



Update on the Transition to a Unified Family Court

Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021

Effective Jan. 1, 2022, all family law matters in Nova Scotia trial courts will be dealt with as per Rule 59 of the Civil Procedure Rules of Nova Scotia, regardless of the trial court where the matter is being processed.

Currently, the Family Court of Nova Scotia and both the General Division and the Family Division of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia hear family law matters at the trial level. Although this will continue to be the case for a number of months, these courts will begin to use a common set of forms and processes as part of the continuing expansion of the Unified Family Court.

Supreme Court (General Division)

As part of the transition to a Unified Family Court, effective Jan. 1, 2022, court forms and proceedings related to family matters filed in the Supreme Court (General Division), and which are provided for in Rule 62, will be replaced by those provided by Rule 59, with all necessary modifications required.

Family Court of Nova Scotia

In addition, effective Jan. 1, 2022, all court forms and proceedings in the Family Court of Nova Scotia will be replaced by those provided by Rule 59, with all necessary modifications required.

There will be a transition period of six weeks during which Family Court forms and Rule 62 forms will be accepted. Effective Feb. 14, 2022, only forms under Rule 59 will be accepted, unless a court officer or a judge directs otherwise. The transition period will ensure lawyers, court staff, and members of the public have time to adapt to these changes.

Questions about the filing of court documents can be emailed to Court Administration at the courthouse where you will be filing. Email addresses for all court locations are available online [here](#).

For information relating to the law, processes, and services that make up family law in Nova Scotia, visit the Nova Scotia Family Law website at <https://www.nsfamilylaw.ca/>.

History of the Unified Family Court

The Family Division of the Supreme Court was first established in Nova Scotia in 1999 to be one court dealing with all family law matters arising within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and on Cape Breton Island. At that time, family law matters were held in two courts with divorce and division of property being heard in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia and most other family matters being dealt with in the Family Court of Nova Scotia.

The existence of two ‘family’ courts outside the HRM and Cape Breton Island continued until 2020.

Since March 2020, the Family Division of the Supreme Court has gradually expanded its jurisdiction to other areas of the province. Seven new positions were created on the Family Division Bench for judges to cover these additional locations.

Often referred to as the Unified Family Court (UFC), this new model improves access to family law services by allowing all family law matters to be processed by one court. This reduces delays and makes the family law process clearer and less stressful for everyone involved.