



COVID-19: UPDATE ON MASKING PROTOCOL FOR COURTHOUSES

Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020

Further to the [July 3, 2020, update](#) regarding masking in courthouses, the All Courts Recovery Committee is now strongly recommending that non-medical masks be worn at all times in courtrooms, except when an individual is speaking.

This recommendation follows the recent update from the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding the possible aerosol transmission of COVID-19 in some circumstances and is informed by advice the Committee sought from Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Presiding judges continue to have discretion on the use of masks based on the individual circumstances of the courtroom, the case, and the parties involved. Judges will give direction on masking in their individual courtrooms at the beginning of the proceedings. Such direction may change depending on the circumstances present on any given day (i.e. if an exempt participant from outside Atlantic Canada is attending in person, everyone may be required to mask for the entirety of the proceeding).

As of July 6, 2020, all visitors entering a courthouse in Nova Scotia are required to wear a non-medical mask in all common areas of the building, including entrance lobbies, elevators, waiting areas and interview rooms. Anyone permitted inside a courthouse is encouraged to bring their own mask. However, for those who may not have one, a supply of disposable masks will be available at the front doors.

It is important to emphasize that masks are not a substitute for physical distancing and other public health directives. They are part of a multi-layered approach to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The full Recovery Plan, including the safety guidelines and protocols implemented at the Nova Scotia Courts, is available online [here](#).

-30-

Media Contact:

Jennifer Stairs
Communications Director
Nova Scotia Judiciary
902-221-5257
stairsjl@courts.ns.ca