



November 29, 2020

Surrey and Abbotsford Provincial Courthouses are Open

Surrey Provincial Court

Fraser Health has been involved in cases of COVID-19 among staff of the BC Sheriff Services at the Surrey Courthouse. As with all identified cases of COVID-19, all cases have been interviewed and close contacts have been directly notified and required to self-isolate. There is no clear evidence of transmission of COVID-19 at the Surrey Courthouse. However, as an additional precaution, mass-testing was conducted on November 26 at the Surrey Courthouse, focusing on all staff of the BC Sheriff Services. The results of mass testing were reassuring that there was not an undetected outbreak at the Surrey Courthouse. Public health has contacted any individual that tested positive to ensure isolation and to identify and isolate close contacts. See **Appendix "A"** for the letter from Fraser Health dated November 29, 2020.

In light of the information from Fraser Health, the Surrey Provincial Court will be open tomorrow, Monday November 30.

Abbotsford Provincial Court

The Court has been advised that:

- Fraser Health does not provide personal details about those involved for privacy reasons. However, Fraser Health has confirmed there is no outbreak at the Abbotsford Courthouse.
- Fraser Health also confirms that contact tracing is complete and all close contacts have been directly notified and required to self-isolate. Self-monitoring letters have been issued to all staff in the BC Sheriff Service department at the Abbotsford Courthouse
- The Fraser Health says it is confident that the situation has been managed appropriately and that all measures have been taken to ensure that transmission is controlled.

In light of this information, the Abbotsford Provincial Court will also be open tomorrow.

Health and Safety Protocols in All Provincial Courthouses

It is important to remember that various health and safety protocols have been developed and implemented in all courthouses to help mitigate and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. As described in [NP 22 In-Person Proceedings During COVID-19: Health and Safety Protocols](#), the two most important strategies continue to be physical distancing and hand-hygiene. Additional interventions have been undertaken, including the daily self-health questionnaire by all people working at courthouses, physical distancing markers, plexi-glass in courtrooms and court registries, day-porters to clean high touch areas, and additional deep cleaning, when exposures may have occurred.

Sheriffs are aware of the maximum allowable number of people who can be inside any particular courthouse based on physical distancing requirements and a count is maintained at the door to ensure

that the requisite physical distancing can be observed at all times. Health screening is also conducted by the sheriffs at the public entrance to courthouses. Additionally, mask wearing is now mandatory in all public areas of the courthouses, subject to certain recognized exceptions, and in all courtrooms unless the presiding judge or justice orders otherwise. Masks work as another layer of protection for everyone.

Appendix "A"



November 29, 2020

To staff and attendees at the Surrey Provincial Courthouse:

Fraser Health has been involved in a number of cases of COVID-19 among staff of the BC Sheriff Services at the Surrey Courthouse.

As with all identified cases of COVID-19, all cases have been interviewed and close contacts have been directly notified and required to self-isolate. Additionally, self-monitoring letters have been issued to all staff among the BC Sheriff Services at the Surrey Courthouse.

There is no clear evidence of transmission of COVID-19 at the Surrey Courthouse. However, as an additional precaution, mass-testing was conducted on November 26 at the Surrey Courthouse, focusing on all staff of the BC Sheriff Services. The results of mass testing were reassuring that there was not an undetected outbreak at the Surrey Courthouse. Public health has contacted any individual that tested positive to ensure isolation and to identify and isolate close contacts.

A site inspection and review of safety plans was performed by an Environmental Health Officer as a standard practice when COVID-19 cases are identified at a place of work. No major concerns were found, with minor recommendations provided.

The preventive measures in place at the Surrey Courthouse are working to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

Cases at worksites are a reflection of our communities. As cases of COVID-19 continue to rise in our communities, we all must continue the following actions to decrease risk of transmission:

- Paying close attention to COVID-19 symptoms, and promptly isolating and seek testing if symptoms occur.
- Limit close and group interactions as much as possible.
- Follow COVID-19 precautions at work, including wearing a mask in common areas of courthouses.

Sincerely,

Emily Newhouse, MD, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Fraser Health Public Health