

This Notice has been superseded or replaced by subsequent directives published on the Ontario Court of Justice website. This is an archived version provided for reference only.

Notice to the Profession and the Public re: Delay in Resuming Criminal Trials and Preliminary Inquiries in the Ontario Court of Justice at, Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock (Published September 11, 2020)

On August 26, 2020 the Ontario Court of Justice announced it would resume hearing criminal trials and preliminary inquiries on September 14, 2020 at certain locations: see [Notice to the Profession and the Public re: Resumption of Criminal Trials and Preliminary Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#) (published August 26, 2020). This resumption of hearings was the second phase of an incremental plan established by the Ministry of the Attorney General, which is responsible for courts administration and courthouse facilities, to facilitate the return to full court operations across Ontario.

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.

More information about the precautionary health and safety measures at courthouses implemented by the Ministry is available on the following website: [COVID-19: Reopening courtrooms](#).

The Ministry confirmed it would not re-open any courthouse unless and until it has concluded that the health and safety of courthouse participants will be adequately protected.

The Ministry has advised that it is not satisfied that all of the necessary health and safety measures are in place in the following courthouses to allow in-person proceedings to resume as of September 14, 2020: Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock. **As a result, the Court will not resume hearing in-person trials and preliminary inquiries at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock on September 14, 2020.**

Trials and preliminary inquiries at all other court locations identified in the August 26, 2020 notice will be proceeding as scheduled.

This notice sets out the procedure that will apply until further notice to criminal trials and preliminary inquiries scheduled to be heard in the Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock courthouses on or after September 14, 2020.

1) Trials and Preliminary Inquiries at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock

Trials and preliminary inquiries will not resume at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock on September 14, 2020 unless they are able to proceed using remote technology, as described in section 2.

a. Trials and preliminary inquiries scheduled for the week of September 14 – 18

All cases scheduled for a trial or preliminary inquiry at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock the week of September 14 to September 18 will be addressed in their location’s COVID-19 Trial Readiness Court the week of Monday September 14, 2020. All counsel and accused persons will appear by videoconference or audioconference.

Arrangements will be made for accused persons who are in custody to attend by audioconference or videoconference.

Accused persons who are out of custody and are represented by counsel do not need to be present for the Trial Readiness Court. If their matter is adjourned to a new date, a bench warrant with discretion, returnable on the new date, will be issued.

Accused persons who are not represented by counsel are to attend the Trial Readiness Court by audioconference, to speak to their matter.

Set out below are details about the COVID-19 Trial Readiness Courts in Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock:

Courthouse	Trial Readiness Court Details
Gore Bay	Court date: Tuesday of the week before

	<p>Court time: 9:30 am (all matters)</p> <p>Audioconference: 1-866-633-0848 Conference ID# 4800482</p>
Orillia	<p>Court date: Tuesday of the week before</p> <p>Court time: 9 am (all matters)</p> <p>Audioconference: 1-866-633-0848 Conference ID# 4712564</p>
Stratford	<p>Court date: Monday of the week before – Courtroom 1</p> <p>Court time: 9:45 am (all matters)</p> <p>Audioconference: 1-866-633-1033 Conference ID# 2164807</p>
Woodstock	<p>Court date: Tuesday of the week before (beginning Tuesday, September 15) – Courtroom 2</p> <p>Court time: 9 am (all matters)</p> <p>Audioconference: 1-866-633-1033 Conference ID# 5240997</p>

b. Trials and preliminary inquiries scheduled to commence on or after July 13

All cases scheduled for a trial or preliminary inquiry at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock commencing on or after Monday September 21, 2020 will be addressed in the COVID-19 trial readiness court, in accordance with the procedure set out in section 1c of the [Notice to the Profession and the Public re: Resumption of Criminal Trials and Preliminary Hearings as of July 6, 2020](#). All counsel and accused persons will appear by videoconference or audioconference.

2) Trials and Preliminary Inquiries in Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock may Proceed Using Remote Technology

The Court is prepared to hear trials or preliminary inquiries using remote technology (audioconference and videoconference) where the technology is available and subject to the discretion of the judge presiding over the hearing.

Counsel and parties are encouraged to consider and discuss with one another whether all or any portion of the hearing (including any witness testimony) can be conducted using remote technology. If counsel intend to propose that some or all of a hearing be conducted using remote technology, counsel should immediately advise the Court, so that the Court can confirm if the necessary technology is available and so that the matter can be brought forward to be addressed, if necessary.

3) Plan for Resumption of Trials and Preliminary Inquiries in Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock

Notice will be given advising when Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock will be opening so that counsel and parties can prepare for the resumption of trials or preliminary inquiries. Please check back on the Ontario Court of Justice website for updates.

4) Other Court Proceedings will Continue to be Conducted as Remote Proceedings

All criminal proceedings other than trials and preliminary inquiries at Gore Bay, Orillia, Stratford and Woodstock will continue to be conducted by audioconference and/or videoconference, unless otherwise directed by a judicial official. This includes bail proceedings, resolutions (including guilty pleas) involving accused persons who are in and out of custody and case management (set date) appearances for accused persons who are in custody or out of custody.