

2025 Submission Rules for

The Crime Writers of Canada Award

for Best Unpublished Crime Manuscript

Sponsored by ECW Press

Introduction

The first award for Best Unpublished Crime Manuscript was presented by the Crime Writers of Canada in 2007 as part of the CWC mandate to recognize and promote the careers of promising new crime writers.

The competition is open to (1) Canadian citizens, no matter where they are living, and to writers, regardless of nationality, who have Permanent Resident status in Canada; (2) writers who have never had a novel of any kind published commercially but who have a completed crime novel manuscript. Contestants initially only enter the first 5000 words plus a full synopsis; however, they must have a completed manuscript (50,000-110,000 words) at the time of entry.

Note: Crime novels include capers, cozies, detective stories, espionage, police procedural, and any other type of mystery, suspense, or thrillers. If you are not certain that your submission qualifies, please contact us at awards@crimewriterscanada.com

Like many other professional writing organizations, CWC will no longer accept printed copies of work except in exceptional circumstances. All submissions should be in digital format only. From the initial submissions, up to ten (10) authors will be asked by the judges to submit their completed manuscripts. A shortlist of up to five (5) finalists will be selected from these completed manuscripts. Until the Shortlist is announced on April 25, 2025, authors cannot announce or promote their entry.

The winner will be announced **on May 30, 2025**, and receive the Unpublished Award statue along with a \$500 cash prize from ECW.

Competition Rules

Definition of a Crime Novel

A crime novel must contain a crime (but not necessarily a murder) that is solved or thwarted by a protagonist and carried out by the main character. The crime must be integral to the plot.

Eligibility

The contest is open to all writers who fulfill the following eligibility requirements:

1. You are a Canadian citizen, regardless of place of residence, or a writer, regardless of nationality, who has been granted Permanent Resident status in Canada.
2. You have not had a novel, or novel-length work of fiction (50,000+ words), of any kind, published commercially whether in print or electronically (i.e., e-book or published on the Internet) or self-published in any genre, including literary fiction under your given name or a pseudonym, and/or written alone or jointly with another author.

3. You do not have a contract from a publisher for your manuscript. **If you accept a novel contract during the course of the contest or if you decide to self-publish, you must notify us. In the interest of fairness to other writers, your manuscript will be withdrawn without refund.**

Important Notes:

A novel that has an ISBN or ASIN is considered published commercially.

If you are published in the areas of nonfiction, short fiction (novellas and short stories), poetry, or plays/screenplays, you are eligible to submit.

You are welcome to submit the same manuscript in subsequent years, provided it was not shortlisted for the Unpublished Award and that criteria 1 to 3 are still met.

If you are uncertain whether your manuscript is eligible, contact us at awards@crimewriterscanada.com.

The decision of Crime Writers of Canada as to whether a manuscript is eligible for the Unpublished Award is binding.

Submission Procedure

****Do not include your name anywhere in the document.**

Entrants must submit:

1. One (1) PDF document containing:
 - a) the opening 5000 words of their completed crime novel
 - b) a 500-word synopsis of the novel. The synopsis should be of the entire novel. The synopsis is a crucial part of the submission; it's the only way the judges can assess your plot development, so take time to write it.
2. A completed entry form and entry fee for each submission.

Manuscript and synopses must be:

- In English.
- Single-spaced using 12-point Times New Roman or Courier, with 1-inch margins.
- Include a header in the upper left-hand corner containing the title of the manuscript on each page of the excerpt, synopsis, and manuscript. **Do not include your name in the header.**
- Make sure that each page is numbered.
- Submissions should be saved in PDF format using **the title of the manuscript followed by the year of entry (2025)**

Deadline - 31 October 2024 @11:59 PM PDT or earlier.

*We regret that entries received after this date cannot be considered.

Entry Fee:

CWC members in good standing receive a 20% discount. Price adjustments will not be made after submission.

2025 AWARD FEE SCHEDULE

BEST UNPUBLISHED CRIME MANUSCRIPT

MEMBER FEE	\$36
NON-MEMBER FEE	\$45

All Payments must be in **Canadian funds**.

Entry fees not paid IN FULL by the required date will result in the submission being disqualified.

If the category has fewer than six (6) submissions in a given year, all books or stories will be held over to be judged in the Awards of the following year.

Longlisted Authors will be notified no later than **January 31, 2025** if they have made the longlist and will be required to immediately submit, by email, **their complete manuscript, in PDF format or be immediately disqualified**. Instructions for longlisted submissions will be provided in the notification email.

Do not advertise that you have made the longlist or publish excerpts from your manuscript until the shortlist is announced. If you do, you may be disqualified, as only anonymous entries will be adjudicated.

Judging & Scorecard

Entries are purged of all author-identifying information before being sent for judging. Scorecards will be used to determine the longlist, shortlist, and winner. In the initial round, submissions will be judged and scored by a panel of three jurors. Those entries not qualifying for the longlist will receive their scorecard on or before March 30, 2025.

ECW will provide an additional juror in the final phase of judging after the finalists have been chosen so that submissions from all finalists will have been read by the publisher.

There is no commitment on ECW Press's part to publish the finalists, nor are the finalists obligated to accept an offer from ECW Press.

All scorecards will be returned on or before June 30, 2025.

Important Dates

Submissions Deadline: **Thursday, October 31st, 2024, 11:59 PST.**

The shortlists for all categories will be announced: **Friday, April 25th, 2025**

The winners will be announced: **Friday May 30th, 2025**

Contact

For more information about the contest, please email: awards@crimewriterscanada.com

For information about Crime Writers of Canada, please email: ed@crimewriterscanada.com