



THE PROVINCIAL COURT
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Effective Date: *10 January 2022*

NP 19 *Revisions in red*

NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION AND PUBLIC

COURT OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 (JANUARY 10 TO 28, 2022)

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, particularly with the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in the Province, which may result in staff shortages, the Court recognizes the benefits of limiting in-person attendance at courthouses to preserve the capacity of the Court to meet the needs of the public, while continuing to safeguard the health and safety of everyone attending courthouses. Accordingly, from January 10 to January 28, 2022 the Provincial Court of British Columbia is implementing the measures outlined below. **Where matters are noted below as proceeding that will be dependent on there being sufficient judges and court staff available, as well as the availability of participants in the proceeding.**

Matters that have been scheduled to proceed virtually will proceed on their scheduled dates. The Court is committed to facilitating the conduct of certain proceedings, including trials, in whole or in part, by video or audio conference and encourages parties to consider remote attendance and virtual proceedings where appropriate and possible.

For further information about in-person proceedings and attendance, see [NP 22 In-Person Proceedings and Attendance During COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols](#). For further information regarding virtual proceedings, see [NP 21 Virtual Proceedings and Remote Attendance in the Provincial Court](#).

Archived versions of NP 19 are available [here](#). The directions in this Notice are subject to change as circumstances of the pandemic change.

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I. FILINGS

Provincial Court registries are accepting all filings at the [applicable court registry](#) either in person or remotely (by mail, email, fax to fax filing registries under [GEN 01 Fax Filing Registries – Family and Small Claims](#), or using [Court Services Online](#) where available). To protect the health and safety of all court users and help contain the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining access to the Court, parties are encouraged to use remote filing options wherever possible.

Applications in family and small claims matters may be accompanied by **affidavits**, written statements of fact that have been sworn or affirmed to be true before a commissioner for oaths such as a lawyer or justice of the peace. In order to reduce the number of people attending court registries the Chief Judge is advising Provincial Court registries that the materials filed need not be sworn or affirmed at this time (during COVID-19). The judge who hears the matter may attach whatever weight they consider appropriate to unsworn or unaffirmed documents. People submitting affidavits must still take care to ensure their affidavits are accurate and true. If there is a hearing the judge will likely require them to swear or affirm that the contents of their affidavit are true at the hearing. See, also, [NP 20 Affidavits for Use in Court Proceedings](#). The only exception is that Affidavits of Personal Service need to be sworn/affirmed before filing if the person who served the documents will not be attending the hearing.

During COVID-19, the Chief Judge is advising Provincial Court registries to accept family Applications and Notices of Motion with typewritten or electronic signatures.

Police must send Informations by telecommunication (fax or telephone) to the applicable local [court registry](#). The process hearing will be done by telephone.

Information about judicial authorizations is set out below in Part IV, section 8.

II. FAMILY (including child protection (CFCSA) and maintenance enforcement (FMEA))

If you require legal assistance with your matter, you may contact Legal Aid at 1-866-577-2525.

All presentation hearings (CFCSA) will continue to be scheduled without any change to process.

Family trials and trial continuations **scheduled to commence or continue on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022** will be adjourned without parties having to make an application. These trials will remain on the trial list on the date scheduled but the trial will not proceed on that date. Instead, the Court will contact participants by audio or videoconference on that date to discuss next steps and, if not resolved, the matter will be adjourned to another date as directed

by the judge to fix a new trial date. Please make sure you are available at the time your trial is scheduled.

If you want to make an “Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed” please see Part V below in this Notice.

If your trial was scheduled in this period to proceed virtually it will proceed on its scheduled date.

Family remand lists (CFCSA, FLA, FMEA), family case conferences (CFCSA), family settlement conferences, and family management conferences will be heard by audioconference or videoconference on the date scheduled. For family remand, please contact the applicable [court registry](#) for dial in information/link in advance of the scheduled date.

Consent Adjournment (CFCSA/FLA/FMEA)

Where counsel and parties agree to adjourn a matter they can use the following procedures to adjourn. Counsel and parties will then not need to speak to the adjournment on the currently scheduled date.

By Director’s Counsel (CFCSA)

- See [FAM 07 CFCA Consent Requisitions](#) and the [Consent Requisition Form](#).

By Counsel (FLA/FMEA)

- See [FAM 09 Consent Adjournment \(FLA/FMEA\)](#) and the [Consent Adjournment Form](#).

By Parties (FLA/FMEA)

- See Rule 114 of the *Provincial Court Family Rules*, B.C. Reg. 120/2020 for the procedure to adjourn a trial date by consent.

Other Resources for Family Cases

- The following link lists some other resources that may assist in resolving a family matter: <https://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/types-of-cases/family-matters/links>.

III. SMALL CLAIMS

[SM CL 02 Small Claims Proceedings During COVID-19](#) continues to apply except for sections A.1 and B.5 which are modified as follows.

- Rule 9.1 simplified trials scheduled on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022 are adjourned for rescheduling without the parties having to attend Court. The Court will contact parties and counsel to reschedule.

- All other small claims trials, trial continuations and default hearings scheduled **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022** will be adjourned without parties having to make an application. These trials will remain on the trial list on the date scheduled but the trial will not proceed on that date. Instead, the Court will contact participants by audio or videoconference on that date to discuss next steps and, if not resolved, the matter will be adjourned to another date as directed by the judge to fix a new trial date. Please make sure you are available at the time your trial is scheduled.

If you want to make an **“Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed”** please see Part V below in this Notice.

If your trial **or payment hearing** was scheduled in this period to proceed virtually it will proceed on its scheduled date.

IV. CRIMINAL (ADULT AND YOUTH)

In this Part, “trial” includes preliminary inquiry if not already stated.

If you require legal assistance with your matter, you may contact Legal Aid at 1-866-577-2525. Any in-custody accused who is transported to Court from a correctional facility, if they are returning to custody after the appearance, may be placed in an induction unit. For current information, see [BC Corrections’ COVID-19 In-Court Protocols](#).

1. TRIALS, TRIAL CONTINUATIONS, AND PRELIMINARY INQUIRIES

- a. In custody criminal trials, trial continuations and preliminary inquiries originally scheduled **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022****

In-custody criminal trials, trial continuations and preliminary inquiries will remain on the trial list on the date scheduled. Counsel and self-represented litigants are to attend Court in person (or as otherwise scheduled) on the date scheduled at 9:00 AM to advise if they are ready to proceed that day. Witnesses and parties represented by counsel are to wait outside the courthouse (within a 30 minute distance) and be prepared to be called to attend court in person. The Court will determine which trials will proceed.

For information about in-custody criminal trials at circuit court locations see Part VII “Circuit Courts” below.

- b. Out of custody criminal trials, trial continuations, and preliminary inquiries originally scheduled **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022****

All out of custody criminal trials, trial continuations and preliminary inquiries scheduled on or between **January 10 and January 28, 2022** will be adjourned without parties having to make an application. These trials will remain on the trial list on the date scheduled but the trial will not proceed on that date. Instead, the Court will contact participants by audio or videoconference

on that date to discuss next steps and, if not resolved, the matter will be adjourned to another date as directed by the judge to fix a new trial date. Please make sure you are available at the time your trial is scheduled.

A bench warrant will be issued for all accused persons who cannot be contacted on their trial date set **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022**. The bench warrant will be held and not executed until **February 4, 2022**, unless the next scheduled appearance date is before **February 4, 2022** in which case it will be executed on that earlier date. If the accused person appears personally or through counsel/agent on or before **February 4, 2022**, the bench warrant will be vacated.

If you want to make an **“Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed”** please see Part V below in this Notice.

If your trial was scheduled in this period to proceed virtually it will proceed on its scheduled date.

2. JUDICIAL INTERIM RELEASE

All judicial interim release (bail) hearings will continue to use audioconference or videoconference (instead of in-person appearances), unless a judge or justice orders otherwise. Bail applications occurring outside of Court sitting hours shall be referred to the [Justice Centre](#) (see [CRIM 05 Hearing of Bail Applications](#)). For bail hearings for all adult and youth criminal files in the Northern Region, see also [CRIM 14 Northern Bail Pilot Project](#).

For consent bail variations without a surety, the Application to Vary Bail by Consent Form (PCR 317) (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/courthouse-services/documents-forms-records/court-forms/criminal-court-forms>) may be sent to the [Judicial Case Manager](#) at the applicable local court location in one of the following ways:

- a. by email; or
- b. if available in the location, by facsimile.

Counsel for a person in-custody may sign the Form on their behalf if it is their application. For consent bail variations with a surety, please call the [Judicial Case Manager](#) at the applicable local court location for further information.

3. INITIAL APPEARANCE COURT

Counsel for adults and youth must endeavor to avoid unnecessary personal attendances of the accused or counsel at the courthouse wherever possible. Please refer to “Alternatives to Attending Court” in [CRIM 13 Initial Appearance Court During COVID-19](#).

4. PRE-TRIAL CONFERENCES

[CRIM 12 Criminal Pre-Trial Conferences During COVID-19](#) applies to the specified adult and youth criminal files listed in the “Application” section of the Practice Direction.

This practice direction only applies to files where the accused is represented by counsel. Self-represented accused with trials requiring one day or more of trial time will have a pre-trial conference set before a judge, preferably the trial judge, approximately 8 to 10 weeks before the first date of trial for trial management purposes.

5. DISPOSITIONS

If your disposition was scheduled **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022** to proceed virtually, it will proceed on its scheduled date.

All in person dispositions scheduled **on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022** will remain on the hearing list on the date scheduled but will not proceed on that date unless the judge otherwise orders. Instead, the Court will contact participants by audio or videoconference on that date to discuss adjourning the matter as directed by the judge to fix a new date **or to discuss whether the matter can proceed virtually**. Please make sure you are available at the time your disposition is scheduled.

Counsel may file a [Consent Requisition](#) form (Form 1, CPD-1) in advance of the hearing date to adjourn matters. Counsel and parties will then not need to speak to the adjournment on the currently scheduled date. See [CPD-1 CCFM Practice Direction](#), and [CRIM 08 Criminal Caseflow Management Rules Forms and Procedure](#).

A bench warrant will be issued for all accused persons who cannot be contacted on their scheduled disposition date set **on or between January 10 to January 28, 2022**. The bench warrant will be held and not executed until **February 4, 2022**, unless the next scheduled appearance date is before **February 4, 2022** in which case it will be executed on that earlier date. If the accused person appears personally or through counsel/agent on or before **February 4, 2022**, the bench warrant will be vacated.

For out of custody matters where the accused (out of custody) and counsel agree to appear by audioconference or videoconference, and the prosecutor and defence counsel have agreed to seek a sentence that does not involve any incarceration but may factor in time already spent in custody and include a one day jail sentence where the accused is not taken into custody or a conditional sentence order, in order to schedule these dispositions, defence counsel must:

- i. complete the [“Request for Resolution of Matters”](#) Form;
- ii. file the completed Form to the applicable local [court registry](#); and
- iii. provide a means by which the accused will receive a printed copy of any court order(s). For example, this could be an email, fax or mailing address for the accused or their counsel.

A Judicial Case Manager will contact counsel to schedule the hearing by audioconference or videoconference before a judge.

All materials to be relied on must be provided to the court two days in advance of the hearing. Those materials will include the picklist terms as part of any peace bond, probation order, or conditional sentence order.

Where Crown is seeking incarceration or the accused does not consent to being sentenced by audioconference or videoconference, parties must contact the applicable Judicial Case Manager to schedule these sentencings. Where the accused is appearing in person for their sentencing, counsel may appear by audioconference or videoconference and must notify the JCM of their method of appearance.

6. APPLICATIONS TO REPLACE A POLICE UNDERTAKING

For applications to replace a police undertaking under s. 502(2) of the *Criminal Code* the Application to a Judge Form (PCR 315) is available at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/courthouse-services/documents-forms-records/court-forms/criminal-court-forms>.

7. SPECIALIZED COURTS

Specialized Court	Current Status
Indigenous Courts (including Aboriginal Healing Court Conferences)	Will remain on the date scheduled unless otherwise notified by the Court. The Court will hear these matters by audioconference or by videoconference.
Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver	Accused and counsel may appear, in person, by audioconference, or videoconference during the COVID period.
Downtown Community Court	
Domestic Violence Courts	
Kelowna Integrated Court	Crown and defence counsel are encouraged to appear by audioconference or videoconference.
Victoria Integrated Court	Accused and counsel and other court participants, including ACT Team members are encouraged to appear by audioconference or videoconference during the COVID period.

8. JUDICIAL AUTHORIZATIONS

See [CRIM 03 Daytime Judicial Authorization Applications](#).

9. SECTION 490 DETENTION OF THINGS SEIZED

Section 490 Criminal Code extension applications will be heard by telephone or videoconference. New applications must include a date/time and phone number that the applicant and disputant can attend by telephone. On the day of the telephone hearing, if the matter is uncontested, and service has been proven, the CSB Justice of the Peace or Judicial Justice will review the application along with supporting materials filed. If the matter is contested, the CSB Justice of the Peace or Judicial Justice will obtain the telephone contact information for the applicant and disputant and provide that to the applicable local [Judicial Case Manager](#), who will arrange to have a Provincial Court Judge determine by telephone any next steps.

10. APPLICATION TO RENDER ACCUSED BY SURETY

Those no longer wanting to be sureties for an accused can fill out the form, [Application to render accused by surety pursuant to s. 766\(1\) of the Criminal Code](#) (PCR 967), and make that application by filing the form at the applicable local [court registry](#).

V. APPLICATION TO HAVE SCHEDULED TRIAL PROCEED

If you wish to have a trial or trial continuation proceed on the basis of urgency, you must email the Court an “Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed” outlining why the matter should be considered urgent with a copy to opposing counsel at least 3 business days (where possible) prior to the first day of the trial. The Court will review the application and filed materials, outlining why the trial should proceed on the basis of urgency, and will: direct a virtual hearing be scheduled by the JCM to determine the urgency of the trial; direct that the trial proceed on the scheduled date as the trial is urgent; or, confirm the adjournment of the trial. Email the [“Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed”](#) to the applicable contact below for your Region with the subject line “Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed”.

REGION	CONTACT
Fraser	Email for Criminal matters: Surrey.CriminalScheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca Email for Family or Civil matters: Surrey.CivilScheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca
Interior	Email for Criminal matters: Kelowna.CriminalScheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca Email for Family or Civil matters: Kelowna.CivilScheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca
North	PG.Scheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca
Vancouver	Email for Criminal matters: Van.Scheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca

	Email for Family or Civil matters: Robson.Scheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca
Vancouver Island	Vic.Scheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca

VI. PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY MATTERS

Matters related to public health and safety and the COVID-19 pandemic, including matters under the *Quarantine Act*, *Public Health Act* and similar statutes and regulations can be filed at the applicable local [court registry](#).

Disputants are encouraged to appear remotely for *Quarantine Act* appearances scheduled on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022. You may request in writing to a judge using form [PTR 825](#) to attend remotely by audioconference or videoconference.

VII. CIRCUIT COURTS

For Pemberton all matters other than trials will proceed in person or virtually as scheduled. If you have questions please contact nvan.scheduling@provincialcourt.bc.ca or 604-981-0293.

For all other circuit court locations all matters scheduled on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022 will proceed as set out in the above sections of this Notice. However, for in-custody criminal trials the Court will contact parties to schedule a virtual pre-trial conference on the record in advance of the scheduled trial date to determine if the matter is proceeding and whether it will proceed virtually or in person.

VIII. TRAFFIC, TICKET OR BYLAW MATTERS

All traffic, ticket and bylaw trials scheduled on or between January 10 and January 28, 2022 are adjourned for rescheduling without the disputant having to attend Court. Parties will be sent a new notice of hearing that will include the date, time, and location of the hearing. If your trial was scheduled in this period to proceed virtually **with both parties attending remotely** it will proceed on its scheduled date.

Parties who receive a notice of hearing and require interpreter services for their hearing must contact the Violation Ticket Center at 1-877-661-8026 prior to their hearing date.

Disputants have the options of:

- a. **Filing Written Reasons including a request for a fine reduction and/or time to pay** (link to form: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/courthouse-services/court-files-records/court-forms/traffic/ptr022.pdf>)
- b. **Paying the fine(s) on the ticket**

To dispute a violation ticket and have a trial date assigned as a future available court date, the Disputant can download a [form](#) and mail it in to: Ticket Dispute Processing, Bag 3510, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3P7.

THE FOREGOING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, ANY UPDATED DIRECTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE COURT'S WEBSITE.

Cross-reference

- BC Centre for Disease Control [Guidance for Courthouse Users During the COVID-19 Pandemic & BC Restart Plan](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control Public Exposures webpage](#) regarding courthouse exposure events and incidents
- B.C. Government's [Restart Plan](#) and [COVID-19 court restart operations](#)
- Provincial Health Officer [Statement for Employers on Transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to Communicable Disease Plans](#)
- [Protocol](#) for communication and testing related to COVID-19 at courthouses

History of Notice to the Profession and Public

- Original Notice to the Profession and Public issued on March 19, 2020, and effective March 25, 2020 (unless otherwise stated in the Notice).
- Updated Notice issued March 23, 2020 with additions noted in red.
- April 2, 2020: Updated Appendix B to replace picture of Application to Vary Bail by Consent Form with link to the Form.
- April 14, 2020: Changes since last update noted in red, including adding applications to replace a police undertaking under s. 502(2) of the *Criminal Code* under "Persons in Custody"; revising "Judicial Authorization" section and removing "Justice Centre" section in Part III "Criminal (Adult and Youth)"; adding Part IV "Public Health Emergency Matters"; and housekeeping changes.
- April 28, 2020: Updated to set out the plan to commence recovery of some court operations that are capable of being done remotely by audioconference or videoconference.
- May 8, 2020: Updated to address: summary proceedings in criminal matters; and, some urgent matters (see page 8 for information regarding a May 16, 2020 deadline).
- June 12, 2020: Updated to remove reference to Hub Courts; address Initial Appearance Court, remand appearances, and court appearances scheduled after July 3, 2020; update Appendix "C"; add Appendix "D". See, also, NP 22 Resuming In-Person Proceedings During COVID-19: Health & Safety Protocols and NP 21 Guide to Remote Proceedings.
- July 2, 2020: Updated regarding traffic court locations, registry opening for new filings, urgent applications, additions to Appendix C and further information regarding CRIM 12.
- July 13, 2020: Updated to reflect that court registries will accept all filings, including in-person filings, and to remove references to the urgent hearing process in place during reduced registry operations; added Nelson Traffic Court sittings on August 14 and 28, 2020; and housekeeping changes to remove outdated information including several Appendices.
- July 17, 2020: Updated to add Creston Traffic Court sitting; move references to details regarding Circuit Courts to new Notice (NP 23) hyperlinked in Part VI.
- July 29, 2020: Updated "Family" and "Criminal" sections; clarification of small claims applications and payment hearing appearances after July 3, 2020.
- August 17, 2020: Removed chart under Part V "Traffic, Ticket and Bylaw Matters" as Notices of Hearing contain relevant information.
- September 28, 2020: Updated to add section d under Part I "Family", section c under Part II "Small Claims", and reference to "unpaid agents permitted by the presiding judicial officer" under Part V "Traffic Matters"; and consequential amendments to Part III "Criminal" further to the revised CRIM 12 Practice Direction.
- October 1, 2020: Housekeeping changes – references to "one day or more" revised to "more than one day" further to the CRIM 12 Practice Direction.
- October 9, 2020: Updated to reflect current court operations only, delete historical references such as to Appendix "A" – Adjournment Details, and change "remote proceedings" references to "virtual proceedings".
- December 7, 2020: Updated Part III "Family" to reflect Early Resolution and Case Management Model in Surrey; changed title from "COVID-19: Resumption of Court Operations".

- December 21, 2020: Updated Part V, section 8 to include reference to s. 49 *Community Charter* applications; updated Part II regarding suspension of limitation periods.
- February 16, 2021: Updated Part II title for Limitation Periods; Part V, section 8 re Judicial Authorizations; Part VII Traffic, Ticket and Bylaws to remove references to alternate locations for hearings; and housekeeping changes.
- March 1, 2021: Updated Part VII Traffic, Ticket and Bylaws to add section entitled “*Process for Disputant – Request to Appear by Telephone or Videoconference*”; updated Part IV Small Claims re Applications and Payment Hearings.
- April 19, 2021: Removed Part II Provincial Suspension of Limitation Periods; updated Part III “Small Claims” further to SM CL 02 Practice Direction; added reference to CRIM 05 and CRIM 14 Practice Directions in Part IV “Criminal” (#1 Judicial Interim Release); and updated Part IV “Criminal” (#8 Judicial Authorizations) re applications for unsealing orders.
- May 17, 2021: Amended Part II “Family” by removing reference to FAM 08 Practice Direction, and updating consent adjournment by parties consequential to the new *Provincial Court Family Rules*, B.C. Reg. 120/2020.
- June 04, 2021: Housekeeping amendment to Part II “Family” to be consistent with the new *Provincial Court Family Rules*, B.C. Reg. 120/2020; and updated Part IV “Criminal” (#8 Judicial Authorizations) to reflect the revised CRIM 03 Practice Direction.
- June 14, 2021: Updated Part IV “Criminal” (#8 Judicial Authorizations) to remove reference to the expired CRIM 03 Practice Direction: Daytime Search Warrant Applications and the expired Chief Judge’s memo dated February 9, 2021.
- July 02, 2021: Introduction revised in accordance with updated BC Centre for Disease Control Guidance for Court Users During the COVID-19 Pandemic and the government’s Restart Plan; and housekeeping changes.
- September 1, 2021: Updated Part VI to include the Officer – Request to Appear by Telephone or Videoconference Form and surrounding process; housekeeping changes; and deleted Part VII Circuit Courts.
- January 4, 2022: Revised to limit in person proceedings in response to the rapid and concerning increase of COVID-19 cases and specifically the spread of the Omicron variant in the Province.
- January 10, 2022: Revised to cover the period January 10 to January 28, 2022; Introduction updated; Part IV section 5 information about consent requisitions added; Part V Application to Have Scheduled Trial Proceed added; Part VII Circuit Court added; and other housekeeping changes.

By Direction of Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie
Provincial Court of British Columbia