



COVID-19: SUPREME COURT ADOPTS ESSENTIAL SERVICES MODEL

Thursday, March 19, 2020 (Halifax, NS) – To help address the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the province, the Nova Scotia Supreme Court (including the Family Division) is adopting an essential services model.

Unless ordered otherwise by the trial judge, any trials that are currently underway will continue until they conclude. All other proceedings will be limited to those deemed urgent or essential by the presiding justice.

In relation to urgent or essential matters, judges will consider whether alternative measures, such as telephone or videoconferencing, may be used to hear those matters. Counsel are encouraged to do the same to reduce the number of people who need to appear in court in person. Social distancing measures will be practiced for all court matters that proceed in person.

These measures will remain in place until further notice.

There are now three confirmed cases and nine presumptive cases of the COVID-19 virus in Nova Scotia. These preventative measures are in line with the advice of public health officials regarding social distancing and avoiding public gatherings of more than 50 people.

Counsel and members of the public are reminded you should **not** visit a courthouse if:

- You have travelled outside Canada in the past 14 days;
- You are experiencing symptoms of the coronavirus; or
- You have been directed by public health officials, 811 or your doctor to self-isolate.

If any of these criteria apply to you, and you are scheduled to be in court, contact your lawyer or the Court immediately to seek instructions from the presiding judge in your case. Contact information for all courthouses can be found on the [Courts of Nova Scotia website](#).

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