide this country’s future. As a California resident, you can vote in the precinct in which you live if you are:

- A citizen of the United States. (El.C §§ 2101, 2112)
- Registered at least 15 days before the election. (El.C §§ 2102, 2107, 2154)
- Not in prison or on parole for conviction of a felony. (El.C § 2101)
- Not found mentally incompetent by a court.

Where do I register?

Register at your county elections office or at a temporary registration place set up by the elections office. You can also register in the high school or college. Any person qualified to register can apply to the county elections office by mail, telephone or in person. Or, register online at sos.ca.gov. (Fill out the form, print it and mail it to the pre-printed address. You can also register any time after your 17th birthday, but your registration would not go into effect until you turn 18. For more information, email your questions to elections@sos.ca.gov or call 1-800-345-VOTE (8683) toll free. (El.C §§ 2102, 2103, 2146)

If I forget to register, can I just show up to vote?

No. Voting record books close 15 days before an election. You must be registered by then. (El.C § 2102)

Where do I vote?

The county elections office establishes the polling place in your neighborhood.

If I’m away at college, can I vote there?

Yes, if you have become a resident there and have registered to vote. Otherwise, you will need to vote by mail, voter’s ballot (also known as an absentee ballot). Contact your home county elections office at least seven days before the election for a mail voter’s ballot. Your completed ballot must be received on or before election day by 8 p.m. (El.C §§ 3000-3003)

When I turn 18, I am automatically eligible to serve as a juror?

No. To serve on a trial jury, you also must:
- Be a U.S. citizen.
- Be able to understand English.
- Live in the court’s jurisdiction.
- Not have been convicted of a felony or malfeasance while in public office (unless your civil rights have been restored by, for example, a pardon).

How are potential jurors selected?

They are selected randomly from voter registration and Department of Motor Vehicles lists, telephone directories, utility company lists and other such lists that provide a cross-section of citizens. (CCP § 197) Once summoned to court, the prospective jurors then make up the panel from which trial jurors are chosen.

Do all potential jurors wind up serving on a jury?

No. The court typically brings in more prospective jurors than will be needed. This is because some people are automatically excused and others may be excused during the jury selection process. (CCP §§ 222.5, 223)

If I’m summoned for jury duty, do I have to respond?

Yes. If you fail to respond to a jury summons, you can be held in contempt of court and be fined or imprisoned or both. (CCP §§ 204, 209) If you cannot serve on the summons date, however, you may ask for one postponement to a more convenient time. (Read the summons from your particular court to find out how to respond in your county.)

You might be excused from jury duty if such service would cause undue hardship for you or the public, or for certain other reasons (see below). Also, if you do not meet the eligibility requirements for jury service or you are a peace officer or under a conservatorship, contact your local jury office. You might be disqualified or temporarily excused from service. Whatever your circumstances, however, do not ignore the jury summons.

Why would a judge excuse some people and not others?

Judges have the right to excuse prospective jurors for a variety of reasons. The prospective juror may have:

- Immediate family members related to someone involved in the case. (CCP § 229)
- A financial interest in the case. (CCP § 229b)
- A felony conviction, prejudice or bias or an opinion regarding the outcome of the case. (CCP §§ 203, 225b)

The judge may also excuse a potential juror if service on the jury would cause undue hardship on him or her or on the public. Judges may use their discretion. (CCP § 224b)

What happens during the jury selection process?

Names are chosen at random from those called for jury duty. The judge asks general questions and excuses people for the reasons mentioned above. Lawyers may do more questioning and ask the judge to excuse others for the same reasons. In addition, each lawyer is allowed, without providing any reason, to excuse a certain number of prospective jurors. (CCP §§ 194d, 228, 231)

What if I can’t get time off work to report for jury service?

Employers are required to give employees time off for jury duty.
(Depending on your employer, however, you may lose wages during that time.) Also, it is against the law for an employer to fire or harass you for reporting to jury duty as long as you have given the employer reasonable notice. (Lab.C § 230) If this occurs, notify your local jury office or the judge assigned to your trial.

There are also laws allowing students to be excused from classes to fulfill their jury service. (E.LC § 48205(a)(5))

**Will I be paid anything for my jury service?**

Yes, but not much. Beginning on the second day of service, the county will pay you at least $15 a day (unless you continue to receive your regular pay from a government or public employer during jury service) and 34 cents per mile in mileage costs one way. (ICC P. § 215)

**What happens if I’m not selected to serve on a jury?**

If you are not chosen as a juror on the first day of your jury service, you will be excused and cannot be summoned back for such service for at least one year. This is because California has a “one-day or one-trial” jury service system. If you are chosen to sit on a jury, you will be expected to serve as a juror throughout the trial. Once the trial concludes, however, you will not be summoned back for at least one year.

Trials can range from a day or two in length to months or, in rare cases, even longer. However, the judge in the case will have some idea of what to expect. And if serving as a juror in a long trial would be extremely difficult for you, you will have an opportunity to explain your situation to the judge. Being on a jury can be a rich and rewarding experience. There are countries in which the citizens do not have such a right. As a juror, you will be called upon to judge the facts. And only in very limited circumstances can the trial judge override your decision. For more information on jury service, request a free copy of the State Bar pamphlet. What Should I Know About Serving on a Jury? Or visit the California Courts website at courts.ca.gov.

**How do I register?**

You have several options. You can:

- Register online at www.sss.gov.
- Pick up a form at your local post office, complete it and mail it in.
- Mail in a completed Selective Service reminder card (a card sent to most young men around their 18th birthday).
- Check the appropriate box on a Federal Student Financial Aid form. The Department of Education will then supply the necessary registration information to the Selective Service.
- Register at your high school. Many high schools have staff members who are Selective Service registrars.
- Register at any U.S. embassy or consular office if you are living overseas.

**Why is there a Selective Service registration?**

Such registration allows the government to keep a list of young men who could be summoned quickly—in a fair and random order—in the event of a national emergency. (50 USC § 453, Cert.C § 7593.1) Failure to register could result in a maximum $250,000 fine and/or five years in prison. In addition, you must register in order to qualify for federal student aid, federal jobs and federal job training, as well as any state student financial aid or state employment. (§ 46400) And if you are an immigrant from ages 18 through 25, you must register to remain eligible for citizenship.

**Do I have to register for military service?**

It depends. If you are a male U.S. citizen or male immigrant living in the United States, you generally must register with the Selective Service System within 30 days of your 18th birthday. All eligible young men ages 18 through 25 must be registered. Women are exempt. (50 USC § 453, Cert.C § 7593.14) Failure to register could result in a maximum $250,000 fine and/or five years in prison. In addition, women must register in order to qualify for federal student aid, federal jobs and federal job training, as well as any state student financial aid or state employment. (§ 46400) And if you are an immigrant from ages 18 through 25, you must register to remain eligible for citizenship.

At age 18, you now have more freedom in matters of the heart as well. You can get married without your parents’ consent, for example, or legally form a registered domestic partnership.

**If I decide to get married, what do I need to do?**

Simply apply for a marriage license at the county clerk’s office in the county where you are to be married and pay the application fee. You will have to sign an affidavit that you have received a health department brochure containing information about genetic defects, AIDS (including the availability of testing) and domestic violence. (FC §§ 350, 355, 358)

For a legally valid marriage, you will need:

- An authorized official (generally a clergyman, judge or someone else who is legally authorized to perform marriages). (FC § 400)
- A competent adult witness. (FC § 422.1)
- Mutual declarations from you and your spouse-to-be that you take each other as husband and wife. (FC § 420)
- A marriage license. (FC §§ 300, 359; H & SC § 103175)

**What is community property?**

The assets and wages earned or obtained during a marriage. Both spouses have equal ownership and control over the property. Both also may keep certain property separate. Separate property would include, for example, assets that belonged to one spouse or the other before the marriage (as long as the property was always kept separate from the community property). A gift “earmarked” for one spouse or the other and an inheritance also would qualify as separate property. (FC §§ 750-752, 760, 770-772)

**What is a prenuptial agreement?**

It is an agreement—also called a premarital agreement—that you and your prospective spouse can make before marriage. In such an agreement, the two of you can change your rights and obligations regarding your property. For example, you could decide who has the right to buy, sell or manage certain property. Or you might agree on how the property will be distributed if you wind up divorcing. Nothing in the agreement can violate public policy or be criminal. Also, a spouse must have independent counsel if he or she wants to waive future spousal support. And nothing in the agreement can put child support in jeopardy. (FC §§ 1500, 1610-1613)

**Now that I’m married, does my new spouse have to support me?**

Both spouses are obligated to provide for the support of the other and for any minor children. Either spouse can be held liable for necessities furnished to the other or to minor children. (FC §§ 3900 et seq., 4300 et seq.)

**What would grounds be for divorce?**

In California, there are two grounds: irreconcilable differences and incurable insanity. (FC § 2310(b))

**How do I get divorced if my marriage breaks down?**

You will need to file a divorce petition (known as dissolution in California). You may want to consult an attorney. A judge will consider child custody, child support, financial maintenance of either spouse and property division. As a general rule, all community property assets and debts are divided equally.

Also, you have several options—each with advantages and disadvantages—in how you handle your divorce. You could hire an attorney to represent you. Or you could simply seek a lawyer’s help with certain parts of the process. Or you and your spouse could reach an agreement with the help of a mediator and avoid going to court. Or you could act as your own attorney.

For more information, see the State Bar pamphlet What Should I Know...
About Divorce and Custody? Information on ordering a free copy can be found on page 15.

Can same-sex couples get married?

No, not in California in mid-2011. A 2008 state Supreme Court ruling briefly legalized same-sex marriage in California. A ballot initiative banned it that same year, and the United States Supreme Court later ruled California’s ban constitutional. The California Jarvis-Cardinale Domestic Violence Prevention Act (PC § 15) protects both domestic and same-sex partners from violence. It could be amended to protect domestic partners in the near future. The act protects the right of domestic partners to seek restraining orders, to gain temporary custody of children, to gain ownership or control of property, and to request financial spousal support. A domestic partner is defined as a former spouse, a former fiancé(e), a domestic partner, or a cohabitant. If you face violence, you can apply for a restraining order (TRO). Many domestic partners do not have children, so they may only have the right to seek restraining orders and restraining orders may not be enforceable. The act also provides protections for domestic partners of transgender individuals.

What happens if I am arrested?

You may be searched, handcuffed, and taken to a police station. You will also be advised of your rights, commonly known as the "Miranda" warning, under the United States Constitution. (Miranda v. Arizona, 384 U.S. 436) Be careful what you say to anyone at the police station—even if you are behind closed doors. You have no right to privacy in a police station. If you have been arrested, you can refuse to discuss your case with police. Law enforcement officers cannot threaten you or force you into answering questions. Nor can they offer you leniency in exchange for any written or oral statements. Also, you have the right to have an attorney present. If you cannot afford to hire an attorney, the court will appoint one for you. (PC §§ 6862, 851.5)

Infractions usually do not involve any time in jail, but do require a court appearance and/or payment of a fine. If charged with an infraction, you are not entitled to a jury trial or an attorney at state expense. Some traffic violations are infractions.

Some crimes are punishable as misdemeanors or felonies. Such crimes—known as "wobbler"—are considered felonies until judgment is imposed by a court.

What happens if I do something illegal without realizing it was a crime?

You are still guilty of the crime. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Ask yourself if what you are doing will harm somebody or damage somebody else's property. If it will, it's wrong and may be a crime. (PC §§ 26, 27)

What is domestic violence?

The law defines domestic violence as certain kinds of abuse directed toward a spouse or former spouse, a domestic partner or former domestic partner, a cohabitant or former cohabitant, a person related by blood or marriage, or a person with whom the abuser has had a "dating or engagement relationship," or with whom the abuser has had a child. (FC §§ 7820 et seq.)

No one—and that includes your boyfriend, girlfriend or any family member—has the right to hurt you. Unfortunately, however, verbal and physical abuse among intimate partners and family members does occur. It may begin with shouting and escalate to hitting and, in some cases, even deadly force. Such abuse—referred to as domestic violence—cuts across all cultures, ethnic backgrounds, education levels and income brackets. It impacts gays and lesbians as well as heterosexuals. It happens to teenagers as well as senior citizens, and men as well as women.

When can law enforcement officers search me, my home or my car without a warrant?

Yes, in certain situations. If you are arrested, police can search the immediate area in which you are arrested as well. Other homes—even other parts of the same room—would be off limits, unless the police believe that other suspects are hiding. During the search, police can seize any evidence of a crime, such as stolen property or drugs, which is in plain sight. Your home also can be searched without a warrant in an emergency, such as if police are trying to prevent the destruction of evidence. And if police have good reason to believe that your car contains illegal or stolen goods or evidence, they
can search your car, including the trunk, as well. Or, if police stop your car for any legal reason—such as a broken taillight—they can take any illegal goods in plain sight. (H & S C § 11470; PC §§ 833, 833.5)

What happens after I have been arrested and booked?

Typically, you would be taken to court for an “initial appearance” within 24 hours. If you were arrested on a weekend, however, you might have to wait until Monday morning when court opens. (PC § 859b)

Can someone bail me out?

Maybe. It would depend on the circumstances of your case. Bail is designed to guarantee your appearance in court. The court will often require that a certain amount of money be deposited with the clerk of courts. Sometimes the court allows the deposit of a bond or the title to a home. Usually a member of your family must own the funds and show the receipt in order to get you released. In some situations, you could be released on your own recognizance without posting bail. (PC §§ 858, 859, 866.5, 987)

What do I do if I can’t afford an attorney?

You are entitled to an attorney. At your initial appearance, tell the judge that you wish to speak to someone from the local public defender’s office. Generally, the judge will postpone your case to give you time to contact a public defender. (PC §§ 856, 859, 866, 987)

What happens if I help a minor break the law?

If you help a minor commit a crime, you could face criminal charges as well. (PC §§ 30-31)

What could happen if I lie or file a false police report?

It is against the law to make a false police report, give false information to a police officer, turn in a false fire alarm. In addition, you should tell the truth if you are questioned as a witness. To lie under oath is itself a crime. (CC §§ 1116, 1464.5, 146.5)

What can I do if I think a police officer is mistreating me?

If you are being placed under arrest, cooperate with the officer—even if you think he or she is out of line. You can, if you choose, protest and seek lawful remedies against the officer later. For example, you could hire an attorney, seek help from a legal aid organization, or take your case to a special law enforcement agency, private agency or organization set up to handle such complaints. (PC § 634a)

If an unusually serious offense is involved or you wish to bypass such channels, you could contact the district attorney’s special investigations division. Or, if a federal law may have been violated, you might contact the U.S. Attorney General or FBI.

Police may not handle every situation properly. But keep in mind, police officer’s behavior is often in response to provocation, a complaint from another citizen, mistakes made under pressure or doubt as to what the law is. Good police community relations are a two-way street with both sides either contributing to the problem or to its solution.

Can I be tried as an adult even before I turn 18?

Maybe. It would depend on the nature of your crime. If you are at least 14, you can be tried as an adult for certain offenses (generally serious and violent crimes, such as murder, aggravated sexual assault, illegal use of a firearm and gang-related crimes). Prosecutors make such decisions on a case-by-case basis. (PC § 26; W & A C §§ 602, 607b, 707)

What is the “three strikes law”?

Under the “three strikes law” (the California Career Criminal Punishment Act), a third criminal conviction could mean, in certain situations, a prison sentence of 25 years to life. If you have been convicted of two violent or serious felony crimes (strike one and two) and you commit a third felony (any felony), you could be subject to the “three strikes law.” And if you have a prior juvenile record, it could count if you were at least 16 when you committed any previous crimes. (PC § 667) Prosecutors and judges have some discretion in their application of the three strikes law.

Can I get my criminal record sealed?

Maybe. A California juvenile court record may be sealed when you turn 18 or five years after your last juvenile court case ended. You must ask the juvenile court to seal the record. (W & A C § 781)

However, if you were 14 or older when you committed a felony, a serious misdemeanor or certain vehicle violations, the juvenile court does not have to seal your record. (PC § 653.2; W & A C § 787.6)

Sealing a California juvenile court record means that those charges, arrests and probation status reports contained in the record cannot be seen by anyone without the person’s permission. Once a record has been legally told any future employer or school admissions officer, for example, that you were never arrested. (PC § 851.7b; W & A C § 781a)

If my record is sealed, it is really out of reach?

Yes, for the most part. But even when a record has been sealed, the court record remains with local police, the State Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, and the FBI. (W & A C §§ 781, 826)

Once a record has been sealed, the police, probation department and court cannot legally release any information about the record or even provide clarification of any information that may help the person who was convicted. In some instances, the consequences of simply having a criminal record can be more severe than the punishment for the crime.

What are some consequences of having a criminal record?

• A driver’s license may be denied on the basis of a criminal record, and many jobs require a car. (VC §§ 13202, 13210, 13350 et seq.)

• A criminal record might prevent a person from being accepted by the college or university of his or her choice.

• A person who has been convicted of a felony may be prevented from entering the armed forces or, if accepted, may not be given a commission or a security clearance. (10 USC § 504)

• A person who has been convicted of a felony is imprisoned or on parole does not have the right to vote. (E & C §§ 2101, 2102, 2212)

• Many businesses require employees to be bonded. An insurance company usually refuses to bond anyone who has been convicted of a felony.

• Some employment may be closed to those convicted of crimes or those who, while minors, committed offenses that would be considered crimes if committed by an adult.

• If you are not a citizen and you are convicted of violating any law or regulation of a state, the United States or a foreign country, you could be deported and prohibited from returning to this country. (8 USC §§ 1112, 1227) Also, law enforcement agencies are required to notify United States Immigration Services regarding the arrest of anyone who is not a citizen. (PC §§ 834b, 834c, 1016.5, 5026; Govt. C § 68109)

Are there state and federal criminal laws?

Yes. In California, most criminal laws can be found in the California Penal Code, but criminal acts also are defined in other parts of the law. For example, some city and county ordinances—such as curfew laws, laws against smoking and laws requiring smoke detectors—are considered criminal laws as well.

In addition, the federal government has its own system of courts, law enforcement agencies and laws. Known as the United States District Courts, federal trial courts also have their own sentencing provisions and correctional agencies.

Many federal criminal laws relate to acts involving U.S. governmental agencies, such as the U.S. Postal Service and the Justice Department, or crimes involving interstate commerce. Most federal crimes are felonies punishable by more than a year in prison.

What are some common federal crimes?

• Transporting a stolen vehicle across state lines. (18 USC § 21313)

• Mailing matter that is obscene or incites crime. (18 USC § 1461)

• Transporting or importing narcotics. (21 USC § 852)

• Forgery of government checks. (18 USC § 513)

• Possession of stolen mail and items—such as credit cards—that have
A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS

GUNS and other weapons

When you turn 18, you are old enough to buy a rifle or shotgun if you choose. (You must be 21 to buy a hand gun.) But if you do, be aware of the responsibilities, safety rules, and dangers associated with firearms. Nationwide, some 30,000 people die from firearms-related accidents, homicides and suicides each year. Even more—close to 66,700 people in 2009 alone—suffer non-fatal gunshot wounds.

What are some of the laws regulating guns and other weapons?

It is illegal to:

- Leave a loaded gun in a place where a child can retrieve it. The potential penalty is a fine and imprisonment. (PC §§ 12033-12036)
- Conceal a weapon on your body or in your car without a special permit. (PC §§ 12031, 12050)
- Carry a loaded firearm in a vehicle, in a public place or in any other area where it is forbidden. (PC §§ 12031, 12034; FGC § 2006)
- Possess a firearm within 1,000 feet of any K-12 school. (PC § 626.9)
- Possess blackjacks, billy clubs, sandbags or metal knuckles. These can be taken and destroyed by the police. (PC §§ 12020, 12029)
- Carry, sell, lend or give away a switchblade knife or similar type of knife if the blade is longer than two inches. (PC § 653k)
- Possess a stun gun, any kind of unguarded razor blade or any knife longer than 2 1/2 inches on school grounds. (PC §§ 244.56e, 626.10)

In addition, California requires a 10-day waiting period and a criminal record check for most gun buyers. (PC § 12017)

Could I get in trouble for simply pointing a gun at someone?

Yes. It is against the law to threaten anyone with a deadly weapon (except in self-defense) or to carry such a weapon without a license. This includes tear gas weapons, such as mace, which require training and licensing. In addition, using tear gas is illegal unless it is done in self-defense. (PC §§ 245, 12024, 12403.7)

Are there any restrictions on where I can practice my shooting?

Yes. You cannot shoot any firearm from or onto a public road or highway in any city. It also is against the law to shoot a firearm at a house, vehicle, building or aircraft and, of course, at any other human being. (PC §§ 246, 374c)

Do I need a license to hunt?

Yes. In California, you must have a license to hunt birds and other animals. In addition, you will need a “certificate of competence” from a hunter-safety training course to get such a license. (GCC §§ 10434.2, 3081, 3049-3054)

A hate crime is a criminal act committed, in whole or in part, because of one or more of the following actual or perceived characteristics of the victim: disability, gender, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or association with any person or group that has one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics. (PC § 422.55) In California, the law also specifically prohibits anyone from damaging property or using force or threats of violence to interfere with someone else’s rights because of any of these actual or perceived characteristics. (PC § 422.6)

What are some examples of hate crimes?

Hate crimes take many forms. Such a crime could be a physical assault, an attempted assault or simply the threat of an assault. It could be any crime motivated by the offender’s bias (as defined in PC § 422.55). A threatening phone call, a swastika on your door, a burning cross on your lawn, paint splatters on your car or other damage to your property, if excessive, could be evidence of a hate crime. (PC §§ 190.03, 422.6, 422.7, 594.3, 11410, 11411, 11413) A hate crime is different from a hate incident, which is hate-motivated conduct (such as a bigoted insult, taunt or slur) that is protected by the individual’s First Amendment right to freedom of expression.

How can I stop someone from continuing to harm me?

If you know the person’s identity, you could ask the court for a restraining order. Your city attorney, county district attorney or the California Attorney General’s office can request such an order for you. Or the district attorney or city attorney might decide to seek a civil injunction on behalf of the State of California, and request that each person who violated your rights pay you a $25,000 penalty. (CC § 52.1)

What will happen to the person who harmed me?

If there is enough evidence of a hate crime, the county district attorney could prosecute your alleged attacker. And depending on the facts of the case, your assailant could face a fine and, or even prison. If the crime is a hate-motivated felony, the judge may add years onto the offender’s prison sentence. The judge could order “restitution” as well. This means that the convicted person would have to pay you back for “actual damages” or losses. Such costs might include your medical bills, for example, or the expense of removing racist slurs from a fence. (PC §§ 422.6, 422.7, 422.75, 422.85)

In general, legal actions are divided into two categories: criminal and civil. Civil actions are lawsuits in which someone sues someone else for monetary damages (money) or something else to compensate for an injury or damaged property. Or a lawsuit could demand future protection of some type.

When you turn 18, you can sue—or be sued—in civil court.

What is a tort?

It is the legal term for certain kinds of injuries or damage that could lead to a lawsuit. If you commit a tort (injuring someone or damaging someone’s property or reputation), you could be sued. It doesn’t matter whether you injured the person on purpose or by accident. (Some torts are also crimes, so you could be tried in two courts for the same conduct.) And if you are found liable, you could be ordered to pay all resulting damages. (CC §§ 3333)

Examples of torts include:

- Negligent driving: causing injuries and/or damaging property. (CC §§ 1714, 3333.4; VC § 23104)
- Assault: unlawfully attempting to touch or hurt another person. (PC § 243)
- Battery: intentionally touching another person without his or her consent. (PC § 243)

Privacy and Teens: Can your boss legally read your personal text messages? Can a doctor reveal your medical diagnosis to anyone who asks? Can the school principal search you for drugs? Privacy issues are at the heart of many legal battles. As a child, you rely on others—your parents or other adults—to protect your privacy. The law provides added safeguards as well. But when you turn 18, it will be up to you to protect your own privacy and, if necessary, assert your legal rights. This might seem like an impossible task at times in a world filled with cell phone cameras, online social networking, GPS tracking and new technology that collects and shares information. But how you behave can make a difference. When you share something personal, make sure you understand the potential consequences. You could be giving up your legal right to privacy by posting that picture or personal story.

This does not mean that your right to privacy is absolute. For example, the U.S. Constitution protects only the reasonable expectation of privacy from government intervention. This has been a point of controversy in court cases involving students who have been searched by school officials or randomly tested for drugs. In one case involving student athletes and random drug testing, the U.S. Supreme Court said that the reasonableness of a search is determined by comparing the impact on the individual’s privacy rights with the legitimate governmental interest—and ruled that the invasion of the student’s privacy was permissible. You may have a greater right to privacy in your home, but there are limits there as well. For example, your roommate generally could allow police to search the common areas of your shared apartment (such as the living room) but not your private bedroom. And in certain circumstances, police could legally search you, your home or your car without anyone’s consent (see Crimes and Consequences). Nor would you expect complete privacy in the workplace. Depending on the circumstances, your employer might be able to legally read those texts that you sent to your boyfriend from work or the email sent from your office computer (see Computers, Cell Phones and the Internet).
A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR TEENAGERS

False imprisonment: keeping someone in a room or car or other place so he or she can’t leave. (PC § 236)

Defamation: an unlawful written or spoken attack on the reputation or good name of a person. (CC §§ 43 et seq.)

Is there any time limit for filing a lawsuit?

Yes. There are statutes of limitations—laws that set time limits for filing various types of lawsuits. For example, the time limit is generally two years from the time of the injury for personal injury lawsuits. (CC § 335.1) And for lawsuits involving damage to real or personal property, it is three years from the date the damage occurred.

If the injury or damage occurred when you were a child, however, the time clock usually does not start ticking until you turn 18. If you were injured in a traffic accident at age 11, for example, you could wait until two years after your 18th birthday to file suit. (CC § 352)

You socialize on Facebook, “tweet” on Twitter and upload videos to YouTube. You research school papers online. You may even buy birthday gifts, do your banking and make weekend plans in cyberspace. For many in your generation, today’s expanding cyber world has become an important part of day-to-day life. But while it may open new doors, this new world also puts you at risk in new ways. You cannot always be sure who’s on the other end of an online conversation. You could be targeted by cyberbullies. You could lose job opportunities by revealing too much on a social networking site. Someone could misuse your private information if you’re not careful. And if you hack into someone else’s computer or download certain material, you could wind up in trouble.

Is downloading information, pictures or music from the Internet ever against the law?

Yes, sometimes. It is illegal, for example, to pirate or download copyright-ed material (such as music) without authorization. You could also get into trouble if you download sexual pictures of children or young teens. Possession of or control over “child pornography” is a crime—and could land you in prison. And if you are convicted of possessing (or attempting to possess) such material, you would have to register as a sex offender for life. Delete any email with an attached photo of child pornography immediately.

For more information on crimes related to computers, see Computers, the Internet and Theft on page 14.

Is it safe to give out personal information online?

It is never completely risk-free. So, if you do provide personal data online, take some precautions. For example, never give personal identifying information (such as your Social Security number) to solicitors or other agencies that contact you—even if the email or online advertisement looks official. It can be difficult to distinguish legitimate solicitors from those who want such information for fraudulent purposes.

If you shop online, look for indications that the website is secure before you enter a credit card or other personal data. (See Top 10 Tips for Identity Theft Prevention on page 14.)

If I meet someone online, what’s the harm in sharing more about myself?

It may seem safe—and even easier than in person—to share your innermost secrets with someone via the Internet. Your newfound friend may seem to understand you better than anyone else. The problem is that you do not really know who is on the other end of the online conversation. Protect yourself. Avoid revealing personal identifying information, such as your name, where you live or where you go to school, to anyone you meet online. He or she may not be anything like the person portrayed in your online friendship—and may have dangerous motives in mind.

More information on Internet safety can be found at missingkids.com and at fbi.gov. And for tips on online privacy and social networking, see the box below.

What is sexting?

The definitions for this new term vary. To some, sexting is when a young person sends or posts a sexually explicit image or message to a peer via a cell phone or the Internet. Others include sexually suggestive images and messages in the definition. One survey found that one in five teenagers had sent or posted semi-nude photos or videos of themselves and that almost twice as many had sent or posted sextually suggestive messages. Most of the teens said the messages or photos were intended for a boyfriend or girlfriend. But sexting can have serious, unintended consequences. Such materi-als can easily be transmitted for countless oth-ers to see—leading to embarrassment and humiliation. And depending on the message and/or photo, it could (and in some states) potentially lead to criminal charges as well.

Both federal and state law make it illegal for anyone (even minors) to possess or distrib-ute child pornography. State law also prohibits sending a minor a “harmful matter” intended to arouse and seduce the young person. And if convicted of such a crime, you could be ordered to register as a sex offender as well. (PC §§ 288.2, 290, 311.1(a), 311.1(a); 18 USC §§ 2252A, 2256)

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying, too, has various definitions. In general, it refers when a youth uses a cell phone, computer or other electronic communications device to taunt, harass, torment, humiliate or threaten another youth. Some researchers say the behavior must be repeated and cause harm to be characterized as cyberbullying. A cyberbully might post altered, humiliating photos of a classmate online, for example, or launch an online campaign of vicious rumors about a peer. Experts say cyberbullying can lead to anxiety and depression in young victims and, in some cases, may have even led to suicide. In a 2010 survey of young people (ages 10 to 18), close to one in five said they had been cyberbullied.

Legislators, school officials and courts around the country are struggling to address the problem without trampling on young people’s First Amendment right to free speech. California law gives school administra-tors grounds to suspend or recommend expulsion for students who are caught cyberbullying in certain circumstances.

In many cases, such behavior may not break the law. In certain circumstances, however, a young cyberbul-ly could potentially face criminal charges. State law pro-hibits the use of phones or other electronic communications devices to intentionally annoy someone with repeated calls or electronic contacts, obscene language or threats. Or, depending on the circumstances, a cyberbully could face charges for seriously threatening someone’s life, committing a hate crime, cyber-stalking or using electronic means to reveal personal information about someone that would threaten that person’s safety. Recent state legislation also makes it illegal to try to harm someone by

Staying Private in Public: How to Limit Your Exposure on Social Network Sites

Most social networks automatically set your account so “everyone” can see who you are and what you do. You can decide how public you want to be. Regularly visit your “Account” to customize your privacy settings to suit your tastes.

Keep your circle of friends recognizable. If you let an unknown person join your network, his or her unknown friends can have access to information too. Judge strangers as strangers, just as in the “real” world.

You can say no when your social network suggests adding a friend or feature or app to your account. If you change your mind, you can add them later.

If you share things like your pet’s names, don’t use those names in your passwords. Bad guys scan social media pages for that kind of information to help them discover your online passwords.

Take a minute and think about what you share online. Don’t discuss medical conditions or anything you wouldn’t want to see on a billboard.

Don’t post your home address or phone number.

Protect your email address—don’t post it. Use the social network’s messaging tool instead.

Be careful about revealing where you are, also known as your “real-time” location. Check out icantstalk.com to see how easy it can be for someone to track you.

Never post that you’ll be away from home.

Don’t provide your full birth date in your profile—omit the year.

Don’t label or “tag” photos with names on your social network. Ask friends and family who post photos of you and your family to see the photos they post.

Use a strong password for access to your social network pages and NEVER share it.

Protect your account from a take-over. Use strong password-like strategies for answers to security questions. For example, answer “What was your first pet’s name?” with “Dial1Duckie.”

Protect your information by protecting your computer with the best anti-malware software available.
credibly impersonating a real person on a website or by other electronic means. (EIC §§ 9226, 48989; PC §§ 422, 422.6, 646.9, 653m, 653.2) And young people, parents and schools have been sued in cyberbullying-related cases as well.

**What are location-sharing services?** They are services that share the user’s physical location with others via their smart phones or social networking sites. Location-sharing may be a great way to track down your friends or to let your parents know when you are stuck in traffic. But there are obvious risks as well. If you let too many people know where you are—and where you are not—you could also be more vulnerable to stalkers. Or to an angry ex-boyfriend who now knows the coast is clear. Take the time to check the service’s privacy controls; you may be unintentionally sharing your location with people you don’t even know.

I’ve seen some great deals and chances to win big on the Internet. Should I be skeptical?

Absolutely. Internet crime is increasing at an alarming rate. In 2010 alone, Victims report fraudulent Internet auctions, credit card fraud, scams impersonating the FBI, identity theft, fake emails seeking disaster relief donations and purchased merchandise that was never delivered. For more information on common types of Internet fraud and how to protect yourself, go to fbi.gov. Victims can file complaints with the Internet Crime Complaint Center (a partnership between the FBI, the National White Collar Crime Center and the Bureau of Justice Assistance) at ic3.gov.

Are my personal “texts” as private as a personal phone call?

Not necessarily. In California, it is generally illegal to record private phone conversations without the consent of everyone on the line. (PC §§ 502(c))

Fight “phishing”—don’t take the bait.

Your texts, however, are written messages that can be easily forwarded to your ex-boyfriend or even your entire high school class without your knowledge. Even written something embarrassing or hostile? Something that you wish you could take back? Once you push “send,” however, it may be too late.

Text messages also leave a written record that could eventually wind up in the hands of your employer, the government or the police. A U.S. Supreme Court decision recently concluded that a government employer did not violate a public employee’s rights by reading his personal texts—some of them sexually explicit—sent from a work-issued pager. The employer—who read the texts while auditing the agency’s pager usage—disciplined the employee.

Nor did police violate anyone’s legal rights when they inspected an arrestee’s cell phone and found a text potentially related to a drug deal, according to a 2011 California Supreme Court ruling.

**Can my boss legally monitor my emails and the websites that I visit while I’m at work?**

Probably. You should not expect privacy when you use your workplace computer to send emails and browse the Internet. However, check with your employer regarding the privacy policy for your particular workplace.

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**Top 10 Tips for Identity Theft Prevention**

1. **Protect your Social Security number.** Don’t carry your Social Security card in your wallet. If your health plan (other than Medicare) or another card uses your Social Security number, ask the company for a different number.

2. **Fight “phishing”—don’t take the bait.** Scam artists “phish” for victims by pretending to be banks, stores or government agencies. They do this over the phone, in emails and in the regular mail. Don’t give out your personal information—unless you made the contact. Don’t respond to a request to verify your account number or password. Legitimate companies will not request this kind of information in this way.

3. **Keep your identity from getting trashed.** Shred or tear up papers with personal information before you throw them away. Shred credit card offers and “convenience checks” that you don’t use.

4. **Control your personal financial information.** California law requires your bank and other financial services companies to get your permission before sharing your personal financial information with outside companies. You also have the right to limit some sharing of your personal financial information with your companies’ affiliates.

5. **Shield your computer from viruses and spies.** Protect your personal information on your home computer. Use strong passwords with at least eight characters, including a combination of letters, numbers and symbols, easy for you to remember, but difficult for others to guess. Use firewall, virus and spyware protection software that you update regularly. Steer clear of spyware. Download free software only from sites you know and trust. Don’t install software without knowing what it is. Set Internet Explorer browser security to at least “medium.” Don’t click on links in pop-up windows or in spam email.

6. **Click with caution.** When shopping online, check out a website before entering your credit card number or other personal information. Read the privacy policy and look for opportunities to opt out of information sharing. (If there is no privacy policy posted, beware! Shop elsewhere.) Only enter personal information on secure web pages with “https” in the address bar and a padlock symbol at the bottom of the browser window. These are signs that your information will be encrypted or scrambled, protecting it from hackers.

7. **Check your bills and bank statements.** Open your credit card bills and bank statements right away. Check carefully for any unauthorized charges or withdrawals and report them immediately. Call if bills don’t arrive on time. It may mean that someone has changed contact information to hide fraudulent charges.

8. **Stop pre-approved credit offers.** Stop most pre-approved credit offers. They make a tempting target for identity thieves who steal your mail. Have your name removed from credit bureau marketing lists. Call toll-free 1-888-SOPIFOUT (767-8688) or opt out online at optoutprescreen.com.

9. **Ask questions.** Ask questions whenever you are asked for personal information that seems inappropriate for the transaction. Ask how the information will be used and if it will be shared. Ask how it will be protected. Explain that you’re concerned about identity theft. If you’re not satisfied with the answers, consider going somewhere else.

10. **Check your credit reports—for free.** One of the best ways to protect yourself from identity theft is to monitor your credit report. You can get one free credit report every year from each of the three national credit bureaus: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion. Request all three reports at once, or be your own no-cost credit-monitoring service. Just spread out your requests, ordering from a different bureau every four months. (More comprehensive monitoring services from the credit bureaus cost from $44 to more than $100 per year.) Order your free annual credit reports by phone, toll-free, at 1-877-322-8228 or online at annualcreditreport.com. Or you can mail in an order form.

Sources: California Office of Privacy Protection / 1-866-785-9663 / privacy.ca.gov
Certificates
In California, it is generally
gift
sell gift certificates or gift cards
fees. However, there are excep-
tions. Also, in
redeemable for cash.
gift certificates may even be
there are fewer restrictions.

(CC §§ 1749.45-
1749.5).

What if nobody will listen?
There are local, state and national agencies set up
to protect the consumer—
Local consumer agency — check the telephone book under county government agencies.
State — Department of Consumer Affairs / Tel: 1-800-952-5210
TDD: 1-800-326-2297 / dca.ca.gov
Federal — The Federal Trade Commission / Tel: 1-877-FTC-Help (382-4357)
TTY: 1-866-653-4261 / ftc.gov

You might also consider filing a claim in small claims court if your loss is
$7,500 or less. Attorneys generally are not allowed to assist you in small
claims court. However, you can consult with an attorney beforehand.
(Information on ordering the State bar’s pamphlets free of charge can be found below.)
(Information on ordering the State bar’s pamphlets free of charge can be found below.)
Department of Consumer Affairs also offers a no-cost guide that may help you
understand the small claims court process. Visit the California Courts’
online self-help center at courts.ca.gov.

Looking for more information on the law?
We hope this guide will help you make this important transition into adulthood. For additional copies of When You Turn 18: A Survival Guide for Teenagers in English or Spanish, please email your request (including your name, mailing address, phone number, number of copies and language desired) to 18bar@calbar.ca.gov. You can also order free copies of State Bar consumer education pamphlets touching on such topics as renting a home, employee rights and domestic violence. For a list of the available pamphlets and the online versions, visit calbar.ca.gov. Or reorder complimentary copies of the pamphlets by sending an email to pamphlets@calbar.ca.gov. If you do not have access to the Internet, call 1-888-875-LAWS (5297) for instructions on ordering the guides and pamphlets by mail.

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Warmest regards,
Douglas A. Winthrop
President
California Bar Foundation

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Or make a gift online at
www.calbarfoundation.org

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