



COVID-19: PROVINCIAL COURT SUSPENDS IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS

Friday, Dec. 31, 2021

In light of record-breaking COVID-19 case numbers in the province and the threat of the highly transmissible Omicron variant, the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia is suspending most in-person proceedings and will be operating virtually via Microsoft Teams or telephone effective Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, until Friday, Jan. 14, 2022. **Trials for individuals in custody will be heard in person, as operational requirements allow.**

This directive also applies to Youth Justice Court, Night Court and Wellness Court Programs in the Provincial Court. The situation will be reassessed prior to Jan. 14 to determine whether it is safe to resume in-person proceedings.

Counsel and other court participants are reminded that mandatory masking and physical distancing measures are in effect for any trial that proceeds in-person. Strict adherence to personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential to help reduce the spread of the virus.

To be clear, this directive does not affect scheduled or new Provincial Court and Youth Justice Court matters that can be done remotely by telephone, videoconferencing or a combination of the two technologies. Those matters will proceed, provided there is sufficient staff and equipment to do so and unless the presiding judge orders otherwise. Counsel are expected to appear virtually, either with or on behalf of their client.

All other In-person proceedings that cannot be held virtually will be adjourned and rescheduled at the time of the virtual appearance.

The resolution of non-urgent matters remains a priority for the Provincial Court and the Youth Justice Court. Counsel are encouraged to continue reviewing their matters to see what can be resolved without an in-person hearing. The full process to request the resolution of a non-urgent matter is outlined in [here](#).

Provincial Court Sitings in Eskasoni First Nation

Until further notice, all Provincial Court sittings in Eskasoni First Nation, in accordance with the above protocols, will be heard at the Sydney courthouse.

Self-Represented Individuals

If you are not in custody and you have a court appearance by telephone or video in the Provincial Court, unless the Court contacts you directly, your matter will go ahead, and you are expected to participate. If you are unsure of the status of your matter, please [contact the courthouse](#) where your matter is scheduled to be heard.

If you are not in custody and you have an upcoming in-person appearance in the Provincial Court, you should not come to the courthouse. Instead, you should [contact the courthouse](#) where your matter is scheduled to be heard or contact duty counsel at Nova Scotia Legal Aid to assist with adjourning your matter. You can apply online using the Legal Aid [Adjournment Request](#) form or call 902-420-7800.

You will be required to attend court in person on the new date you are provided.

Bail Hearings

All bail hearings will proceed virtually by video on Microsoft Teams, whenever possible.

Please note that during the suspension of in-person proceedings, Provincial Court judges in certain locations may require in-person attendance of local counsel for contested bail hearings. Counsel involved in contested proceedings should check with the judge presiding in that jurisdiction for direction.

For more information on the COVID-19 measures in the Provincial Court and the Youth Justice Court, please refer to the [Consolidated Directive](#).

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