

NOVA SCOTIA COURTS

COVID-19

**RECOVERY PLAN
& GUIDELINES**

JUNE 2020

COVID-19 COURTS RECOVERY PLAN & GUIDELINES

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The Guidelines and Protocols developed by the Committee are informed by Public Health Guidance, Occupational Health and Safety Requirements, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer, and Public Health. This Recovery Plan has been reviewed by representatives of Labour and Advanced Education and the Occupational Health and Safety Division, and by Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented situation for everyone. Organizations and institutions around the world, including the courts, are attempting to deal with this crisis in the best and safest manner possible.

The safety of those who work in and appear before the Nova Scotia Courts must govern how we continue to function during the pandemic. Over the past three months, the Courts have been hearing primarily urgent and essential matters, and mostly by telephone and video. As the situation evolves, the Courts continue to adapt, expanding the services available, where it is safe to do so.

To assist with this transition, the Nova Scotia Judiciary struck a COVID-19 Court Recovery Committee to identify, assess and mitigate potential risks associated with the coronavirus. The Committee, led by Supreme Court Justice Darlene Jamieson, has a judge from each court, as well as representatives from the Nova Scotia Department of Justice Court Services Division, which includes Sheriff Services, and the Facilities Manager of the Department of Justice. The Committee also has the benefit of expert advice from an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) consultant, Public Health, and other disciplines, as needed.

The number of physical courtrooms available for use is an evolving situation. As part of its work, the Court Recovery Committee is undertaking a detailed assessment of all 77 courtrooms in the province. That work is being done in three phases to determine what modifications are necessary for each space before they can be deemed safe for in-person hearings:

- Phase 1: Identify the courtrooms where little to no intervention is required to accomplish physical distancing and put them into use.
- Phase 2: Identify the courtrooms that require minimal interventions to be operational.
- Phase 3: Identify the courtrooms that will require major intervention and those that will be unusable as courtrooms during COVID-19 but could have other uses.

The initial results of the assessment helped develop this Recovery Plan. The following information is a basic overview of the plan; for more specific information, please review the comprehensive guidelines and safety protocols included in this document.

In addition to court-specific strategies, this Recovery Plan incorporates several basic safety strategies recognized by the Public Service Commission as effective ways to minimize or eliminate the risk of exposure. Those include organizing the physical layout of workspaces; maintaining physical distance and proper hygiene; regular cleaning; communication; and recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19.

Physical distancing is the foundation for this plan. Risk assessment begins with assessing, and where needed, modifying the physical space of each courthouse. Additional elements, such as the installation of plexiglass or lexan and no-contact drop boxes for document filing, are being introduced where physical distancing is either insufficient or impossible.

Sheriffs are conducting screening at courthouses to ensure a visitor's presence is required and that it is safe for them to attend. Anyone who has travelled outside the province recently, is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or has been directed by Public Health officials, 811 or a doctor to self-isolate, is advised not visit a courthouse.

Protocols are in place for enhanced cleaning of courthouses and courtrooms. These include measures such as sanitizing witness boxes between uses, as well as regular cleaning of high-touch areas, bathrooms etc. There will be hand sanitizer and wipes available throughout courthouses and all visitors will be required to use hand sanitizer upon entering the building. Hand sanitizer will also be available at counsel tables, witness boxes, and judges' and clerks' desks. Protocols have also been developed for situations where disinfecting is not a viable option, such as the handling of paper documents and the transfer of documents between individuals in a court proceeding.

Courthouses are now equipped with signage to enable the safe use of courthouse spaces, including elevators, hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, interview rooms and copy rooms. As in-person hearings increase, it is likely that court commencement times will need to be staggered to reduce the number of people in public spaces.

Public Health protocols say Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be used only when all other levels of protection are not enough. As such, masks will not be required inside courthouses; however, staff and visitors are encouraged to use a non-medical mask (NMM) in situations where exposure to crowded public spaces is unavoidable and consistent physical distancing is not possible.

Virtual court is the final piece of the Courts' Recovery Plan. Remote appearances by telephone, video and platforms such as Skype for Business allow courts to hear more matters without additional staff at the courthouses. They are also a helpful option when courtrooms are too small to hold in-person hearings and still respect physical distancing.

It should be noted that on their own, each of these strategies are effective and important; however, it is when they are all followed as part of a comprehensive and carefully considered plan that court staff, court users and the broader public can feel confident and safe entering a courthouse in Nova Scotia. That requires support, cooperation and commitment at all levels of the justice system.

This Recovery Plan has been reviewed by representatives of Labour and Advanced Education and Occupational Health and Safety Division, and by Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia.

INTRODUCTION TO PLAN AND GUIDELINES

COMMITTEE MANDATE

The Court Recovery Committee has been asked to identify, assess and mitigate potential risks associated with the spread of the COVID-19 virus as part of the gradual expansion of court services available during the pandemic.

PURPOSE

The safety of those who work in and appear before the Nova Scotia Courts must govern how we function during the pandemic. This Recovery Plan balances the need for the Courts to remain open with the need to ensure that the public and court staff are safe. Its central purpose is to ensure guidelines and safety protocols are in place to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19 for members of the Judiciary, court staff, counsel, parties, media, and all other participants in the justice system. The Recovery Plan also ensures the expansion of services is done safely and in compliance with Public Health directives.

BACKGROUND

Throughout much of the pandemic, the Nova Scotia Courts had been hearing urgent and essential matters only, and mostly by telephone and video. Public access to courthouses was restricted and new processes were introduced for filing court documents, virtual court appearances and media access.

Small team rotations were scheduled so staff could provide administrative and judicial support for those urgent and essential matters that did proceed. Other matters were adjourned and rescheduled for this summer or later. Where work could be carried out remotely from home, judges and staff were equipped with the appropriate IT and tele-communications support.

The Nova Scotia Courts are now increasing access where it is safe to do so. This includes hearing more matters in-person if public health directives can be followed.

To support these operational changes, the Court Recovery Committee has developed a Recovery Plan and Guidelines that consider the **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) Health & Safety Considerations for Return to Work** provided by the NS Public Service Commission ("**PSC Considerations**" herein) and the NS Public Health directives.

Risk mitigation development also recognizes that each Court has different timelines for expanding services. In-person hearings will only proceed when the necessary safety protocols are in place. Only those people with business at the courthouse will be permitted inside the building. This Recovery Plan carries the following assumptions from the **PSC Considerations (with responses)**:

- No Public Health orders prevent employees from resuming work. *(There are no Orders of the Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection Act preventing court staff as a category from returning to courthouses as of the date of this Recovery Plan. Exceptions to this are the same as those for the general public, for example the requirement to self-isolate if diagnosed as having COVID-19)*
- It has been determined that the service provided cannot be delivered with employees working from home. *(For a few administrative functions, it may be possible for court staff to partially work from home as had been done previously. However, the services required to expand court operations, such as in-person courtroom hearings, cannot be performed by court staff working from home).*
- Enough employees are available to conduct work safely. *(There are enough Court Officers and Sheriffs available to perform the work safely at the courthouse.)*

The Courts of Nova Scotia are an essential service under the [Order of the Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection Act](#) and have various exemptions including, for example, gathering limits. While the Recovery Plan is intended to address public health considerations and protection of court users and staff, it does not supersede the “essential service” classification and related exemptions in the Order.

Court Services and Sheriff Services will continue to work with the Judiciary to meet these core safety objectives throughout the return to regular court operations.

OVERVIEW OF SAFETY STRATEGIES:

The [Recovery Plan: Actions For Courthouses](#) below incorporates the following strategies (taken from the *PSC Considerations*) to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in addition to court specific strategies:

[1] Physical Layout Organization: To support physical (social) distancing, the courthouses are being assessed, physically organized, and arranged to maintain two-metre distancing between people. Court Administrators are working directly with the Judiciary and Sheriff Managers to identify areas in the courthouse that can provide sufficient physical distancing between all court participants (judges, court and sheriff officers, parties, persons-in-custody, counsel, witnesses, public and media) to allow the areas and courtrooms to be used for proceedings. When this is not possible, physical barriers will be utilized whenever possible (e.g. “Plexiglass”: Lexan and Plexi).

[2] Maintain Physical Distancing: Specific activities to maintain physical distancing include assessing pedestrian flow through the courthouse and preparing a plan to promote physical distancing and reduce “crossing paths” of persons. Other actions include using signage, directional arrows, floor markings (two metre markings), identified seating arrangements, and markers or stanchions, to direct or restrict movement of persons. Staff will minimize their personal contact with each other and limit non-essential visits to all other offices, common spaces, or public areas.

[3] Maintain Proper Hygiene: Specific activities to maintain proper hygiene include educating staff on proper hygienic approaches to maximize their safety and reinforce those processes. Cleaning supplies should be made available to all court participants to sanitize high touch areas and workspaces. Items formerly made available to the public will be removed that increase risk in waiting areas (pamphlets, magazines, papers, desks, etc., as deemed necessary).

[4] Regular Cleaning: The workspaces in the courthouse will be cleaned regularly on an increased frequency. Areas and fixtures will be identified that need a dedicated cleaning regimen due to high traffic, e.g. waiting areas, doorknobs, light switches, etc.

[5] Communication: Processes and precautions will be communicated to everyone at the courthouse – all court participants (judges, court and sheriff officers, parties, persons-in-custody, counsel, witnesses, public and media) – including verbal and visual reminders, modelling appropriate behaviour, supporting staff and addressing any questions or concerns. Staff will be made aware of precautions undertaken to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 (e.g. NS Government Updates, 811 Assessment, Mitigation Guidelines, FAQs, PPE Video, and Safety in the Workplace Plans, and available updates on any changes (e.g. Courts of NS Measures, Government Updates, NSHA Bulletins. This shall be reinforced by posting information and during staff meetings and morning musters. All staff must immediately inform their Supervisor if they become symptomatic.

[6] Recognize Symptoms: As part of the communications piece, all court participants will be reminded of the [NS Public Health published information](#) including the [COVID-19 symptom list](#). This information is subject to change and therefore people are referred to the source materials (and links are provided) each time the information is referenced in this Recovery Plan.

COURTHOUSE ASSESSMENT: RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX

The Hierarchy of Controls outlined on this page and the next are taken directly from the *PSC Considerations*. The health and safety of employees and clients are top priority when planning return to the workplace. A **Risk Management Matrix** has been prepared to identify areas of concern regarding the possible transmission of COVID-19 and implement control methods in court specific ways. To reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19, the Matrix uses the OHS principle of the hierarchy of controls which are listed in order of effectiveness and are best used in combination.



When possible eliminate potential exposure to COVID-19:

- Suspend non-essential work/tasks.
- Change the way the work/task is done to eliminate the exposure (e.g. by phone, online).

If the work must be done and the two-metre (6-foot distance) cannot be maintained, consider engineering or administrative controls.

Substitution controls are not possible during a pandemic as there is no way to substitute the hazard, in this case, COVID-19.

Engineering controls provide a barrier between the worker and the hazard

- physical barriers to isolate, such as installing Plexiglas
- distance workstations
- human traffic patterns (limiting areas where people gather or frequent)
- automation to reduce contact with surfaces (like automated hand-washing dispensers, automated hand drying, automatic doors, etc.)
- ventilation: make sure ventilation systems are working properly and optimally
 - increase the percentage of fresh clean air that circulates into the system
 - change filters in ventilation systems more frequently

Administrative controls may be used in combination to protect and reduce workplace exposures.

- revising work schedules to reduce the number of employees in the workspace
- reducing close contact with customers or co-workers with calls and e-mails
- creating a buffer zone of at least 2 metres between employees and clients and keeping meetings as short as possible
- providing hand washing facilities and alcohol-based hand sanitizers when regular facilities are not available
- regularly cleaning objects that are touched frequently with disinfectants or soap and water
- providing boxes of tissues and ensuring safe and sanitary disposal of used tissues
- removing magazines and papers from common rooms

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the last line of defense. Implementing higher level elimination, engineering and administrative protective measures will reduce situations where employees may be in close contact with potentially infected people.

RECOVERY PLAN: ACTIONS FOR COURTHOUSES

The following provides an overview of the scope of the processes used in the planning and examples of what is being implemented. Details of this activity are provided in the charts and schedules in this plan.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS IN THE COURTHOUSE SETTING

Physical distancing is the foundation for the risk mitigation strategy. Risk assessment begins with assessing the physical space of the courthouse building. Maintaining two metres (six feet) of physical distance will be reinforced by use of visual cues, signage, and directional controls in hallways and stairwells. In the [Public Health Agency of Canada case management statement](#), the Agency considers transient interactions (e.g., walking by another person in a hallway or briefly being closer than two metres) as being in the “low/no known” category of exposure risk.

Additional elements are being introduced where physical distancing is either insufficient or impossible, for example (each detailed later in this Plan):

- installation of plexiglass or lexan where physical distancing is not possible,
- no contact drop boxes for document filing,
- designated rooms for counsel / client / witness meetings or interviews,
- one-person occupancy for photocopy rooms, elevators, bathrooms
- screening people on entering the building for COVID Symptoms,
- increasing the frequency and intensity of cleaning,
- providing sanitizer and wipes at high touch areas,
- staggering court times and work hours to avoid congestion in the courthouses

COMPREHENSIVE RISK ASSESSMENTS

All courthouses have been assessed to plan for mitigating risks in all spaces including courtrooms, office space, court administration areas, waiting rooms, meeting rooms, hallways, stairwells etc. These individual risk assessments will inform the mitigation measures for the various court houses and courtrooms.

To begin this process, a detailed assessment of each courtroom and non-courtroom space has taken place to determine what modifications, from a physical distancing perspective, are required before each courtroom is operational.

For example: “maximum occupancy capacity” is the limit set by number of counsel, accused’s, gallery etc. The occupancy limit will be posted outside each courtroom that is in use and will not be exceeded at any point during a proceeding.

The number of physical courtrooms available for use is and will be an evolving situation. The assessment process is therefore being done using a three-phase approach:

- **Phase 1** identifies those courtrooms around the province where little to no intervention is required to accomplish physical distancing and put them into use. They are large enough or can be adjusted by moving furniture, gallery seating, some counsel tables and limiting the numbers of people in them to allow for the required physical distancing.
- **Phase 2** identifies those courtrooms that will require minimal interventions to become operational. For example, Lexan or plexiglass installations to provide barriers.
- **Phase 3** will identify those courtrooms that will require major intervention and finally those that will be unusable as courtrooms during COVID but perhaps have other uses, for example: settlement conferences and interview rooms.

VIRTUAL COURT

Virtual court and conference options are fundamental to the Courts' ability to continue handling cases until a vaccine is available. These options directly respond to the reality that not all courtrooms will be ready immediately and a number will be too small for social distancing.

Each level of court is maximising its feasible options which includes, as examples:

[1] The Court of Appeal offers weekly telechambers, hears Chambers motions by both telephone and video conferencing, and is offering virtual court hearings.

[2] The Supreme Court (General Division), is offering virtual court hearings, generally limited to audio, and offering conciliation/ADR conducted via telephone primarily and other virtual means if available.

[3] "Supreme Court (Family Division) is offering virtual court hearings, generally limited to audio and offering conciliation/ADR conducted via telephone primarily and other virtual means if available."

[4] The Provincial Court has been conducting bail hearings virtually and has developed a virtual process to triage and hear applications for peace bonds where full disclosure, due process and trial fairness can be assured. This latter process involves Presiding Justices of the Peace.

[5] Settlement Conferences and Pre-hearing/Pre-trial Conferences have been made available by telephone conferencing and are now expanded in some courts to Videoconferencing.

All of these options are detailed on the [Courts of Nova Scotia](#) website on its [Nova Scotia Courts COVID-19 Updates](#) Page. Court Services is supporting these initiatives through their staff and by developing procedures, providing training and expanding the use of technology.

COURTROOM PROCEDURES

Procedures in the courtrooms are also being assessed to determine how best to maintain physical distancing, etc. Documents and exhibits provide a good example. While counsel are encouraged to forward all proposed documents and exhibits in advance, there will be situations where additional materials are required during the proceeding. Counsel will not be able to approach the Court Reporter/Clerk to directly pass a document for marking, as they did in the past, and the Court Reporter/Clerk will not give a copy directly to witness.

Documents and exhibits will be managed through the use of a separate, designated “Document/Exhibit Transfer Table” which is appropriately distanced from the desk of the Court Reporter/Clerk and the witness. When new material is unavoidable, counsel delivers the document or exhibit to the Table for the Court Reporter/Clerk to collect as follows, subject to the direction of the judge:

- Counsel takes the copies to the table marked “Document/Exhibit Transfer Table” and returns to their seat.
- Then the Court Reporter/Clerk goes to the table to obtain the exhibit for processing (enters it in to Exhibit Log, stamps etc.) and puts it back on the transfer table.
 - An option for labelling the exhibit is to use of a sheet of paper with the exhibit marking on it which is stapled to the document to minimize touching.
- Counsel then picks up their copy, and the witness does the same.

Adopting the practice of approaching the Document/Exhibit Table one at a time and in turn will maintain safe physical distancing because no-one is at the table at the same time.

Throughout the court proceeding, all should practice good hand hygiene and sanitizer will be available.

Water jugs will not be available in the courtroom during court hearings. Counsel, parties and witnesses are permitted in bring their own water in clear plastic bottles that are no larger than 1 litre in volume. Sheriffs will provide water for an in-custody accused person.

Another focus is the need to avoid congestion in the courthouses. Therefore, as in person hearings increase, court commencement times will likely have to be staggered.

OTHER COURT PROCESSES

During the transition back to in-person proceedings, other procedures and services have been expanded to maximize resolution options for court users

- The courts are offering a variety of desk proceedings or “Documents Only” Hearings.
- Arrangements for document drop-off and by appointment are in place.

- Public Information Services are provided via online products and telephone conferencing.
- In courthouses addressing a high volume of self-represented litigants, the option of using portable plexiglass screens for the witness stands will be explored by court administration with the judges.

SHERIFFS SERVICES

Sheriffs Services will play a vital role in the safety and management of all court users: the [COVID-19 General Operational Plan: Safety In The Workplace](#) has been developed to support this work.

Sheriffs will do the initial screening as people enter the courthouse. No-one should enter a courthouse if:

- They feel unwell and are exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19, as identified by public health officials.
- They have travelled outside NS or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 and have not self-isolated for at least 14 days prior to being screened

Sheriffs will also be monitoring physical distancing in the courtrooms and throughout the courthouse.

SANITIZATION AND CLEANING STANDARDS

Court Services has developed a [COVID-19 Cleaning Requirements To Support Recovery Plan](#) to ensure enhanced cleaning of courthouses and courtrooms including, for example, sanitizing witnesses boxes between witnesses, bathrooms and high-touch areas in the courthouses will be frequently cleaned throughout the day (e.g. elevators, stairwells, door handles). After court closes, cleaners will disinfect all areas.

It is likely most public bathrooms with multiple stalls will become single person access unless they are large enough to accomplish physical distancing.

There will be sanitizer and wipes located where necessary throughout the courthouses. These will include locations where contact with high-touch surfaces is likely (e.g. at the building entrance, outside courtrooms, elevator lobbies). Within the courtrooms, hand sanitizer bottles will be available at counsel desks, the witness stand, and the clerk's desk, at a minimum.

PPE GUIDELINES

Public health protocols say Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is meant to be utilized if all other levels of protection are not enough. Court Services has developed PPE Guidelines in its

[Court Services: COVID-19 Mitigation Practices and Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Guidelines.](#)

If a circumstance arises that warrants wearing a mask when testifying and this situation creates an issue, this may be addressed by having a small number of face visors or shields available for each courtroom.

INFORMATION SHARING WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

The Committee has reached out to see what courts in other jurisdictions are putting in place to share information and best practices.

An example currently under consideration is a pre-court form (based on one developed in N.B.) to be completed prior to the court trial or hearing to ensure the courtroom has the necessary capacity and address any specific needs or issues in advance.

The proposed form for the Supreme Court details a full range of considerations including:

- o how many counsel, clients, witnesses, support persons will be present
- o particulars if any out of Province witness, accused, counsel are involved
- o what the technology requirements are and any issues
- o any required additional accommodations

INPUT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

The Committee is benefitting from the perspectives, interest and feedback of stakeholders, especially the legal community.

Gender equality considerations have been raised by the Gender Equity Committee of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society and should be factored into the processes for the scheduling of matters to allow those with additional care requirements greater flexibility in having their matters heard in an effective and efficient manner.

MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

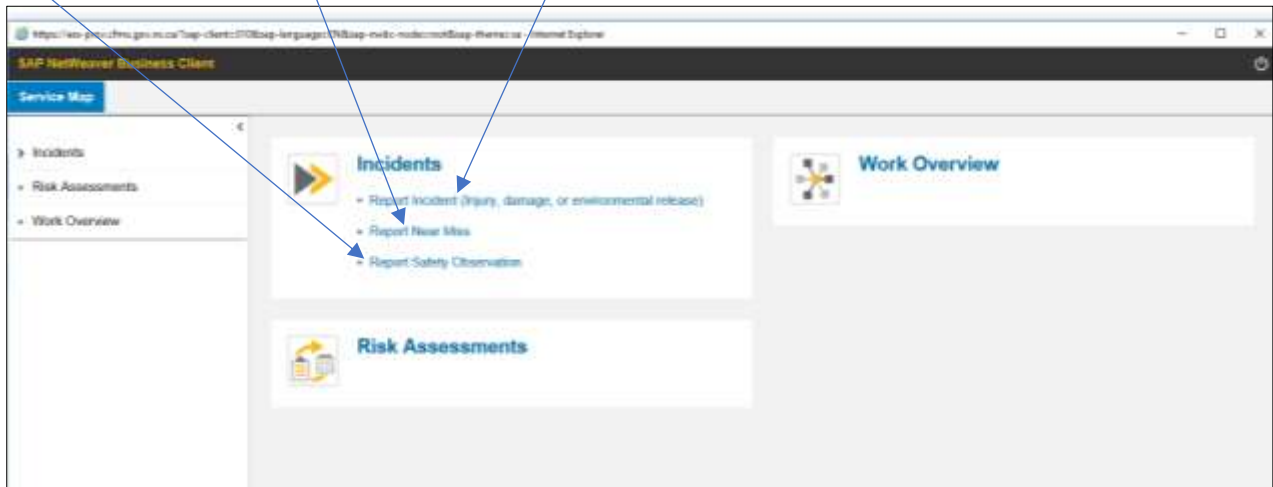
There will be an inspection process implemented to ensure control measures are being adhered to and are working as intended.

All Court Staff have an ongoing role in maintaining a courthouse environment that is COVID-19 safety compliant. As part of the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of this plan and risk mitigation strategies, staff are encouraged to have open communication with their Supervisors and Court Administrators .

Using the government Employee Self-service (ESS) Services, staff can also access the online Environment, Health and Safety Management (EHSM) System to report an incident directly.



Safety observations, near misses and incidents can be documented in the EHSM System.



BUILDING MITIGATIONS

The following table summarizes the buildings mitigation process steps and provides link to the supporting documentation.

Mitigations Summary	Reference Material
<p>Risk Assessment Each area of the courthouses thoroughly assessed with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Risk Assessment Management Matrix tool and • advice from the OSH PSC representative assigned to Courts. <p>This will identify</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the required mitigations to be put in place based on hierarchy of controls to ensure safe hearings • ensure adequate room for social distancing and limit number of individuals permitted in the courtroom • areas needing physical reorganization and new cleaning regimens 	<p>[A] Risk Management Matrix Excel Sheet (template only in this Plan)</p>
<p>Phase 1 “ready to go” courtrooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are measured and identified as ready for use • can accommodate the required social distancing with little to no interventions (beyond moving furniture, tables, limit # of individuals etc.) and those modification are made • use expanded cleaning schedules • address the readiness requirements themselves, including: stock cleaning/sanitization supplies, sufficient trash cans. and PPE • have required signage (see below) . 	<p>[B] Courtroom Inventory – Phase 1 Excel Sheet (separate document)</p>
<p>Phase 2 (minimal intervention) Courtrooms and Phase 3 (major intervention) Modifications of each courtroom to ensure that the space is made COVID-19 prevention compliant for in person proceedings, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • install Lexan barriers (where required) • portable plexiglass screens may be considered by court administration with the judges as alternative <p>Address the readiness requirements as listed above for Phase 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Risk Management Matrix Excel Sheet (template only in this Plan)
<p>Lobby/Common Areas/Elevators/Conference and Waiting Rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessed with the Risk Management Matrix and PSC Possible Exposure COVID-19 Questions for Courthouses Chart • manage pedestrian flow using signage, directional arrows, floor markings (two metre markings), identified seating arrangements and stanchions to direct or restrict movement of persons • signage (see below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Court Services: COVID-19 Mitigation Practices and (PPE) Guidelines including TABLE: Court House Services with Public Present
<p>Public Washrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhanced cleaning schedule implemented • limit available number of stalls or sinks to maintain physical distancing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to COVID-19 Cleaning Requirements To Support Recovery Plan

Mitigations Summary	Reference Material
<p>Private Areas: Judges’ Offices Chambers Court Admin & Sheriff Services Offices/Cubicles /Workstations File Room/Exhibit Room/ Locker/Storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed with Risk Mitigation Matrix and with PSC Possible Exposure COVID-19 Questions for Courthouses Chart make list of these high-risk locations/items and materials needed to meet requirements for sanitizing stations, wipes and disposal, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Court Services: COVID-19 Mitigation Practices and (PPE) Guidelines Refer to COVID-19 Cleaning Requirements To Support Recovery Plan
<p>Private Areas: Staff Washrooms/Locker Rooms/ Lounges/Lunchrooms/Kitchens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular cleaning schedule implemented provide cleaning stations/supplies for high-touch areas signage indicating maximum number of people. 	<p>Refer to Court Services: COVID-19 Mitigation Practices and (PPE) Guidelines</p> <p>including TABLE: Routine Staff Activity (No public present)</p>
<p>Signage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> installation of necessary signage to assist in designating the safe use of courthouse spaces including elevators, hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, interview rooms, copy rooms. also to provide physical distancing reminders: for example, by use of spacing and directional cues in hallways and stairwells will include things like : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Health Screening Front Door- building entrance ➤ COVID-19 Personal Hygiene and Physical Distancing Guidelines - All hallways ➤ Elevator Etiquette: Max Occupancy, Standing Locations, Direction- Outside of Elevator Entrance ➤ Washroom Etiquette: Max Occupancy, Entry Protocol -Washroom Doors ➤ Hand Washing Practices in all washrooms-adjacent to the sink ➤ Usage signage outside photocopy rooms, lunchrooms and other small spaces ➤ Floor Directional signage where necessary 	
<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 virtual court laptops are now in place across the province procedures, training and support also in place 	<p>Variety of Materials and processes offered and managed by Court Services</p>
<p>HVAC/Ventilation for owned and leased buildings</p> <p>Facilities Management of TIR (Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal) is compliant with the following Public Health occupational health and safety guidance with respect to COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make sure ventilation systems are working properly increase ventilation rates for makeup air, supply air, and exhaust systems (within system design specifications) increase the percentage of fresh clean air that circulates into the system change filters in ventilation systems more frequently develop operations and maintenance procedures to clean, maintain, and operate ventilation systems including protection for maintenance staff 	

RISK MANAGEMENT MATRIX EXCEL SHEET

Risk assessments have been undertaken in each courthouse using the attached template to ensure that all spaces are configured in accordance with public health advice and OSH guidelines and appropriate mitigations identified and put in place

Risk Rating Key	LOW 0- ACCEPTABLE	MEDIUM 1- ALARP (as low as reasonably practicable)	HIGH 2- GENERALLY UNACCEPTABLE	EXTREME 3- INTOLERABLE
		OK TO PROCEED	TAKE MITIGATION EFFORTS	SEEK SUPPORT

Helpful Hints

- You can select more than one mitigation. Each time you select a new mitigation it will display in a list format.
- If you select a mitigation that you do not want, you will get an error message if you try to delete the mitigation. All mitigations for that risk must be deleted and readded.
- You may see an error warning next to your list of multiple mitigations. As long as your mitigations are listed, this is not an issue and you may disregard the
- A formula will populate the risk level fields based on the key to the left and your determination of likelihood & severity.

	SEVERITY			
	ACCEPTABLE LITTLE TO NO EFFECT ON EVENT	TOLERABLE EFFECTS ARE FELT, BUT NOT CRITICAL TO OUTCOME	UNDESIRABLE SERIOUS IMPACT TO THE COURSE OF ACTION AND OUTCOME	INTOLERABLE COULD RESULT IN DISASTER
LIKELIHOOD				
IMPROBABLE RISK IS UNLIKELY TO OCCUR	LOW - 1 -	MEDIUM - 4 -	MEDIUM - 6 -	HIGH - 10 -
POSSIBLE RISK WILL LIKELY OCCUR	LOW - 2 -	MEDIUM - 5 -	HIGH - 8 -	EXTREME - 11 -
PROBABLE RISK WILL OCCUR	MEDIUM - 3 -	HIGH - 7 -	HIGH - 9 -	EXTREME - 12 -

COVID-19 Risk Management Matrix												
Items	Sample Person	COURTHOUSE/JC	Annapolis			OBJECTIVE	Reduce Risk of COVID-19 Exposure/Infection					
ID # (Do Not Leave Blank)	DEPARTMENT/ LOCATION	RISK	PRE-MITIGATION			MITIGATIONS / WARNINGS / REMEDIES	NOTES (explain other mitigations and change management strategy for implementation)	POST-MITIGATION				
			RISK SEVERITY	RISK LIKELIHOOD	RISK LEVEL (As of 7/2/20)			RISK SEVERITY	RISK LIKELIHOOD	RISK LEVEL (As of 7/2/20)	ACCEPTABLE TO PROCEED?	
Sample Courtroom 401		Swearing in of witness			#N/A						#N/A	
Sample Courtroom 401		Staff interaction with counsel/judge			#N/A						#N/A	
Sample Courtroom 401		Handling documents/exhibits			#N/A						#N/A	
					#N/A						#N/A	
					#N/A						#N/A	
					#N/A						#N/A	
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TABLES: COVID-19 SERVICES MITIGATION OPTIONS

The options presented in these tables offer appropriate protection based on the duty, task or activity being carried out by staff. The general principles that are demonstrated in the tables should be similarly applied to other circumstances that are not listed.

* **NOTE:** the Justice Officer level # references the court officer level typically assigned the activity and does not restrict a higher level from completing the activity

Court House Services with Public Present			
Task	Court Officer*	Activity	Type of Mitigation
Receiving Payments made to the court – all court levels (filing fees, sureties, fines, etc.)	Justice Officer 2 or Justice Officer 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive payment using handheld touchless credit/debit terminal. 2. Review documents as applicable. 3. Receive cash payment only when absolutely necessary 	No PPE required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; • sanitizing touchless terminal after each transaction and wash hands • workstation sanitizing after each transaction and workplace cleansing and wash hands • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering • While cash is not preferred, if this is the only option for the client, it is placed in a zip-lock bag for storage followed by washing hands
Peace Bond Application and Swearing Info	Justice Officer 3, 4 & 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive document, swear/affirm 2. witness signature 3. confirm identification 	No PPE required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering
Review conditions or release order	Justice Officer 2, 3, 4 & 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review release conditions/order with accused. 2. Sign Jurat. 3. Provide signed document to accused. 	No PPE required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.
Filing Applications and Documents All court levels	Justice Officer 2, 3, 4 & 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review documents, receive payment, provide documents from file 	No PPE required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.

Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of Mitigation
Conducting Group or Individual Intake Sessions	Justice Officer 2 or 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present Power Point, answer questions 2. provide/receive/review documents 3. give directions 4. swear/affirm documents 5. conduct safety screening 6. provide legal information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit face-to-face and group activities whenever possible by using IT solutions. <p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices and physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; sanitizing workplace cleansing. • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering
Conducting Conciliation or ADR Meetings	Justice Officer 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct safety screening 2. meet individually or jointly with 1+ parties 3. assisted negotiation, 4. receive/review/swear documents, 5. provide direction/legal information 6. prepare/review court orders with parties present, 7. make referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit face-to-face activities whenever possible by using conference calls and IT solutions. <p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.
Managing Judges' ROTA	ROTA Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assigns judges to courtrooms by inputting information into CIS 2. receives documents 3. meets with judges. 	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.
Document receipt, validation, and action Supreme Court and Probate Court	Justice Officer 2, 3, 4 & 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review documents received directly from clients 2. review documents with clients 3. provide advice to clients. 	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.

Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of Mitigation
File Clerk Duties	Justice Officer 1 or 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Retrieve court files for judges, court staff, parties, and lawyers File court files and documents for judges, court staff, parties, and lawyers 	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.
All Staff responding to and assisting court users (for example: FLIP Clerk)	Justice Officer 2 or 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide referrals, legal information provide/review/ receive documents for filing give directions, swear/affirm documents, receive identification 	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.
Scheduling	Justice Officer 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Receive adjournment slips schedule matters in presence of parties, lawyers receive/review documents 	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering.

Courtroom with Accused/Witness Present

Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of Mitigation
Swearing or affirming Witness	Justice Officer 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Handling a holy book or eagle feather (in protective wool case) administer oath or affirmation by reading from handbook with witness in courtroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witness may exercise option to affirm Witness may bring own Holy Book or sacred item Holy Books may be stored in plastic Ziploc Bag which can be sanitized after each use Eagle Feather Case may be wrapped in a plastic sheet which can be sanitized after each use Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering or sanitize after use. Sanitize witness box between individual people. Sanitize keyboards, etc. Refer to COVID-19 Cleaning Requirements To Support Recovery Plan

Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of Mitigation
			<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing
Distributing documents and exhibits to judge, parties, counsel and witnesses	Justice Officer 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute documents to parties in courtroom. Handle, label and transfer exhibits among participants (both documents and items) during court proceedings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents should be provided to the court in advance, if possible enough copies for the witnesses, parties, counsel, and the judge to each have own copy Document copies and exhibits can be placed on a central document/exhibit table for people to obtain copies themselves while adopting the practice of approaching the table one at a time to maintain physical distancing When an exhibit is needed for a witness, the same approach can be adopted at the witness stand Water jugs will not be available in the courtroom during court hearings. Counsel, parties and witnesses are permitted in bring their own water in clear plastic bottles that are no larger than 1 litre in volume. Sheriffs will provide water for an in-custody accused person. <p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing

Document Handling			
Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of Mitigation
General Document Handling	All staff	Filing, opening mail, distributing documents to judges, co-workers throughout courthouse.	<p>Refer to COVID-19 Paper Handling Protocol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid using shared items (e.g. pens) or use disposable covering. Sanitize mail/filing areas/in and out trays. <p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing

Routine Staff Activity (No public present)			
Task	Court Officer	Activity	Type of PPE/Mitigation
General Staff Interactions	All staff	Staff contact within courthouse	<p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices; physical distancing; workstation sanitizing after each transaction; workplace cleansing • Avoid using shared items or use disposable items • It is best practice to not share food at the workplace. If necessary, have one person separate the food into individual servings to reduce common touch areas. • Caution is recommended if eating food at workstations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do not work while eating at desk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not handle any documents while eating and then pass them to people. ▪ Do not go over case files that someone else has touched while eating ○ Do not eat in areas where the surfaces cannot be readily cleaned (i.e., front counters). ○ Do not eat if unable to practice good hand hygiene before and after eating <p><u>Wash hands, eat, wash hands again, work.</u></p>
Kitchen Use	All staff	Staff utilizing kitchen facilities within courthouse facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Cleaning Requirements to Support Recovery Plan <p>No PPE required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow good hand hygiene /sanitization practices • physical distancing • Avoid using shared utensils • Limit staff numbers using kitchen at any one time. • Where possible relocate/remove seats/tables to achieve 6ft physical distancing Thoroughly wash kitchen utensils in detergent before and after use. • Utilize disposable paper towels. • In-bought food to be sealed in containers and labelled. • Refrigerators/microwaves/eating surfaces/sinks/taps to be cleaned periodically throughout the day.

Staff and Management Duties			
Task	Staff	Activity	Type of PPE/Mitigation
All working in the courthouse	All	General Safety Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-screen using the Public Health self-assessment tool to determine if ill or experiencing COVID-like or cold/flu symptoms ▪ If symptomatic in the workplace, the person must immediately consult their supervisor for further instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Please visit https://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca/en for up-to-date information on COVID-19 symptoms ▪ Please visit https://novascotia.sharepoint.com/sites/thehub for updated information and FAQs from the Public Service Commission. ▪ Follow Public Health advice and all safe work procedures and signage. ▪ Regularly communicate with supervisor on any concerns and document in the Environment, Health and Safety Management (EHSM) System. ▪ Wear a non-medical mask (if preference) to offer additional protection to others, remembering that masks do not replace the need for physical distancing measures and hand washing.
General Management	CA EC10s	Supervise staff work; provide guidance to staff; staff meetings; liaise with judicial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit numbers of staff in meetings • conduct via telephone or video conference. <p>https://novascotia.sharepoint.com/sites/TheHub/SitePages/Guide-for-Managers---Exposure-Potential-Exposure-in-the-Workplace.aspx</p>
Public liaison	CA EC10s	Dealing directly with clients re service issues/complaints etc. Handling documents from clients.	<p>NOTE: The Department of Justice, Court Services and Sheriff Services each have internal OHS supports. Supervisors are directed to reach out to them for guidance on addressing any COVID-19 staffing issues. Supervisors are to contact their consultant at https://novascotia.sharepoint.com/sites/MyHR/Pages/Contact-US-Employees.aspx or by email pscafety@novascotia.ca</p> <p>if an employee is unwell at work, they should be isolated from others as quickly as possible and told to call 811. After that Public Health will do contact tracing and will contact supervisor if required. Public Health will walk all contacts through the appropriate process, including cleaning and who to inform.</p>

Court Services: COVID-19 Mitigation Practices and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidelines

BACKGROUND

The Courts of Nova Scotia have been operating under an Essential Services Model and limiting the number of people in the courthouses. The NS Courts now plan to increase operations and the number of matters requiring personal appearances by court-users will also increase.

These guidelines:

- are created by Court Services for use by court staff as safety measures to reduce COVID-19 risk for all court-users
- are under regular review as the knowledge about the COVID-19 virus continues to expand
- follow the advice offered by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer (OCMO) for Nova Scotia
- will be updated as required to reflect emerging best practices as determined by the OCMO

OBJECTIVES

- To detail appropriate mitigation practices for sanitation and hygienic safety
- To ensure the consistent application of guidelines
- To identify times when use of PPE is required and describe how to use PPE

STAFF SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

If a court officer or staff person become symptomatic in the workplace, that person **must** immediately consult their supervisor for further instruction.

- Please visit <https://when-to-call-about-covid19.novascotia.ca/en> for up-to-date information on COVID-19 symptoms
- Please visit <https://novascotia.sharepoint.com/sites/thehub> for updated information and FAQs from the Public Service Commission.

COURT-USERS BEING SCREENED AT ENTRY

Sheriffs Services are screening individuals who wish to enter the courthouses. Entrance will only be allowed for those who:

- work in the building,
- are participating in a court proceeding, or
- have an appointment.

No-one should enter a courthouse if

- they feel unwell and are exhibiting any of the symptoms of COVID-19, as identified by public health officials (see above).
- They have travelled outside NS or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 and have not self-isolated for at least 14 days prior to being screened

COURT USERS EXEMPTION

As part of people being screened for travel, a process for exemptions is being developed so that they can be addressed in advance with the presiding judge.

As of June 12, 2020, under [the Order of the Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection Act](#), section 3.6 provides:

Notwithstanding Clause 3.1, individuals who are engaged in a legal proceeding in Nova Scotia, whether the accused, victim, witness or party in such proceeding, may enter Nova Scotia for participation in the legal proceeding if the individual:

- (a.) self-isolates/self-quarantines for the period of time they are in Nova Scotia other than when they are in court; and
- (b.) complies with the requirements of physical distancing as set out in Clause 6.1 while in Nova Scotia.

Section 6.1 provides:

6.1 All persons present and residing in Nova Scotia must maintain physical distancing of two metres or six feet and keep gatherings to a maximum of 10 persons indoors and outdoors.

If an essential court participant is traveling from out of province, they are responsible to self-identify and advise the court in advance. Counsel are required to discuss these participants with the court to determine if an exemption to the requirement to isolate/quarantine may be granted and instructions on how to isolate/quarantine for remainder of time in Nova Scotia.

Other processes may include:

- Essential court participants must be screened on entry for illness (this may include temperature checks if directed by Public Health)
- Essential court participants must only attend court and isolate otherwise
- Staff must support the essential court participant in identifying and appropriately using personal protective equipment (PPE)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The current guidelines to prevent spread of the COVID-19 virus are to:

- **stay informed**, be prepared, and follow public health advice
- follow **proper hand hygiene** (handwashing and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) and respiratory etiquette (sneezing/coughing into one's elbow)
- practice **physical distancing** of 2 metres (6 feet) between people (or separation by a physical barrier if physical distancing cannot be maintained)
- **avoid** touching one's face, mouth, nose, or eyes
- use a **non-medical mask** (NMM) in situations when exposure to crowded public spaces is unavoidable and consistent physical distancing is not possible.

- The safe and appropriate use of a NMM is an additional public health practice that can be taken to protect others, as outlined in the Nova Scotia COVID-19 Public Health [Guidelines for staying healthy](#) (also see [PPE section](#) below).
- References to PPE face masks in these guidelines refer to medical masks and not NMM.
- **increase cleaning** of common, high touch surfaces
 - e.g. work areas, counter tops, telephone handsets, copier/scanner touchpads, debit/credit card terminals, in-trays/out-trays, pens, staplers etc) in one's personal workspace
 - use a disinfecting cleaning product
 - minimum of twice a day and more often as required
- **stay at home**
 - when symptomatic or ill
 - as much as possible if at high risk of severe illness
- **reduce** personal non-essential travel

COURTHOUSE DYNAMICS: COURTROOM & COUNTER PROCESSES

These guidelines are intended to operate in tandem with government information and guidelines and to support individual choices made on personal safety approaches (for example, using a NMM).

There are proven methods to tackle reducing the risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus that are more effective than simply using PPE. Physical distancing is the foundation for the risk mitigation strategy. The following provides considerations and examples that should be applied in **each location within the courthouse** where the judiciary and court staff will come into contact with each other and/or with court-users:

- changes in work practices, for example:
 - increase interactions/communications by phone or computer with lawyers, media, and the public
 - enhance document drop-off processes
- changes in courtroom practices, for example:
 - Water jugs will not be provided for court hearings. Counsel, parties and witnesses are permitted in bring their own water in clear plastic bottles that are no larger than 1 litre in volume. Sheriffs will provide water for an in-custody accused person.
 - ensuring additional cleaning occurs after each witness leaves the witness box or area (following new COVID-19 additional cleaning procedures) so a witness can remove a NMM to give testimony
 - lawyers can make extra copies of documents and provide in advance so that each participant has a copy
 - Document copies and exhibits can be placed on a central document/ exhibit table for people to obtain copies themselves while adopting the practice of approaching the table one at a time to maintain physical distancing

- environmental adaptations within locations, for example:
 - paths marked on the floors of halls/courtrooms to maintain distancing
 - provision of sufficient trash cans
- physical or structural changes: work is underway to review each courthouse to consider what, if any, changes can occur, for example: glass or plexiglass barriers

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may include:

- Nitrile gloves
- Medical face masks (if physical distancing is not possible or practical)
- Face shield (may be used in place of non-medical masks)

The use of PPE is the 'last line of defence' and the least effective means of protection against the virus. Usage should not be viewed as the starting point for disease prevention. Staff should exercise professional judgment recognizing that PPE may be required if the preferred mitigation options in the tables below *cannot* be done.

There may be circumstances of individual legal proceedings where attendees will be asked to wear masks, examples include but are not limited too:

- Vulnerable populations that have self identified as such for health reasons
- Witnesses/parties/etc. who have come into the province to participate in a legal proceeding and are exempted from the 14 days self isolation

While courts will not be providing masks to counsel, a limited supply will be made available for individuals such as self represented litigants who may need them.

When it is determined that the use of PPE is appropriate, staff **must**:

- review the [correct procedures](#) with respect to fitting, wearing, removing and safe disposal of this equipment
- consult with their supervisor if they have any questions

The use of NMM is always available as a personal safety choice. Currently [as of May 25, 2020], the NS Government COVID-19 Public Health [Guidelines for staying healthy](#) include the following instructions regarding the use of non-medical masks:

Even if you don't have symptoms, you should consider wearing a non-medical mask when you're in places where it's hard to maintain social distancing ...

Using a mask alone isn't enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19. You should also make sure to keep your hands clean, follow cough and sneeze etiquette, practise social distancing and stay home if you're feeling sick.

Guidance for wearing non-medical masks may change as Public Health continues to monitor the local spread of COVID-19.

HOW TO USE PPE CORRECTLY

FIRST & ALWAYS

Wash your hands with soap and water* before putting on and after removing any PPE

- Wet your hands with warm running water.
- Add soap and scrub for 20 seconds: Wash backs, thumbs, between fingers, and under nails.
- Rinse off soap under running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel.
- Turn off tap with a towel.

*Soap and water are the best cleaning option when you follow the above steps.
When unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

MEDICAL FACE MASK

View: How to put on / take off mask: <https://vimeo.com/403797242>

- Before touching the mask, **wash your hands** with soap and water, or when unavailable, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Inspect** the mask:
 - Check for tears or holes.
 - Orient which side is the top side (where the metal strip is).
 - Ensure the proper side of the mask faces outwards (the coloured side).
- **Place** the mask to your face.
 - Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck (or loop elastics over ears)
 - Pinch the metal strip or stiff edge of the mask so it molds to the shape of your nose.
 - Pull down the mask's bottom so it covers your mouth and your chin
 - Fit snug to face and below chin.
- **Wash hands again** with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Avoid touching the mask while wearing it;**
 - if you do, clean your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **After use**, take off the mask;
 - remove the elastic loops from behind the ears
 - keep the mask away from your face and clothes to avoid touching potentially contaminated surfaces of the mask.
- **Discard** the mask in a closed, lined bin immediately after use.
- **Replace** the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp or dirty with secretions.
 - Masks are usually single use only.
- **Wash your hands** after touching or discarding the mask – with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

INFORMATION ON NON-MEDICAL MASKS

The NS Government refers to the federal information and guidelines for using NMMs:

Learn about [choosing and how to wear a non-medical mask](#).

DISPOSABLE GLOVES

Information from NS Provincial Covid-19 Supplies Team

During the COVID-19 pandemic, gloves are not required as standard PPE. The Infection Protection and Control team at NSHA advises that wearing 1 pair of gloves and moving from task to task, from one place to another can increase the risk of spreading germs, much like moving about with unclean hands. Good hand hygiene is the most important method to prevent transmission of germs.

For Health Canada's hand hygiene infographic visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands.html>

Gloves are required for some situations, such as when dealing with chemical hazards or bodily fluids. Consult with your Occupational Health and Safety Department for more information.

Disposable Gloves - Limitations

Staff should note that personal use of gloves can create a false sense of security and may help spread the virus. This can happen as employees unintentionally touch something or someone contaminated with the virus with their gloved hand and then touch their face or surfaces with their gloves.

Consequently, *it cannot be stressed enough*, gloves are not a replacement for proper and frequent hand hygiene (i.e., hand washing or hand sanitizer when hand washing facilities are not readily available).

If gloves and face mask are used, put the gloves on after the mask and remove them first.

- Wash and dry hands before putting on gloves.
- Do not touch your face while wearing gloves.
- To remove gloves,
 - pinch one glove at the wrist and peel it off to remove it inside out.
 - Hold it in gloved hand, sliding ungloved hand between the wrist and second glove.
 - Roll glove down hand and fold into the glove you are holding.
- Gloves are single use only.
 - Discard the gloves in a closed, lined bin immediately after use.
 - Wash hand

COVID-19 CLEANING REQUIREMENTS TO SUPPORT RECOVERY PLAN

The Courts of Nova Scotia are transitioning from a modified essential services model to a safe services model. The number of in-person hearings will be increasing when they can be conducted safely according to established protocols to protect against the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The following additional cleaning requirements support the Recovery Plan.

The responsibilities are divided between Court Services and TIR in the Table on the next page. These are to be monitored daily by the Court Administrator or designate at each courthouse.

DOORWAYS

- **Provide wipes or tissues** beside doors that must be kept closed to allow them to be opened without contact by hand.
- **Provide lined waste disposal bins** for disposal of used tissues.

FRONT COUNTER SANITIZING

- Ensure **sanitizing every two hours** of counters and plexiglass partitions.

IN-COURT SANITIZING

- **Assign someone (cleaner or Court Services' staff) to:**
 - Disinfect the **touchpoints** at the **witness stand** between witnesses, including:
 - microphone,
 - horizontal surfaces of the stand,
 - armrests and handrails
- Supplies will be provided for counsel to disinfect the **barristers' tables**
- Seating and other areas will be sanitized when used, e.g. between chambers hearings

WORKSTATION SANITIZING

- Advise staff that each is responsible to sanitize own workstation at the beginning and end of every use or shift ("workstation" includes counter, computer keyboard, mouse, cash trays, etc.)

BUILDING AND BATHROOM SANITIZING

- Ensure that **regular and enhanced sanitizing Protocols** are being followed
- **Reinforce the new requirements** that increased frequency of cleaning must be done in public bathrooms, waiting rooms, interview rooms, elevators, stair rails, handrails, etc.
- Ensure sanitizing every two hours of public bathrooms and staff bathrooms

HAND SANITIZER AVAILABILITY

- Make **hand sanitizer** available at the following locations;
 - Inside courtrooms
 - building entrance, elevator lobbies, and outside courtrooms,
 - any other locations where contact with high-touch surfaces is likely and soap and water are not readily available.

PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA

INFORMATION ON SURVIVAL OF CORONAVIRUSES ON SURFACES

Preliminary information on COVID-19 suggests that the virus may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days depending on different conditions, such as the temperature, type of surface and/or humidity of the environment.

Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated, including:

- tables
- electronics
- faucet handles
- handrails
- countertops
- cabinet handles
- doorknobs
- light switches
- elevator buttons

Mail shipped within or from outside of Canada could also be contaminated. However, because mail generally takes days or weeks to be delivered, and are shipped at room temperature, the risk of spread is low.

Health Canada advises twice daily cleaning, but the enhanced measures in place are more frequent on the spaces identified in the Table (more than twice a day) depending on use.

Distribution of Cleaning Responsibilities		
Enhanced cleaning with respect to COVID-19 <i>in addition to</i> routine cleaning		
Responsibility	Court Services	TIR
Doorways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wipes made available in monitored locations throughout courthouse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twice daily as per TIR document Cleaning Procedures with COVID-19
Front Counter Sanitizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workstation (staff side) counter and plexiglass • debit machine between clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than twice a day, client side
In Court Sanitizing*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinfect the touchpoints at the witness stand between witnesses, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • microphone, • horizontal surfaces of the stand, • armrests and handrails • Supplies will be provided for counsel to disinfect the barristers' tables • Seating and other areas will be sanitized when used, between chambers hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after hours daily

Distribution of Cleaning Responsibilities		
Enhanced cleaning with respect to COVID-19 <i>in addition to</i> routine cleaning		
Responsibility	• Court Services	TIR
Workstation Sanitizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • court staff to sanitize at the beginning and end of every use and as required 	
Building Sanitizing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twice daily as per TIR document Cleaning Procedures with Covid19
Public Bathroom Sanitizing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than twice a day and after hours
Hand Sanitizing Availability**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • made available in monitored locations throughout courthouse, including courtrooms 	

* Judiciary will need to be mindful of additional time for cleanings (between each witness giving testimony, for example) in assessing the estimated time-needed/duration of a court proceeding for scheduling purposes.

** The options of hand sanitizing stations and free-standing hand washing stations were investigated. For reasons of safety, security and supply, these options are not recommended. Hand sanitizer will be made available at entranceways and in courtrooms in areas where they can be both monitored and readily available to court-users when a bathroom is not a practical option. Court services will use existing procurement processes to maintain supply of hand sanitizer's and tissues.

COURT SERVICES – COVID-19 PAPER HANDLING PROTOCOL

The courts throughout the province are now expanding services and adopting a safe services model. This transition ends the temporary use of a system of E-filing and will initially cause a higher than usual volume of paper filing but should gradually return to normal volumes in due course.

There is no evidence to suggest that handing mail is a significant risk factor for being exposed to respiratory viruses including the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The likelihood of an infected person contaminating documents is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.

The following guidance is offered to court staff:

1. After handling documents/packages/mail, the best protection is to thoroughly wash your hands and avoid touching your face.
2. Work surfaces that have come into contact with the documents etc., should be thoroughly cleaned with sanitizing wipes or soap and water.
3. Other office equipment that may have been used when handling documents, e.g. staplers, pens, stamps etc., should also be thoroughly cleaned with sanitizing wipes.
4. Care should be taken after handling documents by touching other surfaces before hand-cleansing. In this way, any risk of cross-contamination is reduced.
5. Hands should be thoroughly washed after sanitizing/cleaning work surfaces and/or other office equipment.
6. Court staff should not use gloves since this can give users a false sense of protection and lead to complacency. In addition, users can cross-contaminate surfaces or infect themselves by touching themselves while wearing gloves or touch the gloves when removing them.
7. Court staff is reminded that they must always follow current health directives.
8. Further FAQs relating to COVID-19 may be found at:
<https://novascotia.sharepoint.com/sites/TheHub/SitePages/FAQ-For-Employees.aspx>

Information prepared March 27, 2020. Prepared by Allan Cole (updated June 15, 2020)



NS Sheriff Services
COVID-19 General Operational Plan
Safety in the Workplace

July 03, 2020

(Updated October 21, 2020)

Prepared by Deputy Chief Lindsay Hernden

NS Sheriff Services

HRM Operations

Purpose:

Plans are now underway across Nova Scotia to re-open Courts to deal specifically with, but not limited to, in-custody matters. The overarching priority is that this initiative be in step with Public Health guidelines to ensure a work environment that is safe for employees, persons in custody (PIC) and the public required to attend Court.

It will be the role of Sheriff Services to conduct appropriate planning to meet that objective, and to further prepare for a return to pre-COVID operating status where and when required. In order to achieve this goal Sheriff Managers are expected to work closely with their respective Judiciary's and Court Administrators (CAs) to address their respective needs at the Justice Centre.

Safe Work Environment:

Sheriff Services has prepared a personal protective equipment (PPE) protocol and a frequently asked question (FAQ) guideline to ensure that Sheriff Officers are informed and appropriately equipped to safely meet every aspect of their work.¹ In addition, an on-line PPE presentation has been prepared for Sheriff Officers to ensure that they are fully cognizant of the protocol and the related mandatory and optional PPE available to them.² Sheriff Services has instituted a robust provincial tracking process for PPE use and its replenishment at each Justice Centre; we will continue to source product as required. Sheriff Services has revised work schedules to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure amongst staff.

In addition to the PPE protocols for identified work tasks, Sheriff Services staff will continue to adhere to the standard universal precautions when performing their duties. This includes physical distancing, hand hygiene (cough and sneeze etiquette), and sanitization of equipment and high touch work surfaces at a minimum of twice per day. It has been identified by the NS Health Authority that the use of non- medical masks is recommended where physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained. The use of procedural or surgical masks when in common public areas, courtrooms (unless otherwise directed by the Judiciary), or any other location where the public is present will be mandatory for Sheriff officers. All members of the public, lawyers, litigants, witnesses, media, support persons etc. will be required to wear a mask while in the above-mentioned locations. These are simple and effective methods to reduce exposure to and spread of COVID-19.

General Safety Strategies:

The objective of the following steps is to further reduce risks to the various stakeholders entering Justice Centres. The use of these strategies will be contingent upon consultation with your respective CAs and with approval of the Judiciary and are not intended to contradict direction provided by them.

These strategies are based upon the following assumptions:

- There are no Public health orders that keep employees from resuming work.
 - It has been determined that the service required cannot be performed by an employee working from home.
 - Enough employees are available to perform the work.
1. Sheriff Managers will identify those courtrooms that can provide sufficient physical distancing between parties (Sheriff Officers, PICs, court staff, Counsel and witnesses) to allow the courtroom to be used for hearings. This will be confirmed by physically measuring the space and must include input

¹ Sheriff Services FAQ & PPE Guidelines - I:\Sheriff Services SMT\COVID 19 Contingency\Directives & Messages\PPE

² PPE Video - I:\Sheriff Services\Webinars

from the CAs/Judiciary. This may require physically re-organizing the workspace by removing unnecessary items to meet physical distance requirements.

2. It would be prudent to conduct a “walk through” of the Justice Centre to identify those areas that will need a dedicated cleaning regimen due to high traffic, i.e. waiting areas, entrances to the building and courtrooms, witness box, door knobs, light switches, etc. A list of these high-risk locations/items would be helpful for cleaning services, and a regular cleaning schedule implemented.
3. Attention should be given to public restrooms for physical distancing, i.e. limiting number of stalls or sinks to maintain physical distancing.
4. Sheriff Managers should consider pedestrian flow through the courthouse and prepare a plan to promote physical distancing and reduce “crossing paths” of persons by utilizing available resources such as elevators, stairwell(s), entrances and exits.
5. Sheriff Staff can utilize a variety of measures to support universal precautions and pedestrian flow which may include signage, directional arrows, floor markings (two metre markings), identified seating arrangements and stanchions to direct or restrict movement of persons.³
6. Cleaning supplies should be made available to Counsel, court staff and witnesses to sanitize workspaces, waiting areas (remove magazines, papers), desks, etc., as they deem necessary.
7. Sheriff staff will minimize their personal contact with members of the court administration staff, and limit non-essential visits to other offices, common spaces or public areas.
8. Sheriff staff will immediately inform their Supervisor if they become symptomatic.
9. Sheriff Managers will ensure that staff are made aware of changes or precautions undertaken to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, i.e. PPE Guidelines, FAQ, PPE Video, and Safety in the Workplace Plan. This shall be reinforced by posting the information, convening return to duty meetings, and conveying frequent reminders during morning musters.

Witnesses Attending Court:

Sheriff Managers shall work with the CA and Judiciary to identify practices that will minimize the length of time a witness spends in a Justice Centre. The following may be considered:

- Scheduling the witness appearance; this is a matter between the Court/Crown/Counsel.
- Sheriffs should have a witness list available to them daily to speed the screening process.
- If possible, a witness should be screened and escorted directly to the appropriate courtroom and placed in designated seating.
- If that option is unavailable, a witness should wait outside the Courthouse with a means available to immediately contact them when called for court.
- If that option is unavailable (bad weather, no vehicle), the witness should be screened and escorted to a waiting room with an identified seating arrangement.
- It would be advisable for Counsel to interview and/or prepare witnesses outside of the Courthouse.
- Currently, courtrooms remain closed to the general public. Persons will not be allowed to attend court merely to show support. The exception is support personnel such as Victim Services.

³ PPE Signage - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/resources/>

General Practise - Guideline for Sheriff Officers:

1. Screening:

- Staff assigned to the entrance at a Justice Centre will adhere to the established screening guidelines as per Public Health recommendations. They include questioning persons seeking entry on both health and travel-related subject matter.
- Staff assigned to screening at Justice Centers will maintain physical distancing and they will wear a surgical or procedure mask while conducting this task.
- A daily witness list should be sought from court administration to facilitate this work where possible.
- Where possible, a list of judicial participants outside of the Nova Scotia Public Health Order or “Atlantic Bubble”, should be sought from PPS and/or court administration.
- Witnesses and other participants will be instructed to maintain physical distancing and will be placed at predetermined seats in waiting rooms or courtrooms based on physical distancing requirements.
- Those entering the Justice Centre will be required to use available hand sanitizer.
- Waiting areas and Courtrooms will be sanitized following use.
- If permissible, those persons required to attend court will have a scheduled attendance time and, where possible, be asked to wait outside the courthouse until called for their appearance.
- A person failing the screening process will be denied entry and the Sheriff staff will seek guidance from the presiding Judge on how to proceed based on the needs of the individual. Sheriffs will notify the Court Administrator.
- If the person is required by the presiding Judge to enter the Courthouse, they will be provided with PPE and will proceed through the access control point (ACP) if operational. They will then be escorted to a designated area. Designated areas used for this purpose will be sanitized after each use.

2. Access Control Point:

- ACPs will be operated with a minimum number of staff.
- Staff will wear appropriate PPE as described in the PPE protocol.
- Staff will maintain physical distancing from their peers while operating the ACP.
- ACPs will have hand sanitizer available for staff use.
- Persons passing through the ACP will be required to sanitize their hands.
- Staff will sanitize bins following use with provided cleaner.
- Staff will sanitize high touch surfaces throughout their shift with provided cleaner.

3. Cell Block:

- Only Sheriff Officers assigned to the cell block will gather in that location. While present, they will diligently exercise physical distancing from peers and PICs.

- Staff assigned to the cell block will screen arriving PICs as per Public Health guidelines and the requirements of Correctional Services.
- Staff assigned will wear appropriate PPE as per the PPE protocol when in the presence of a PIC.
- Only one PIC per cell will be allowed, and every effort will be made to keep PICs as far apart as physical possible while in cells.
- Restraints and cells will be immediately sanitized after use.

4. **Escorts / Court Appearances:**

- Sheriff Officers assigned to escort duty shall wear mandatory PPE when in direct contact (inside 6 feet/2 metres) with a PIC which includes masks, gloves and eye protection.
- Only one PIC will be escorted at a time. Sheriff Officers will maintain physical distancing of the PIC from others and will adopt a route to and from court that supports this requirement.
- Escort Officers will maintain standard procedures within the court to maintain public safety but also meet the needs for physical distancing from courtroom staff, lawyers and witnesses.
- Escort Officers will ensure that restraints are sanitized following the escort.
- Court Officers will wear the appropriate PPE as per the protocol when a PIC is present.
- Court Officers will be responsible for maintaining/enforcing physical distancing requirements for all persons in court as per the specific courtroom plan.
- Court Officers will ensure that the courtroom is sanitized following an appearance, i.e. seat locations for gallery, legal personnel, PIC bench, desktops, etc.

4. **Transport:**

- Staff assigned to transport duties will use PPE as per the PPE protocol when transporting PICs.
- If possible, staff can utilize the same vehicle daily.
- Staff will ensure that the cab of the transport vehicle is sanitized before and after use.
- Staff will ensure the transport vehicle compartments are sanitized before and after use.
- Staff will ensure that any restraints used for transports are sanitized following use.
- No more than 1 PIC will be placed in a travel compartment, and efforts will be made to keep PICs as far apart as physically possible on the truck when being boarded for travel.
- Transport staff will not remain at the Justice Centres to assist with the daily operations as was done previously. They will deliver and drop off the PIC(s) and vacate the building unless there is an exigent requirement for their assistance.

6. **Jury Selection:**

- Sheriff Inspectors or a designate(s) may be required to assist Court Administrators and Vendors in assessing (off-site) locations to conduct the jury selection process. This process will be in accordance with:
 - Nova Scotia Courts COVID-19 Recovery Plan and Guidelines June 2020
 - A Risk Management Matrix tool and

- Advice from the assigned OHS PSC consultant
- This process will identify the required mitigation strategies to ensure safe jury selection proceedings.
- Sheriff Inspector or designate(s) will, in consultation, with the Court Administrator and / or Jury Coordinator, ensure that appropriate PPE has been acquired to meet the anticipated needs for the jury selection process.
- All potential jurors will be notified to conduct a self-assessment / self-screening prior to attending the jury selection location as per: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/> and [Public Health self-assessment tool](#)
- Sheriffs will be responsible for the health and security screening of all persons participating in the jury selection process at the site. If a person is symptomatic upon initial screening at the entrance, the Sheriff must:
 - Direct the person to return home immediately
 - Direct the person to call **811** for further instruction
 - Advise the Jury Coordinator of situation
 - Advise the Sheriff Jury Manager
- Sheriffs will ensure all persons participating in the jury selection process will wear a non-medical mask / procedure or surgical mask while in designated public locations. Sheriffs will provide a mask where necessary.
- Sheriffs will monitor for and enforce appropriate physical distancing amongst participants in the jury selection process.
- If advised of a symptomatic individual Sheriffs must:
 - Immediately remove the person from the area and isolate from others
 - Contact **811** for further instruction
 - Direct person to return home
 - Advise Jury Coordinator of situation
 - Advise Sheriff Jury Manager of situation
- Sheriffs who are advised of any concerns and/or complaints from a participant in the jury selection process will inform the:
 - Sheriff Jury Manager of the complaint
 - The Sheriff Jury Manager will notify the Court Administrator for further action

7. **Jury Trial:**

- Sheriff Inspectors or a designate(s) may be required to assist Court Administrators in assessing their respective Courts to conduct the jury trial. This process will be in accordance with:
 - [Nova Scotia Courts COVID-19 Recovery Plan and Guidelines June 2020](#) using:
 - A Risk Management Matrix tool and
 - Advice from the assigned OHS PSC consultant
- This will identify whether the jury trial will proceed in the courthouse or continue in the jury selection location.
- The process will also identify mitigations to be put in place to ensure safe proceedings.
- Sheriff Inspector or designate(s) will, in consultation, with the Court Administrator ensure that appropriate PPE has been acquired to meet the anticipated needs for the jury trial process.
- All jury trial participants (jurors, staff, counsel and Sheriffs) will conduct a self-assessment / self-screening prior to attending the jury trial as per: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/> and [Public Health self-assessment tool](#)

- If symptomatic, they are not to attend the site and must contact the health authorities via 811 and notify the Jury Coordinator that they cannot attend.
- Sheriffs will be responsible for the health and security screening of all persons participating in the jury trial at the site. If a person is symptomatic upon initial screening at the entrance, the Sheriff must:
 - Direct the person to return home immediately
 - Direct the person to call **811** for further instruction
 - Advise the Jury Coordinator of situation
 - Advise the Sheriff Jury Manager
- Sheriffs will ensure all persons participating in the jury trial will wear a non-medical mask / procedure or surgical mask while in designated public locations. Sheriffs will provide a mask where necessary.
- Sheriffs will monitor for and enforce appropriate physical distancing amongst participants in the jury trial.
- If advised of a symptomatic individual Sheriffs must:
 - Immediately remove the person from the area and isolate from others
 - Contact **811** for further instruction
 - Direct person to return home
 - Advise Jury Coordinator of situation
 - Advise Sheriff Jury Manager of situation
- The presiding Judge after consultation with Public Health through the Court Administrator will determine if the jury trial will continue or not.
- If a positive test is identified the Court Administrator will liaise with Public Health to determine next steps for exposed persons and will advise the presiding Judge. Public Health will engage with all exposed persons on appropriate next steps required of them.
- Sheriffs who are advised of any concerns and/or complaints from a participant in the jury selection process will inform the:
 - Sheriff Jury Manager of the complaint
 - The Sheriff Jury Manager will notify the Court Administrator for further action

8. Jury Deliberation:

- Sheriffs will be responsible for the health and security screening of all persons participating in the jury deliberations at the site. If a jury member is symptomatic upon initial screening at the entrance, or at any point during deliberations, the integrity of the deliberation process must be maintained therefore the sworn Sheriff Jury Manager must:
 - Immediately remove the person from the area and isolate them
 - The presiding Justice will be advised of the situation first to adhere to legislative requirements. Await direction from the Court on next steps.
 - Advise the Jury Coordinator of situation
 - Ensure the Court Administrator is advised of situation
 - Contact 811 for further instruction
- The presiding Judge after consultation with Public Health through the Court Administrator will determine if the jury trial will continue or not.
- If a positive test is identified the Court Administrator will liaise with Public Health to determine next steps for exposed persons and will advise the presiding Judge. Public Health will engage with all exposed persons on appropriate next steps required of them.

- Sheriffs who are advised of any concerns and/or complaints from a participant in the jury selection process will inform the:
 - Sheriff Jury Manager of the complaint
 - The Sheriff Jury Manager will notify the Court Administrator for further action

Conclusion:

This document provides Sheriff Service Managers with various strategies to employ with two primary objectives in mind - to reduce the exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 and to create a safer workplace for Sheriff staff and those utilizing NS Justice Centres. These directions and prevention measures should be taken into consideration when preparing your plans for the resumption of operations at your facility with the cooperation of CAs and the Judiciary. They are not intended to supersede direction from the court and/or Public Health authorities.

For the latest information regarding COVID-19:

Nova Scotia Public Health <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

Health Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Public Health self-Assessment Tool - [Public Health self-assessment tool](#)

Mental Health resources:

Employee and family Assistance Program - [EFAP](#)

Office of Workplace mental Health - [Office of Workplace Mental Health](#)

PSC Health & Safety Information for Returning Employees

Before Returning

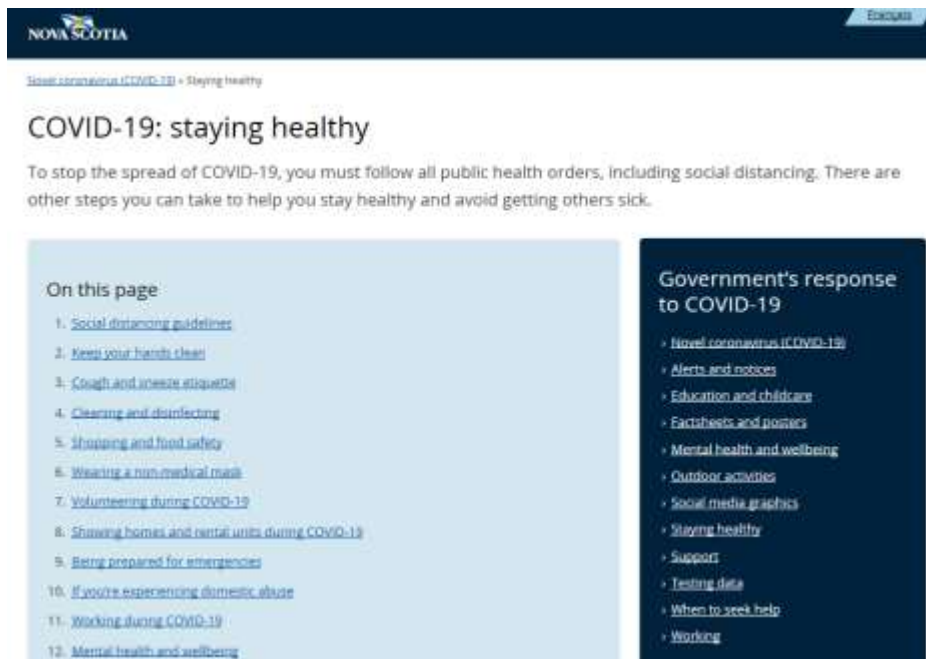
- Self-screen using the [Public Health self-assessment tool](#) and if you are ill or experiencing COVID-like or cold/flu symptoms, you **should not** return to work and should contact 811.
- Follow Public Health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation.
- Identify any equipment or supplies you need to return to the office, including computers, monitors, other accessories that you may have brought home to work remotely. Confirm with your manager once government-owned equipment has been returned and cleaned/disinfected.
- Keep in regular contact with your manager to advise of any concerns you may have and document in the [Environment, Health and Safety Management \(EHSM\) System](#).

When You Return

- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, and clean/disinfect frequently used surfaces.
- Maintain a distance of at least two metres and minimize prolonged contact with coworkers and clients.
- Wear a non-medical mask (if you choose) to offer additional protection to those around you, remember that masks **do not** replace the need for physical distancing measures and hand washing.
- Use telephone and video conferencing for meetings as much as possible. Do not organize or attend any in-person meeting involving more than 5 attendees.
- Limit unnecessary visits to other offices, common spaces or public areas, if necessary, maintain physical distance of two metres.
- Follow all safe work procedures and signage.

Public Health directives

(screenshot summary current to date in Header – link to this page for up-to-date detailed information can be found at [COVID-19: staying healthy](#))



Additional Resources

Mental Health Supports


- [EFAP](#) and the [Office of Workplace Mental Health](#)

For the latest information regarding COVID-19:

- Nova Scotia Public Health <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>
- Health Canada <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>
- World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Nova Scotia Public Health COVID-19 Symptoms List

Current to date above – to ensure most up-to-date information, see [Public Health self-assessment tool](#)



When to call 811 about COVID-19

Do you need to call 811 to be assessed for Covid-19 testing?

Do you have any one of the following symptoms?

- Fever (i.e. chills, sweats)
- Cough or worsening of a previous cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches
- Sneezing
- Nasal Congestion/runny nose
- Hoarse voice
- Diarrhea
- Unusual fatigue
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Red, purple or blueish lesions, on the feet, toes or fingers without clear cause

if you answer yes to one or more of these symptoms, please call 811 for further assessment by a nurse.

if you experience other symptoms that are a concern for you, call 811 to speak with a nurse.

Last Updated: 22 May 2020