



COVID-19: SUPREME COURT ADOPTS MODIFIED ESSENTIAL SERVICES MODEL

Friday, Dec. 17, 2021

In light of recent COVID-19 outbreaks in Nova Scotia and the threat of the new Omicron variant, the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia is adopting a modified essential services model in all locations, effective immediately, until Jan. 4, 2022. This applies to both the General and Family Divisions.

Under a modified essential services model, in-person proceedings in the Supreme Court will be limited to those deemed urgent or essential by a judge.

Jury trials currently underway will continue until they conclude. Supreme Court judges currently hearing non-jury trials will decide whether to adjourn the proceedings or continue until they conclude.

Counsel and other court participants are reminded that mandatory masking and physical distancing measures will be in effect for any urgent court matter that proceeds in-person.

Any non-urgent Supreme Court matters, including probate and bankruptcy matters, that can be held virtually by telephone or videoconferencing will be allowed to proceed, provided there is sufficient staff and equipment to do so. As well, Chambers, Appearance Day, Special Time Chambers, and Crownside for criminal cases will hear non-urgent matters via telephone or videoconferencing, if sufficient resources are available. Any non-essential matters that cannot be dealt with virtually will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Filing Documents

The current processes for filing court documents as outlined in the [May 13, 2021 Notice](#) will continue. For filings related to urgent and essential in-person proceedings, counsel should include a cover letter outlining why the matter is considered urgent or essential.

File Access

Public access to files will continue, by appointment only. Please note that 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.

To make an appointment at the Halifax Law Courts, please contact Laurie Campbell at Laurie.Campbell@novascotia.ca or by telephone at 902-424-6900. To make an appointment at another Supreme Court location, please refer to the [contact list](#) for courthouses across the province.

These are temporary measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Nova Scotia. They will be regularly evaluated, and new directives will be issued as the situation with the pandemic evolves. For more 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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