

This Notice has been superseded or replaced by subsequent directives published on the Ontario Court of Justice website.
This is an archived version provided for reference only.

Scheduling and Conducting of Virtual Criminal Case Management Appearances (Published August 20, 2020; last updated November 29, 2021)

This Notice outlines how virtual criminal case management appearances will be conducted.

Note: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in large dockets. In addition, it will likely take all participants some time to adapt to the new procedures and technology involved in conducting these appearances using remote technology. The Court encourages and appreciates the cooperation and patience of all participants, particularly at the beginning of this initiative. The Court will revise and refine the procedures for these virtual case management courts, as appropriate, based on feedback and as court operations continue to evolve in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please continue to check the [Ontario Court of Justice website](#) for updates

1) Implementation of Criminal Case Management Courts

The Ontario Court of Justice has implemented virtual criminal case management courts, in which criminal case management appearances may be conducted by videoconference or audioconference. Province-wide implementation began on August 24, 2020 and was completed in early January 2021.

Case management appearances include a “first appearance” and matters scheduled “to be spoken to” or to “set a date”. They do not include trials, preliminary hearings, guilty pleas or sentencings. A description of the case management court(s) at each court location is set out in the [schedules](#) setting out courthouse-specific scheduling and connection information.

2) Remote Appearances Using Zoom

Unless otherwise directed by a judicial official, counsel and accused persons who are out of custody may attend for criminal case management appearances by audioconference (telephone) or videoconference using Zoom.

Zoom allows participants to join by videoconference or audioconference (telephone).

A Zoom account is not required to participate in Zoom hearings. You can download Zoom at <https://zoom.us/> free of charge. User tutorials for Zoom are available at: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

3) Appearances by Counsel

Counsel are strongly encouraged to attend case management court appearances by videoconference.

The Court expects that counsel will notify their clients that criminal case management appearances have resumed and that the client is required to attend by videoconference or audioconference, unless counsel is appearing on their behalf.

Because of the nature of remote appearances and because of the high volume of matters in case management courts, there will be limited, if any, opportunity for private discussion between and among participants during a virtual case management court appearance. It is therefore essential that Crown and defence counsel speak with their client (where applicable), and with one another, in advance of the case management appearance.

4) Appearances by Accused Persons

Accused persons are encouraged to attend case management court appearances by videoconference. However, accused persons who cannot attend by videoconference may attend by audioconference (telephone).

If you do not have access to a personal telephone or a computer, you can use a payphone to call Zoom's toll-free 1-855 number (listed on the [Scheduling and Connection Information notice for your court location](#)) to join the court proceeding for free. In addition, many courthouses and local service agencies have resources and/or procedures to help people who don't have their own telephone or computer

attend court by video or phone. If you are unable to attend a criminal case management appearance by video or telephone, please [contact the courthouse](#) to find out what alternatives to an in-person appearance may be available in your area.

Self-represented accused persons are encouraged to contact Legal Aid Ontario before the day of their criminal case management appearance. Legal Aid Ontario has provided the following information for self-represented accused persons:

Please contact Legal Aid Ontario well in advance of your court appearance. If you would like general legal advice, or if you want to apply for legal aid, call the central Legal Aid Ontario number at 1-800-668-8258. If you want to speak to a local Duty Counsel, and are eligible, Duty Counsel may provide you with legal advice and assistance for your court appearance. At this time local Duty Counsel cannot guarantee same day assistance; it is therefore strongly recommended that you contact Legal Aid Ontario and/or Duty Counsel well in advance of your court date.

Contact information for local Duty Counsel offices is set out in the [schedules](#) setting out courthouse-specific scheduling and connection information.

5) Scheduling and Connection Information

Each case management court has its own unique video link and its own unique telephone number / passcode combination that is needed to connect to the court. This information is set out in [courthouse-specific schedules](#) available on the Ontario Court of Justice website.

To facilitate more orderly proceedings and to limit the number of people waiting on the line to have their matters addressed, many case management court lists have been subdivided into tiers. Counsel and accused persons are encouraged to connect to the case management courtroom at the time specified for their tier. However, the Court recognizes that, as a result of the automatic adjournment of matters and other scheduling changes, counsel may have conflicting court obligations which will prevent counsel from being able to attend during the allotted time.

The scheduling and connection information for criminal case management courts may change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as court operations continue to expand. Please continue to check the [Ontario Court of Justice website](#) for updates.

6) Accused persons who are in custody

Criminal case management appearances for accused persons who are in custody will continue to be conducted by remote appearance (audioconference or videoconference) unless a judicial official directs otherwise, in accordance with the procedures in place since March 2020.

The Court has issued a Practice Direction that permits accused persons who are in custody to waive their right to appear personally before the Court and to request to have their case adjourned in their absence, by instructing defence counsel to complete and file a waiver form on their behalf. For details, please see: [Practice Direction re: Waiver of Personal Attendance and Request for Adjournment / Remand by Accused Persons in Custody](#).

7) Enhanced Designations of Counsel

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in order to limit the number of people who are required to attend court, the Court has issued a [Practice Direction Authorizing Alternate Form of Appearance where an Enhanced Designation of Counsel has been Filed](#).

Accused persons who are represented by counsel and who have filed an Enhanced Designation of Counsel may have their matters adjourned, without the accused personally appearing, in accordance with the procedure set out in the Practice Direction and in accordance with rule 4.5 of the Criminal Rules of the Ontario Court of Justice.

8) Additional Resources

The Court has published resources to assist participants and help ensure that remote hearings, including virtual case management court appearances, run effectively.

For a review of best practices for remote hearings, see [Guidelines for Conducting Remote Hearings in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

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 additional information to assist self-represented accused persons, please see [Information for Self-Represented Accused Persons with Criminal Cases in the Ontario Court of Justice](#).

Not sure about your next court date in a criminal case?

To see a list of cases that are scheduled for that day or the next day at a particular courthouse, go to the Daily Court Lists website: <http://www.ontariocourtdates.ca/>.

If you are unsure about the date of your next court appearance, whether you are required to attend court on that date, or whether you should be attending in person or by remote technology (videoconference or audioconference), please contact your lawyer. If you do not have a lawyer, please [contact the courthouse](#) and ask for assistance.

Courthouse-specific Scheduling and Connection Information

Alexandria	Atikokan	Attawapiskat	Bancroft
Barrie	Belleville	Blind River	Bracebridge
Brampton	Bradford	Brantford	Brighton
Brockville	Cayuga	Chapleau	Chatham
Cobourg	Cochrane	Collingwood	Cornwall
Dryden	Dryden Satellite	Elliot Lake	Espanola
Exeter	Fort Albany	Fort Erie	Fort Frances
Goderich	Gogama	Gore Bay	Guelph
Haileybury	Hamilton	Hearst	Hornepayne
Huntsville	Kapuskasing	Kashechewan	Kenora
Kenora Satellite	Killaloe	Kingston	Kirkland Lake
Kitchener	Leamington	Lindsay	London
Mattawa	Midland	Milton	

<u>Moosonee</u>	<u>Morrisburg</u>	<u>Napanee</u>	<u>Newmarket</u>
<u>North Bay</u>	<u>Orangeville</u>	<u>L'Orignal</u>	<u>Orillia</u>
<u>Oshawa</u>	<u>Ottawa</u>	<u>Owen Sound</u>	<u>Parry Sound</u>
<u>Peawanuck</u>	<u>Pembroke</u>	<u>Perth</u>	<u>Peterborough</u>
<u>Picton</u>	<u>Rainy River</u>	<u>Red Lake</u>	<u>Renfrew</u>
<u>St. Catharines</u>	<u>St. Thomas</u>	<u>Sarnia</u>	<u>Sault Ste Marie</u>
<u>Sharbot Lake</u>	<u>Simcoe</u>	<u>Sioux Lookout</u>	<u>Smooth Rock Falls</u>
<u>Stratford</u>	<u>Sturgeon Falls</u>	<u>Sudbury</u>	<u>Sundridge</u>
<u>Thunder Bay</u>	<u>Thunder Bay Satellites</u>	<u>Timmins</u>	<u>Toronto (311 Jarvis)</u>
<u>Toronto (College Park)</u>	<u>Toronto East (1911 Eglinton)</u>	<u>Toronto (Old City Hall)</u>	<u>Toronto North (1000 Finch)</u>
<u>Toronto West (2201 Finch)</u>	<u>Walkerton</u>	<u>Walpole Island First Nation</u>	<u>Wawa</u>
<u>Welland</u>	<u>Wikwemikong</u>	<u>Windsor</u>	<u>Woodstock</u>