

This Notice has been superseded or replaced by subsequent directives published on the Ontario Court of Justice website.

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Message re COVID-19 (Updated December 20, 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 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.

Throughout the pandemic, 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, which has benefited the Court and, more importantly, court users. The introduction of much-needed technology allows the Court to conduct a broader range of remote proceedings (video or phone) than ever before. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, the Court recognizes the benefits of limiting in-person attendance at courthouses. The Court is committed to facilitating the conduct of certain proceedings by remote technology (video or phone) and encourages judicial officials, parties and counsel to consider using remote proceedings where appropriate.

The Court has encouraged all judicial officials, when exercising their authority, to be flexible and to respect why an individual may not be able to attend a court hearing in person, and to consider alternatives to conducting a proceeding in person. Similarly, the Court encourages counsel and parties to be accommodating when requests for virtual hearings or other arrangements are made by opposing counsel or parties.

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](#).