

PURPOSES OF CRIMINAL LAW

Criminal law serves several purposes:

- 1) The protection and safety of citizens
Ex. Assault, murder, drinking and driving
- 2) To protect people
Ex. Theft, vandalism, break and enter
- 3) To preserve standards of decency
Ex. Soliciting, pornography, causing a public disturbance

- 4) To preserve public order
Ex. Almost all criminal laws are designed to do this
- 5) To preserve people from exploitation
Ex. Fraud, pornography (children and women)

Quality of our Criminal Justice System in Canada

- Does our legal system do a good job in controlling and preventing crime?
 - Law Reform Commission lists 7 principles that should exist if it is to be successful:
- 1) Fairness: procedures and the people involved in them must be fair and all should be treated equally

- 2) Efficiency: procedures should be efficient so as to avoid undue costs and errors
- 3) Clarity: procedures must be clear. This leads to predictability and regularity
- 4) Restraint: procedures should not interfere with an individual's rights and freedoms so long as the freedoms of others are protected

- 5) Accountability: people involved must be help responsible for conducting fair procedures
- 6) Participation: the public should have some measure of control over processes and they should be open to the public
- 7) Protection: criminal law should serve to protect society

Causes of Crime

- Experts have identified a number of causes of conditions that promote criminal behaviour and increased crime rates:
 - Heredity -mental imbalance -economy
 - Emotional insecurity - overcrowding
 - Poverty - TV -lack of education
 - Technology -association with criminals
 - Punishments not severe enough -media
 - Culture -peer pressure -revenge
 - Drugs -hate groups -environment
 - Abuse -thrills/excitement

- In groups of 3, list each cause given to you and try to come up with solutions on how to reduce crime for each cause. You will present your conclusions. (See page 241 for kids at risk of offending)
