



COVID-19: SUPREME COURT (GENERAL DIVISION) OFFERING VIRTUAL JUDICIAL SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES DURING LOCKDOWN

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

Effective immediately, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia (General Division) will permit virtual judicial settlement conferences for non-urgent matters where the presiding judge, counsel and the parties all agree to proceed virtually. In most instances, Microsoft Teams will be the videoconferencing platform used to hear these matters.

The Supreme Court (General Division) continues to operate under an essential services model in all locations, as outlined in the [Notice](#) that went out on April 28, 2021. In-person proceedings are limited to urgent and essential matters, as deemed by a judge. Non-urgent matters, other than judicial settlement conferences that can proceed virtually, will not be held, unless a judge decides otherwise. These matters will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Not all Supreme Court judges are able to conduct virtual matters at this time. Counsel who have a matter that they feel would be appropriate for a virtual settlement conference should contact the Office of the Prothonotary at the Halifax Law Courts to obtain a list of judges who are able to preside over virtual matters:

Caroline McInnes

Provincial Prothonotary, Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

Phone: 902-424-8962

Email: Caroline.McInnes@courts.ns.ca

Jessica Boutilier

Prothonotary, Supreme Court of Nova Scotia

Phone: 902-424-7968

Email: Jessica.Boutilier@courts.ns.ca

The Court appreciates that during the present lockdown, counsel and parties may have family obligations that make it difficult to participate in a virtual proceeding. Counsel are nevertheless encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to move their matters forward.

When preparing for a virtual settlement conference, counsel and parties are reminded that practice directives and court protocols established by the Judiciary will apply when videoconferencing is used for court purposes.

All participants should review the [Conduct, Decorum and Expectations for Virtual Court](#) before taking part in a virtual court proceeding. Every effort should be made to minimize disruptions during a virtual proceeding, but again, the Court understands that may not always be possible under the current lockdown conditions.

To review the various Supreme Court directives related to COVID-19, please visit https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm.

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Media Contact:

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