

# CANADIAN COURTS HAVE CAUGHT 211+ FAKE CASES CITED AS REAL LAW SINCE 2024

A study by [Courtready.ca](https://www.courtready.ca) | March 17, 2026



Artificial intelligence (“AI”) tools sometimes fabricate legal cases that look real but do not exist. When lawyers or self-represented Canadians rely on these tools, fictitious cases can end up being submitted to a judge as if they were real law. Courtready has conducted a systematic review of every known instance of this happening in Canadian courts and tribunals since January 1, 2024. The findings represent a conservative floor, not a ceiling.

211+

Fictitious Citations Caught by Court

111

Affected Decisions

42

Courts & Tribunals

78%

of decisions involved self-represented litigants

74%

of decisions found or presumed AI generated the citations

## YEAR-OVER-YEAR ACCELERATION

7

decisions in 2024

80

decisions in 2025

24

in 2026 so far

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Spreading nationwide:** Non-existent cases have been flagged across 42 different Canadian courts and tribunals, from the BC Civil Resolution Tribunal to the Federal Court of Canada.
- **Self-represented Canadians bear the greatest risk:** In 87 of 111 decisions (78.4%), the person who submitted fictitious cases was navigating the system without a lawyer.
- **Conservative floor:** The 211 citations represent only what courts have caught and remarked on in written decisions. Fictitious cases that go undetected are absent from this data.

## WHY IT MATTERS

*"This is likely the tip of the iceberg. What we are seeing in these decisions is only what the courts or tribunals have caught. For every non-existent decision flagged by a court, there may be others that were never detected. It appears to be only a matter of time before fake cases become real law in Canada."*

— **Tom Macintosh Zheng**, Former Commercial Litigator, Co-Founder of Courtready

Fictitious citations waste court resources, increase costs for opposing parties, and risk undermining public confidence in the justice system. The sharp acceleration from 2024 to 2025 suggests the problem is growing faster than current safeguards can contain it.

## METHODOLOGY

Courtready manually conducted targeted keyword searches of decisions published on the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII) from January 1, 2024, to March 10, 2026. Search terms were designed to capture judicial language indicating that a cited authority could not be verified, as well as decisions that explicitly discuss the use of artificial intelligence in legal proceedings.

Full database and methodology: [courtready.ca/fictitious-citations-in-canadian-courts](https://www.courtready.ca/fictitious-citations-in-canadian-courts)

Database updated weekly | Available in English and French

**About Courtready:** Courtready provides practical legal tools and legal education for Canadians navigating the justice system.

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