

## NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION RE: VIRTUAL COURT OPEN HOUSE

**Tuesday, July 7, 2020**

Legal and IT professionals in Nova Scotia are invited to a Skype for Business open house next week to learn more about the Nova Scotia Courts' current virtual court setup and what is planned for remote court hearings in the coming months.

**When:** Thursday, July 16, 2020  
**Session 1:** 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
**Session 2:** 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Where:** Via Skype for Business  
RSVP to Jennifer Stairs at [stairsjl@courts.ns.ca](mailto:stairsjl@courts.ns.ca) to receive the Skype invitation

**Who:** Lawyers, articling clerks, law students & IT professionals

Virtual court is an important part of the courts' recovery plan for during and after the pandemic. Virtual court includes remote hearings by telephone, video, and communication platforms like Skype, or a combination of these technologies. These remote appearances allow courts to hear more matters without additional staff at the courthouses. They are also a helpful option when courtrooms are too small to hold in-person hearings and still respect physical distancing.

Just like preparing for physical court appearances, counsel participating in virtual hearings are expected to familiarize themselves with the technology and ensure they are fully prepared for their appearance, including testing their setup and equipment.

**While court staff will offer a dry run prior to the hearing, they are not responsible to troubleshoot connectivity issues for counsel and parties. Counsel are encouraged to engage support from their firm's IT staff or an independent IT expert early on, so they can provide help and advice throughout the process. If possible, those IT professionals should attend the Virtual Court Open House to better understand how the Courts are using Skype.**

Virtual options are now available for many civil, criminal and family matters, and fully remote hearings will be available for appeal hearings this fall. Whenever possible, counsel are encouraged to consider and use virtual court. To learn more, visit [www.courts.ns.ca/Virtual\\_Court.htm](http://www.courts.ns.ca/Virtual_Court.htm).

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