



## **COVID-19: PROVINCIAL COURT TO LIFT SUSPENSION OF FINE PAYMENTS FOR SUMMARY OFFENCE CONVICTIONS**

**Thursday, March 24, 2022**

In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Provincial Court of Nova Scotia took steps to ensure people would have more time to pay their fines for summary offence convictions and that no one would be automatically penalized by the Registry of Motor Vehicles for not dealing with their outstanding parking or driving offences.

To help reduce the number of people who had to visit a courthouse in person, deadlines for fine payments were extended and the issuing of certificates of default was suspended. During that time, people who still wanted to deal with their summary offence tickets had the option to pay their fines online.

**Effective Friday, April 1, 2022, the Provincial Court will lift the suspension of fine payments for summary offence convictions.** That means individuals who receive summary offence tickets on April 1 or later will be expected to pay the associated fine by the date indicated on their ticket, unless they notify the Court before that date of their intention to plead not guilty and appear in court.

As well, anyone who has outstanding summary offence tickets that were issued since March 16, 2020, will now be expected to deal with those tickets, if they have not been dealt with already.

Individuals with outstanding tickets will receive correspondence from the Provincial Court indicating the summary offence they were charged with, the fine associated with the charge, and the new deadline to pay the fine. Individuals have the following options to pay their fines:

- Pay online at <https://novascotia.ca/just/nsjustice/>
- Make an appointment to visit a courthouse in person
- Mail a cheque or money order payable to the Provincial Court at the mailing address on your letter (please do not mail cash)

**Please note that if you do nothing to address your fine before the deadline in your letter, your fine will be overdue. If that happens, other methods of collection may be imposed.**

Further to that, a certificate of default will be issued and the Registry of Motor Vehicles may refuse to renew your driver's license, vehicle permit, or provide you with any other service until the fine is satisfied. The Registry will also charge you a fee to regain that privilege.

Individuals with questions about how a summary offence conviction will affect their legal ability to drive should consult with the Registry of Motor Vehicles. The Registry is not in a position to provide legal advice, but staff can provide an individual's driving history and information on reinstatement options and requirements, outstanding fees, and other options available to that driver. For more information, call the Record Assessment Phone Line at 902-424-5587.

## **Night Court**

In the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, summary offence matters are typically heard by a Presiding Justice of the Peace in the evening. This is often referred to as Night Court.

Due to the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, the Provincial Court, including Night Court, has suspended most types of in-person proceedings. On Feb. 14, 2022, the Provincial Court began expanding the types of matters that could be heard in person, beginning with trials and some sentencing hearings, provided the presiding judge or Justice of the Peace is satisfied that all public health directives can be followed.

This continues to be the direction from the Court, and applies to all in-person proceedings in Night Court in Halifax and Sydney. Presiding Justices of the Peace may still handle some Night Court matters by telephone and video on Microsoft Teams, including trials, if all participants consent to a virtual proceeding.

For more information on the measures implemented in the Provincial Court, please refer to the [consolidated COVID-19 directive](#) on the Courts' website.

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