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## New sex offences against children named

By CBC News  
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*Using the internet or a phone to arrange a sexual encounter with a child would be a criminal offence with a mandatory sentence under legislation announced by Justice Minister Rob Nicholson.*

Using the internet or a phone to arrange a sexual encounter with a child would be a criminal offence with a mandatory sentence under legislation proposed Thursday.

It was one of two new sexual offences against children announced in Toronto by Justice Minister Rob Nicholson, a news release said.

Nicholson also announced new mandatory sentences for seven existing sexual offences.

The two new offences created under the proposed Protecting Children from Sexual Predators Act would be:

- Using telecommunications, including the internet, to communicate with another person to agree or make arrangements to commit a sexual offence against a child.
- Providing sexually explicit material to a child for the purpose of facilitating the commission of a sexual offence against a child, often referred to as "grooming."

The first offence was previously introduced as part of the Investigative Powers for the 21st Century Act in the previous session of parliament, which died after Prime Minister Stephen Harper suspended Parliament on Dec. 30, 2009, in advance of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. It was not included when the legislation was reintroduced this past Monday.

Under the proposed legislation, both new offences would have mandatory sentences of at least 90 days or 30 days respectively.

Mandatory minimum sentences ranging from 30 days to five years would also be handed out for seven existing sexual offences that do not currently have mandatory sentences, except under specific circumstances:

- Incest against a person under 16 years of age.
- Bestiality.
- Internet luring.
- Exposure.

- Sexual assault against a young person under 16 years of age.
- Sexual assault with a weapon against a young person under 16 years of age.
- Aggravated sexual assault against a young person under 16 years of age.

For seven sexual offences against children that already have mandatory sentences, the length of the sentence would be raised. These offences include:

- Sexual interference.
- Sexual touching.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Possession of child pornography.
- Accessing child pornography.
- A parent or guardian procuring sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old.
- A householder permitting sexual activity with a 16- or 17-year-old.

Current minimum sentences for less serious "summary" convictions would be raised to 90 days from 14. For more serious cases, it would be raised from 45 days to 90 days, six months, or a year, depending on the offence.

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