



THE PROVINCIAL COURT
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Effective Date: 29 January 2021

NM 01

NOTICE TO ACCREDITED MEDIA

MEDIA ACCESS TO COURT PROCEEDINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Provincial Court of British Columbia recognizes the critical importance of the open courts principle, including in the exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Provincial Court is taking the steps below to ensure that accredited media have access to, and can observe, court proceedings during this exceptional time, while protecting the health and safety of everyone involved. These temporary processes will remain in place until further notice.

1. Access to Court Proceedings

Remote Access

Members of the accredited media should watch the [hearing lists](#), and, if they wish to observe remotely, contact the applicable [court registry](#) for more information about how they can participate by dialing into a teleconference. Media participation in court proceedings taking place by teleconference may be subject to limits on the number of callers that can be connected through a single teleconference number. Participation by members of the accredited media in court proceedings remotely by telephone, is subject to the following conditions:

- Cellphones must be on mute during the proceedings; if using a landline, accredited media must be in a quiet room, so as not to disrupt the proceedings;
- As per the Joint Courts [Policy on Use of Electronic Devices in Courtrooms](#), accredited media may record the proceedings for verifying their notes only;
- If accredited media do not call in at the set time or if the call is lost, the Court will not disrupt the proceedings to connect them; and,
- See also [Notice to the Profession and Public 21](#), Part II Media and the Public (page 4)

In Person Access

Members of the accredited media should watch the [hearing lists](#) and may attend proceedings in person, subject to [NP 22 Resuming In-Person Proceedings During COVID-19: Health & Safety](#)

[Protocols](#). NP 22 provides that in order to maintain a safe physical distance in the public gallery between members of the media and public, the number of seats available in courtrooms will be limited, and entry into the courtroom will not be permitted if the safe physical distancing requirements cannot be maintained.

2. Access to Audio Recordings of Court Proceedings (DARS)

Any requests for access to audio recordings of court proceedings (post-hearing) by accredited media should be made by completing the [Undertaking of Accredited Media](#) (Digital Audio Recording - File Transfer Protocol) (ADM864b)¹ and emailing (a) a signed copy of the Undertaking to the applicable [court location](#), and (b) a copy of their Accredited Media Identification, addressed to the attention of a Court Services Branch Justice of the Peace. All requests for access to audio recordings via File Transfer Protocol (FTP) are subject to the access provisions set out in Part 6 of the [Access to Court Records Policy](#) (ACC-2).

History of Notice to Accredited Media

- Original Notice to Accredited Media issued April 24, 2020 and effective on April 27, 2020.
- Amended Notice to Accredited Media effective July 13, 2020 (housekeeping amendments consequential to [NP 19 COVID 19: Resumption of Court Operations – July 13, 2020](#)).
- Amended Notice to Accredited Media effective September 25, 2020 (updates section 2).
- January 29, 2021 updated to add reference to [Notice to the Profession and Public 21](#) under “Remote Access”.

Melissa Gillespie
Chief Judge
Provincial Court of British Columbia

¹ The Undertaking of Accredited Media (ADM864b) is available at the following Government of BC webpage: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/courthouse-services/documents-forms-records/court-forms/criminal-court-forms>.