



**Notice to the Profession, the Public and the Media
Regarding access to the court proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Prince Edward Island Court of Appeal, Supreme Court and Provincial Court

February 19, 2021

Since March 2020, the Prince Edward Island courts have been operating with restrictions on public access to court proceedings. The courts seek to comply with changing CPHO health care guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of managing access is to ensure the safety of participants and provide ability to carry out contact tracing.

The courts respect the open court principle. This involves broad access to court proceedings by members of the public and media. Restrictions on access due to COVID are limited to those considered necessary to ensure a safe environment for all persons who are necessarily involved in the court process. Since March, courts administration has permitted fewer individuals into the courthouses and courtrooms and has required participants to provide personal contact information in order to accommodate CPHO COVID requirements.

For this purpose, the courts adopted a process whereby when a party, witness, lawyer or other person who is to attend court is to advise the court clerk in advance the names and contact information for all individuals who will attend court.

However, while most participants have tried to be compliant, some gaps are being experienced so that courts do not always receive requests and contact information in advance of court proceedings. This results in log-jams at court entrances. Delays are experienced by all, to await Sheriff screening and court approval for attendance.

Therefore, for clarification and going forward, if a party or lawyer is aware that other persons may plan or wish to attend court proceedings – such as a witness or support person or other member of the public or the media – the party or lawyer is requested to inform court administration and seek prior approval. They should indicate the number and names of individuals, contact information, and their role in the proceeding. This will enable court administration or the presiding judge, as applicable, to make a determination regarding access for additional persons and safe accommodation for all.

The courts strive to ensure that CPHO and court guidelines regarding COVID-19 are followed in order to minimize health risks for all persons who attend at the courthouses and court proceedings.

Requests and arrangements should be made by contacting:

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Court of Appeal: Sheila Gallant, Deputy Registrar, at sfgallant@gov.pe.ca or 902-368-6024
(See also COVID-19 Court of Appeal protocol for “COVID-19: Electronic hearings by Telephone and Video Conference” issued May 1, 2020, Court of Appeal Practice Direction 7(c)).

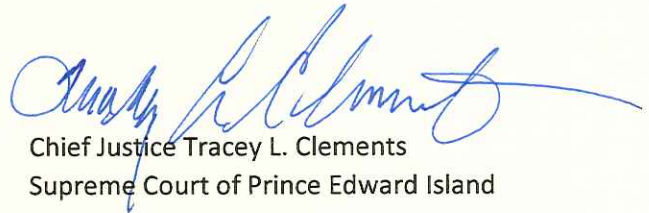
Supreme Court: Trial Coordinator, Shelley Young Brennan at sdyoung@gov.pe.ca or 902-368-6023

Provincial Court:

Charlottetown – 902-368-6693; Georgetown 902-652-8990; Summerside -902-888-8190



Chief Justice David H. Jenkins
Prince Edward Island Court of Appeal



Chief Justice Tracey L. Clements
Supreme Court of Prince Edward Island



Chief Judge Jeffrey E. Lantz
Provincial Court of Prince Edward Island