

Message re COVID-19 (Updated August 3, 2021)

The Ontario Court of Justice has continued to provide meaningful access to justice during the COVID-19 pandemic while making the health and safety of all court users a top priority. The Court has relied on, and benefited from, the expert advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health in making access to courthouses safe during the unprecedented pandemic. In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other public health officials, the Ministry of the Attorney General has implemented a broad range of health and safety measures at all courthouses open to the public.

During the past year, the Court has worked collaboratively with the paralegal and legal professions, Legal Aid Ontario, community justice services, the Ministries of the Attorney General and Solicitor General, federal prosecution services and municipal Provincial Offence prosecutors and courts to provide critical family, criminal, and *Provincial Offence Act* justice services.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has presented enormous challenges for all Ontarians, the Court and justice partners have developed creative new ways to provide access to justice.

Important innovations have streamlined access to the justice system and court services. The introduction of much-needed technology has allowed the Court to conduct a broader range of remote proceedings (video or phone) than ever before. The Court and court users have benefited from these innovations and the Court will continue to use remote proceedings, in-person appearances or a combination of remote and in-person appearances.

Remote technologies have also allowed the Court to continue extensive judicial education programs during the past year.

In addition to introducing new technologies, the Ontario Court of Justice has collaborated in the past year in opening three Justice Centre Pilots in Toronto and London. A fourth Justice Centre is in development in Kenora. While the Justice Centres also adapted for COVID-19 and operate virtually, it is a testament to the commitment of justice and community partners that these pilot Centres launched during a pandemic. The Centres are a tangible example of the Court's commitment to find new ways to address communities that have historically not been well served by the justice system.

If you are unsure whether your case is being held by video, telephone or in person, please contact your lawyer or paralegal, or, if you do not have a lawyer or paralegal, [contact the courthouse](#) where your case is being heard.

It remains important that everyone attending courthouses comply with the public health and safety protections in place. For information about the health and safety measures at Ontario's provincial

courthouses (family and criminal matters), please see [COVID-19: Going to court](#). For Provincial Offences matters please check with the municipal court office.

All participants should review the [Court's remote proceeding guidelines](#) prior to attending any virtual court proceeding.

For more detailed information about Ontario Court of Justice notices, directives and policies in response to COVID-19, see [COVID-19 Notices and Information](#).