



## **COVID-19: SUPREME COURT (GENERAL DIVISION) RETURNING TO SAFE SERVICES MODEL**

**Tuesday, June 1, 2021**

Effective Monday, June 7, 2021, the Supreme Court (General Division) 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. Non-urgent in-person hearings will be permitted, provided they can be conducted safely and in accordance with established protocols to protect against the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

### **Masking in Courtrooms**

As per the [May 27, 2021 Update on Masking](#), the All Courts Recovery Committee is now strongly recommending that disposable medical masks, rather than reusable cloth masks, be worn at all times in courtrooms, including when an individual is speaking.

This recommendation also applies to judicial settlement conferences and any other in-person court proceeding held in a boardroom, jury room, or other enclosed space inside a Nova Scotia courthouse.

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 Court needs to expand the services offered to the public during the pandemic, it 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 or who have an appointment 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.

### **Filing Deadlines**

The suspension of filing deadlines will be lifted in all areas of the province, effective 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

### **Public File Access**

Public access to files will resume on Monday, June 7, 2021, 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](https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm).

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