



THE PROVINCIAL COURT
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**Policies regarding public and media
access in the Provincial Court of British Columbia**

17 February 2011

Vancouver -- The Provincial Court of British Columbia has today posted on its website the Court's *Policies regarding Public and Media Access in the Provincial Court of British Columbia*. The policies, which will take effect on February 28, 2011, can be found at the following link on the court's website: [Policies regarding Public Access in the Provincial Court of British Columbia](#).

The policies seek to appropriately balance the vitally important principle of an open court with the judiciary's overall responsibility for the fair administration of justice in individual cases.

As the Supreme Court of Canada recently noted:

The open court principle is of crucial importance in a democratic society. It ensures that citizens have access to the courts and can, as a result, comment on how courts operate and on proceedings that take place in them. Public access to the courts also guarantees the integrity of judicial processes inasmuch as the transparency that flows from access ensures that justice is rendered in a manner that is not arbitrary, but is in accordance with the rule of law.

(CBC v. Canada (Attorney General), 2011 SCC 2, para. 1)

The policies posted today cover such matters as:

- access to courthouses and courtrooms;
- access to court records;
- access to digital audio recordings of proceedings;
- televising court proceedings; and
- publication bans.

The policy is an evolving document which I expect will continue to be the subject of further development through discussion with the public and the media. Today's policy document is a significant and helpful step in the ongoing process of ensuring an open and accessible court.

Thomas J. Crabtree
Chief Judge