

COVID-19 Notices and Information

Latest Announcements

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Update January 13, 2021: Updated message from Chief Justice Maisonneuve

An updated message from Chief Justice Lise Maisonneuve regarding Ontario Court of Justice proceedings in light of the government's January 12, 2021 declaration of a state of emergency has been posted on the Ontario Court of Justice homepage. See [Message re COVID-19 \(Updated January 13, 2021\)](#)

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Latest Announcements About Criminal Proceedings in the OCJ (Updated December 11, 2020)

Update December 11, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations, December 14, 2020 and January 4, 2021 and January 26, 2021

On December 14, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Espanola. On January 4, 2021, virtual case management courts will launch in Brighton, Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls. On January 26, 2021, virtual criminal case management court will launch in Sharbot Lake. For more information, see [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#)

Enhancements to the Daily Court Lists Website – December 7, 2020

The Daily Court Lists website (www.ontariocourtdates.ca/) publishes the daily court lists for both the Ontario Court of Justice and the Superior Court of Justice. The daily court lists include the case name, time, room

number and reason for the court appearance.

As of Monday December 7, 2020, two enhancements have been made to the website:

- The website now publishes two days of court lists. Case information is provided for both the current day and the next day, and is updated each day at 8 a.m.
- The published case information is updated three additional times during the day.

Please see www.ontariocourtdates.ca for other important information about the daily court lists.

Update December 4, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations December 7, December 14, 2020 and January 4, 2021

On December 7, 2020, virtual criminal case management courts will launch in Bancroft, Killaloe and Wawa. On December 14, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Espanola. On January 4, 2021, virtual case management courts will launch in Brighton, Mattawa and Sturgeon Falls. For more information, see [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#)

Update November 27, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations November 30, December 7 and December 14

On November 30, 2020, virtual criminal case management courts will launch in Armstrong, Fort Hope (Eabametoong), Geraldton, Landsdowne House (Neskantaga), Longlac, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nipigon, Ogoki Post, Renfrew, Schreiber, Summer Beaver (Nibinamik) and Webequie. On December 7, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Bancroft, Killaloe and Wawa. On December 14, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Espanola. For more information, see [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#)

Update November 20, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations November 30, December 7 and December 14

On November 30, 2020, virtual criminal case management courts will launch in Armstrong, Fort Hope (Eabametoong), Geraldton, Landsdowne House (Neskantaga), Longlac, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nipigon, Ogoki Post, Renfrew, Schreiber, Summer Beaver (Nibinamik) and Webequie. On December 7, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Killaloe and Wawa. On December 14, 2020, virtual case management courts will launch in Espanola. For more information, see [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#)

Update (November 18, 2020): Criminal Case Management Appearances on or after November 30, 2020

Previous directives of the Ontario Court of Justice directing that criminal case management matters will be adjourned for five weeks, with a discretionary bench warrant, if the accused person does not appear will end

Friday November 27, 2020. As of Monday November 30, 2020, accused persons are required to attend for their scheduled appearance in criminal case management court – either by having counsel appear on their behalf or by appearing by telephone or video. See [Notice to the Profession and the Public re Criminal Case Management Appearances on or after November 30, 2020](#).

Update November 16, 2020: In-person hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice will resume November 30, 2020 at the following locations: Alexandria, Bradford, Elliot Lake, Kirkland Lake, Picton, Red Lake, and Sioux Lookout.

Criminal trials and preliminary inquiries in the Ontario Court of Justice will resume November 30, 2020 at the following locations: Alexandria, Bradford, Elliot Lake, Kirkland Lake, Picton, Red Lake, and Sioux Lookout. For more information, see [Resumption of Criminal Trials and Preliminary Inquiries November 30, 2020 in additional locations of the Ontario Court of Justice](#)

Update November 16, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations

On November 23, 2020. Virtual Criminal Case Management Courts will launch in Alexandria, Attiwapiskat, Chapleau, Fort Albany, Gogama, Kashechewn, Midland, Moosonee, Morrisburg, Peawanuck, Picton, Sundridge, and Wikwemikong. For more information, see [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#)

Update November 6, 2020: Court proceedings in Thunder Bay

Court proceedings in the Ontario Court of Justice, including in-person trials, are continuing despite a fire in the Thunder Bay courthouse. Court matters are either being conducted remotely or are being relocated to another location. For information see, [Notice to the Profession and the Public: Continuity of Court Operations in Thunder Bay using Remote Technology or at an Alternate Location](#)

Update November 6, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations

On November 16, 2020. Virtual Criminal Case Management Courts will launch in Collingwood, Atikokan, Bearskin Lake, Big Trout Lake, Cat Lake, Deer Lake, Fort Severn, Ignace, Kasabonika Lake, Keewaywin, Kingfisher, Lac Seul, Mishkeegogamang, Muskrat Dam, North Spirit Lake, Pikangikum, Poplar Hill, Rainy River, Sachigo Lake, Sandy Lake, Wapekeka, Weagamow and Wunnumin Lake. Additional courts will be implemented over the coming weeks.

See [Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020](#) for more details

Update November 2, 2020: Criminal Virtual Case Management Courts Launching in Additional Court Locations

On November 9, 2020. Virtual Criminal Case Management Courts will launch in Bradford, Red Lake and Sioux Lookout

See Update – Additional Court Locations Commencing Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances in October and November 2020 for more details

Update August 24, 2020: Guides for Court Appearances by Video or Telephone

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario Court of Justice is holding some court proceedings by using the Zoom platform or the JVN (Justice Video Network) WebRTC platform or by audioconference (telephone).

To help to ensure that remote hearings run effectively, the Court is publishing [Guidelines for Conducting Remote Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#). The Guidelines provide best practices for remote hearings.

For technical information about participating in a Zoom hearing, please see the [ZOOM User Guide for Remote Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

For technical information about participating in a JVN hearing, please see the [JVN WebRTC Manual](#) and [JVN WebRTC Troubleshooting Tips](#).

Latest Announcements About Family Proceedings in the OCJ (Updated January 14, 2021)

Updated January 14, 2021: COVID-19: Scheduling of Family Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice

Please see [COVID-19: Scheduling of Family Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice \(January 14, 2021\)](#)

Update November 17, 2020: Resumption of Family matters in Northeast / Northwest regions; Resumption of First Appearance Court before the Clerk of the Court; Requirement to file sworn Form 6B: Affidavit of Service.

Family law matters in Elliot Lake and Kirkland Lake and Red Lake and Sioux Lookout are expected to resume on November 30, 2020.

Beginning November 30, 2020, across the province, First Appearance Court/First Court Date before a clerk will no longer be waived at locations where First Appearance Court/First Court Date before a Clerk is available. These appearances before a clerk will resume and they will be held remotely.

And, beginning November 30, 2020, the Ontario Court of Justice is requiring that sworn Affidavits of Service must be filed at all family court locations across the province, including filings received by e-mail or through

the ministry's Family Submissions Online platform. Please see *COVID-19: Scheduling of Family Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice* (November 17, 2020).

Update November 6, 2020: Court proceedings in Thunder Bay

Court proceedings in the Ontario Court of Justice, including in-person trials, are continuing despite a fire in the Thunder Bay courthouse. Court matters are either being conducted remotely or are being relocated to another location. For information see, *Notice to the Profession and the Public: Continuity of Court Operations in Thunder Bay using Remote Technology or at an Alternate Location*

Update September 25, 2020: Resumption of in-person criminal and family hearings at Stratford will proceed on September 28, 2020

The resumption of in-person criminal and family hearings at Stratford, which was delayed, will now proceed on September 28, 2020.

- See *Notice to the Profession and the Public re: Criminal Trials and Preliminary Inquiries Resuming in the Ontario Court of Justice at Stratford on September 28, 2020* and *Notice to the Profession and the Public re: In-Person Family Matters Resuming in the Ontario Court of Justice at Stratford on September 28, 2020*

Update September 18, 2020: First Appearance Court/First Court Date Before a Clerk (Family Matters)

The First Appearance Court/First Court Date (Family Matters) will be waived between September 28, 2020 and November 27, 2020. The First Appearance Court/First Court Date before a clerk will resume on November 30, 2020.

- See: *Notice to the Profession and the Public re: First Appearance Courts/First Court Date before a clerk will resume November 30, 2020.*

Update September 15, 2020: Resumption of in-person family hearings in Gore Bay and Woodstock will proceed on September 16, 2020

The resumption of in-person family hearings in Gore Bay and Woodstock, which was delayed, will now proceed on September 16, 2020.

- See *Notice to the Profession and the Public re: In-Person Family Matters Resuming in the Ontario Court of Justice at Woodstock and Gore Bay on September 16, 2020.*

Update September 2, 2020: Scheduling of Family Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice

As of September 28, 2020, the Ontario Court of Justice will begin to resume hearing Applications, Motions to Change, and Family Responsibility Office (FRO) matters. The resumption of these matters is in addition to the family law matters that the Ontario Court of Justice is currently hearing.

For further details about the scheduling of family matters, including a list of the court locations where family matters are being conducted with in-person appearances, please see [COVID-19: Scheduling of Family Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice](#) and the related [First Appearance Court Waiver](#).

Update August 24, 2020: Guides for Court Appearances by Video or Telephone

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario Court of Justice is holding some court proceedings by using the Zoom platform or the JVN (Justice Video Network) WebRTC platform or by audioconference (telephone).

To help to ensure that remote hearings run effectively, the Court is publishing [Guidelines for Conducting Remote Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#). The Guidelines provide best practices for remote hearings.

For technical information about participating in a Zoom hearing, please see the [ZOOM User Guide for Remote Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

For technical information about participating in a JVN hearing, please see the [JVN WebRTC Manual](#) and [JVN WebRTC Troubleshooting Tips](#).

[A Guide for Self-represented Family Litigants During COVID-19](#)

Latest Announcements About Provincial Offences Act Proceedings in the OCJ (December 23, 2020)

Update December 23, 2020

Remote hearings by video conference may begin on January 25, 2021 at court locations that have the technology available. This includes both trial and non-trial proceedings.

Additionally, as early as January 25, 2021, once the Ontario Court of Justice is advised that a Provincial Offences court has implemented all the necessary health and safety measures, in-person appearances may begin at that location. Remote appearances (by audio or video conferencing) will continue to be the presumption unless otherwise ordered by the Regional Senior Justice of the Peace or the presiding justice of the peace.

Please see [COVID-19: Notice to Counsel/Paralegals and the Public re: Provincial Offences Act Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

Update November 25, 2020

On November 25, 2020, the Chief Justice of Ontario Court of Justice made an order pursuant to s. 85 of the *Provincial Offences Act* extending most timelines under the Act until February 26, 2021. A copy of this order is available here:

- [Order pursuant to s. 85 of the POA \(November 25, 2020\)](#)

Additionally, the Court has provided additional information about the scheduling direction on POA proceedings during COVID-19 in s. 4.0 of the revised [COVID-19: Notice to Counsel/Paralegals and the Public re: *Provincial Offences Act* Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

Update October 14, 2020

All in-person appearances scheduled in municipally-administered Provincial Offences courts and all *Provincial Offences Act* appeals to a judge of the Ontario Court of Justice will be adjourned until January 22, 2021. All court locations will continue to hear matters remotely. Please see [COVID-19: Notice to Counsel/Paralegals and the Public re: *Provincial Offences Act* Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

Update September 2, 2020: Provincial Offences Act Matters

Until further notice, no in-person *Provincial Offences Act* proceedings will be conducted until at least Monday, October 19th, 2020. For details on the types of *Provincial Offences Act* matters that may proceed by audio conferencing, please see [COVID-19: Notice to Counsel/Paralegals and the Public re: *Provincial Offences Act* Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

General Information: COVID-19 Procedures and Scheduling

The Ontario Court of Justice has significantly revised its procedures and schedules in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Court adopted a reduced operational schedule beginning on March 16, 2020. In accordance with directives from the Chief Medical Officers of Health of Canada and Ontario, restrictions and measures have been put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including requirements for physical distancing and limits on the numbers of people permitted in courthouses and courtrooms.

Since March 2020, the Court has been working closely with its justice partners, including the Ministry of the Attorney General, to adopt technology that will allow participants to access justice and court-related services without the need for attending in person. Many court proceedings, which have traditionally taken place in person, are now taking place using remote technology, such as video conference or audio conference. The Court has also been working with justice partners to plan for the resumption of in-person attendances in a way that protects the health and safety of all participants.

Criminal and Family Proceedings in the OCJ

The Ministry of the Attorney General, which is responsible for courts administration and courthouse facilities, has established an incremental plan to prepare courthouses and courtrooms to facilitate the return to full court operations across Ontario. The first phase of the plan was implemented Monday July 6, 2020 in a limited number of courthouses and courtrooms; additional courthouses have resumed in-person hearings throughout the summer and fall of 2020. Court operations will continue to expand incrementally as the Ministry implements additional health and safety measures in courthouses and courtrooms.

As part of the return to operations plan, the Ministry is implementing health and safety measures in each courthouse. This involves the completion of site assessments at all courthouses and the implementation of all necessary health and safety precautions, based on public health expert advice, for the protection of all court users, including judicial officers, lawyers, litigants, witnesses, staff and members of the public. The Ministry will not re-open any courthouse unless and until it has concluded that the health and safety of courthouse participants will be adequately protected.

More information about the precautionary health and safety measures at courthouses implemented is available on the following website: [COVID-19: Reopening courtrooms](#). These health and safety measures include screening of all persons entering the courthouse. Before you enter an Ontario courthouse, you will need to answer screening questions. You can complete the online screening before going to court: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/courthouse-screening> and then show the result as you enter. If you cannot complete the screening online, other screening options are available at the courthouse.

Updates

Please continue to check the Ontario Court of Justice website for updates. Court operations will continue to expand as the Ministry facilitates the resumption of hearings in additional courthouses and courtrooms in accordance with its recovery plan. The Court will continue working actively with all justice partners to implement a fair and orderly return to operations. As we do so, the health and safety of all court users remains our paramount concern.