



January 21, 2021

Protocol for Communication and Testing Related to COVID-19 in Courthouses

In light of concerns raised by the BC Courts, counsel and other courthouse users about the need for timely and coordinated communication about COVID-19 testing and exposures in courthouses, the three levels of Court and Court Services Branch met with senior health officials and have created a [Protocol](#) that is now in effect with these main components:

1. A Public Health Guidance document for courthouses that is publicly posted [here](#).
2. The BC Centre for Disease Control has created a [webpage](#) where the following type of information will be posted about COVID-19 and courthouses: COVID-19 exposures at courthouses where a medical health officer of public health specialist has determined there is a risk of infection to others; incident investigations, notices and summaries related to potential COVID-19 clusters, outbreaks or group testing; and, courthouse site inspections.
3. Each Regional Health Authority will be responsible for courthouse COVID-19 incident investigations, response and timely communication with the courts, Court Services Branch and where appropriate the public, recognizing that the Health Authorities alone have the information about COVID-19 incidents, cases, exposures, clusters and outbreaks.
4. If there is to be group testing at a courthouse, notice will be communicated by the Regional Health Authority to those court participants relevant to the investigation.
5. Targeted access to COVID-19 testing for court participants in relation to anticipated or ongoing court proceedings where, for example, a court participant is experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms and testing is required to determine whether the court proceeding can continue as scheduled.

See the Protocol [here](#).

We thank everyone for their ongoing efforts to support the Courts and the justice system through this extremely challenging time. The Courts are committed to remaining open and accessible, and have taken steps to ensure safety as noted on the following websites:

- [Provincial Court - NP 22 In-Person Proceedings During COVID-19: Health and Safety Protocols](#)
- [Supreme Court - COVID-19 Notice No. 27 - In Court Measures During the Pandemic](#)
- [Court of Appeal - Notice to the Public Regarding the Court of Appeal for British Columbia's Response to COVID-19](#)
- [Ministry of Attorney General – COVID-19 Court Recovery Operations](#)