



COVID-19: Scheduling Guidelines in the Supreme Court (Family Division)

Thursday, March 26, 2020

Until further notice, the Supreme Court, including the Family Division, has adopted an essential services model. That means only urgent or essential matters are proceeding in court, and those will primarily be dealt with by telephone and video.

All currently scheduled matters, unless deemed urgent, are being adjourned. They will not be rescheduled at this time. The scheduling office will confirm this with all counsel and self-represented parties.

Going forward, only urgent matters will be scheduled. Urgent matters in the Supreme Court (Family Division) include:

- 5-day and 30-day hearings under the *Children and Family Services Act*
- Applications under Section 29 of the *Children and Family Services Act* (“locate and detain” applications)
- New applications under the *Adult Protection Act*
- Applications under the *Children and Family Services Act* and *Adult Protection Act* that are nearing court-ordered or statutory deadlines
- Child abduction cases
- Secure treatment applications under the *Children and Family Services Act*
- Issues related to domestic violence that are not suitable for criminal proceedings in the Provincial Court or the Justice of the Peace Centre (under the *Domestic Violence Intervention Act*) or the involvement of child protection authorities
- Matters deemed to be emergencies by a judge or court officer

If you believe a matter is an emergency, you must outline the circumstances in writing via a letter to the Court. The letter should not be more than two pages in length. Letters should be submitted to the Court via fax or email. A list of email addresses and fax numbers for the Supreme Court (Family Division) is available at the bottom of this notice.

Your letter must also be provided to the other party, who will have two days to respond to it. During the ongoing situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be no opportunity for oral arguments on whether a matter is an emergency.

A judge or a court officer will review your letter, and any response to it, to determine if it is an emergency. A telephone conference will be scheduled, if appropriate.

To date, the following types of issues have been deemed not to be an emergency:

- Unilateral interruptions of court-ordered parenting arrangements
- Disagreements as to a child's activities while in the care of another parent
- Interruptions in the payment of child or spousal support
- Property issues flowing from a marriage or common law relationship
- Suspension and enforcement of child and spousal support

Counsel are asked to consider alternatives to attending court in person. In some cases, telephone appearances may permit resolution.

Consent orders, faxed or submitted electronically by email to the Court, will be processed as quickly as possible. Please keep in mind that the courthouses are working with significantly reduced staff, so there may be some delays.

Conciliation services are being provided for new applications, such as those relating to child support.

Contact Information for the Supreme Court (Family Division)

Amherst

Email: AMHFC@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-667-1108

Phone: 902-667-2256

Antigonish

Email: AntigonishFamilyCourt@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-863-7479

Phone: 902-863-3676

Halifax

Email: scfamilyhfx@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-424-0562

Phone: 902-424-3990

Port Hawkesbury

Email: porthawkesburyfamily@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-625-4271 or 902-424-4084

Phone: 902-625-2665

Sydney

Email: sydneyfamilydivision@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-563-2224

Phone: 902-563-2200

Truro

Email: truofamilycourt@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-896-4333

Phone: 902-893-5840

Yarmouth/Shelburne/Digby

Email: yarmouthfamilycourt@courts.ns.ca

Fax: 902-742-0678

Phone: 902-742-0550

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