



## **NOTICE # 3 – FAMILY DIVISION MATTERS IN THE COUNTIES OF ANTIGONISH, COLCHESTER, CUMBERLAND, YARMOUTH, SHELBURNE AND DIGBY**

**Friday, March 27, 2020**

The Nova Scotia Supreme Court (Family Division) has been conferred jurisdiction over all family law matters in the Nova Scotia Courts. The Supreme Court (Family Division) is assuming that responsibility incrementally. This memorandum is directed to family law lawyers practicing in the Counties of Antigonish, Colchester, Cumberland, Yarmouth, Shelburne and Digby.

Family law files currently being processed in the Supreme Court (General Division) will continue to be managed by that Division. It is anticipated that by the end of 2020, any of these files still active will be transferred to the Supreme Court (Family Division).

Files currently in the Family Court of Nova Scotia will be presided over by a Family Court judge or a Supreme Court (Family Division) justice. In both cases, the management of proceedings will now be subject to the administrative direction of the Supreme Court (Family Division).

Lawyers and members of the public will now have three options for filing family law matters in your County. A proceeding may be initiated under the Supreme Court (Family Division) Rule. This is new to your counties. You may also continue to file matters as provided by the Supreme Court (General Division) Rule, as has been the practice, or file as provided for under the Family Court Rule(s), as is currently the practice.

Right now, you do not need to make any changes to how you practice or the forms you and your staff complete. The Supreme Court (Family Division) will allow for a period of transition to the forms and processes used in the Family Division. This transition is expected to occur over 6-9 months. You will be given advance notice of the process changes and when they take effect.

The Supreme Court (Family Division) is contemplating a phased-in introduction, transitioning to one process for all family law matters before the end of 2020. Additional information sessions will be held locally to ensure your questions are answered and your input considered. Additional training sessions will also be held for court staff.

Regarding judicial assignments in your respective Counties, Antigonish and Pictou Counties will be principally served by Justice Cindy Murray and Judge Timothy Daley; Colchester County by Justice Raymond Morse; Cumberland County by Justice Robert Gregan; and the Yarmouth/Shelburne and Digby Counties will be principally served by Justice Michelle Christenson.

Finally, accompanying this memorandum are:

- 1) A notice advising counsel and the public of the Supreme Court (Family Division) scheduling policies (Notice #1);
- 2) Guidelines for electronic filing, as the Courts manage through the COVID-19 pandemic (Notice #2); and
- 3) Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (Notice #4).

Thank you for your ongoing assistance as we move forward with the merger of the Family Court and the Supreme Court (Family Division).

*Associate Chief Justice O'Neil  
Nova Scotia Supreme Court (Family Division)  
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