



COVID-19: SUPREME COURT (GENERAL AND FAMILY DIVISIONS) RETURNING TO SAFE SERVICES MODEL

**Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022
Updated: Feb. 18, 2022**

Effective Monday, Feb. 14, 2022, the Supreme Court (General and Family Divisions) will return to a safe services model in all areas of the province.

This means that counsel and parties will no longer have to establish that a matter is urgent or essential to proceed in-person. Jury trials and non-urgent in-person hearings will be permitted, provided they can be conducted safely and in accordance with established public health protocols to protect against the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Masking

Mandatory masking and physical distancing measures in courthouses remain in effect and will be strictly enforced.

Sheriffs will provide a disposable medical mask to all witnesses, parties and defendants involved in an in-person court proceeding. Counsel are expected to bring their own disposable medical mask. However, for those who may not have one, a supply will be available at the front doors of the courthouses.

Access to Courthouses

While the Supreme Court recognizes the need to expand the services offered to the public during the pandemic, it also recognizes that the fewer people inside courthouses right now, the better, from a safety perspective. For this reason, courthouses will continue to limit who is permitted inside the building. Only those individuals who work in the building, who are participating in a court proceeding, who have an appointment, or have approval from a judge to view a court proceeding in person will be permitted in courthouses.

To help maintain the open courts principle, members of the media will be permitted to cover court proceedings in person; however, whenever possible media will be encouraged to participate remotely by telephone or videoconferencing.

Anyone attending a courthouse is reminded to practice good hand hygiene, including the use of hand sanitizer, while in the building.

Public File Access

Public and media access to files continues to be by appointment only, provided there is space available at the courthouse to view the files, while respecting physical distancing.

Individuals must contact Court Administration to make an appointment to view files, prior to coming to the courthouse. This is required so that staff can control the number of people in the viewing rooms. These spaces will be disinfected between appointments. Anyone coming to view files will be subject to health screening at the front door and will be required to wear a mask at all times.

For information on the various Supreme Court directives related to COVID-19, please visit https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm.

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