



PROVINCIAL COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Message from the Chief Judge

April 17, 2020

The Court has taken a series of practical steps to help minimize the spread of COVID-19. Now we are actively reviewing and engaging with various stakeholders about steps we can take to increase court operations. We are working on expanding the types of matters that can be heard while ensuring we continue to protect public health.

Although our present ability to make greater use of technology is limited by system capacity and investment, data security, and legislation, we are continuing to work on projects to increase the use of technology, both inside and outside the courtroom, to improve access to justice.

Even with current constraints, we anticipate being able to increase court operations in a staged approach, particularly as our video and audio conferencing capability grows. For example, we are working on plans to hear remotely some non-urgent matters in all divisions of the Court. We have also reached out to lawyers' organizations and government to assist us in developing a plan to begin to hear trials in a way that respects physical distancing requirements and protects participants by using various "low-tech" measures in courtrooms.

Updates on our progress with these initiatives will be posted on our website's COVID page and Twitter account [@BCProvCourt](#). See also our [eNews article "Why isn't the BC Provincial Court using more video technology for hearings?"](#)

Melissa Gillespie
Chief Judge
Provincial Court of British Columbia