

ASSIGNMENT COURT INFORMATION SHEET

For Counsel

ASSIGNMENT COURT HAS LAUNCHED

From July 2014 through to March 2015, the Provincial Court will be implementing a new approach to trial scheduling whereby hearings in all divisions (criminal, youth, family, small claims) with a time estimate of a ½ day or more will be returnable (on the hearing date) to a single courtroom to assess trial readiness before being assigned a trial judge and courtroom. The types of matters on an assignment court list may include trials, continuations, preliminary inquiries, bail hearings, dispositions or any general assignment crown file. The morning session will commence at 9:00 am and at 1:00/1:30 pm if there is an afternoon session scheduled. Assignment Court launched successfully in Port Coquitlam on July 7, 2014.

WHERE DO I NEED TO GO?

- Check the new digital display monitors for case name and courtroom.
- The doors to the assignment court will open 15 minutes prior to the start of the session
- Amongst other things, priority may be given to those matters that are first ready to proceed
- Go to the courtroom and check in with the court clerk
- If you arrive when court is already in session, please wait for your case to be called
- Out of custody accused, parties and/or witnesses are not required to appear in assignment court as long as counsel can confirm they are in the building

EXPECTATIONS OF COUNSEL

- Advise the JCM(s) if a matter is no longer expected to proceed as scheduled
- Advise the JCMs(s) of any factors that may be relevant to case assignment (e.g. out of town witnesses)
- Advise the JCM(s) in advance of equipment needs or special accommodation
- Appear in person for the calling of the Assignment list
- Meet with opposing counsel prior to the commencement of assignment court to discuss how the matter will be proceeding
- Have instructions from your client prior to the calling of the assignment court list

WHAT HAPPENS IN ASSIGNMENT COURT?

- A Judicial Case Manager (JCM) will preside
- The JCM will call the assignment court list
- Counsel and self-represented parties will advise the JCM of trial readiness.
- The JCM may ask several questions to assess if the case should be assigned a trial judge
 - Are all parties present?
 - Is the matter ready to proceed as scheduled?
 - Is the time estimate still accurate?
- If the case is not ready to proceed, state the reason(s) and the JCM will advise on next steps or adjourn the case to a judge if necessary

MORE QUESTIONS?

For more information on Assignment Court, please email: PCSS@provinciacourt.bc.ca.