



PROVINCIAL COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Message from the Chief Judge

**April 28, 2020**

To comply with the advice of public health officials to minimize the number of people physically in courthouses, the BC Provincial Court transitioned to an “essential services model” in March, limiting hearings primarily to urgent matters. Since then we have been developing procedures to expand the types of cases that can be heard to include less urgent matters suitable for remote proceedings, resolve matters capable of settlement, and efficiently reschedule some matters.

As part of the Court’s COVID-19 recovery plan, we are now introducing mandatory pre-trial conferences for most adult and youth criminal trials and preliminary inquiries, as well as for family and small claims trials. We are also making telephone sentencing hearings available for some non-urgent out-of-custody matters and resuming case conferences in family and small claims cases by telephone or videoconference.”

Please see today’s [eNews](#), updated Notice to the Profession and Public [NP19](#), and Practice Direction [CRIM 12](#): Criminal Pre-Trial Conferences During COVID-19, for details.

Melissa Gillespie  
Chief Judge  
Provincial Court of British Columbia