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# Legal Brief\*

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## Criminal Harassment: When Letting Go Is Essential

Breaking up with someone always causes problems, whether emotional, financial or even residential. These problems, however, pale in comparison to the legal problems that can result from a poorly handled break-up. Criminal harassment is a broad offence that is defined as committing any of the following acts while knowing that the victim is harassed or while being reckless as to whether the victim is harassed:

- (a) repeatedly following from place to place the victim or anyone known to them;
- (b) repeatedly communicating, either directly or indirectly, with the victim or anyone known to them;
- (c) besetting or watching the dwelling-house, or place where the victim, or anyone known to them, resides, works, carries on business or happens to be; or
- (d) engaging in threatening conduct directed at the victim or any member of their family.

Repeated unwanted texts or calls, unannounced visits to your former partner's home, veiled threats of reprisals if they don't take you back — all of these actions can constitute a criminal offence that is increasingly being prosecuted. Criminal harassment carries a maximum penalty of ten years' imprisonment and automatically entails an order prohibiting the possession of weapons, regardless of the sentence handed down.

It is therefore crucial, both for your emotional well-being and your freedom, to peacefully accept a break-up, however painful it may be.

For more information on this subject, don't hesitate to contact your local legal aid office.

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To find the contact information for your legal aid office, please click on the following link [www.csj.qc.ca](http://www.csj.qc.ca).

Don't hesitate to have your eligibility for legal aid evaluated by making an appointment at a legal aid office near you. You can also check your eligibility online [here](#).

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\* The information set out in this document is not a legal interpretation.

The masculine gender is used to designate persons solely in order to simplify the text.