



COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS AT NOVA SCOTIA COURTS WILL REMAIN IN PLACE DURING PHASE 5 REOPENING

Friday, Oct. 1, 2021

Effective Monday, Oct. 4, 2021, Nova Scotia will enter Phase 5 of the Province's reopening plan, which includes the easing of many public health measures.

In preparation for this next stage, the All Courts COVID-19 Recovery Committee consulted with Public Health and is recommending that the Courts' current COVID-19 restrictions remain in place, with some expanded capacity for in-person attendance.

For the foreseeable future, public access to courthouses will continue to be limited to those people who:

- work in the building;
- are directly involved with a court proceeding;
- have an appointment; or
- have approval from a judge to view a court proceeding in person.

To help maintain the open courts principle, members of the media are permitted to attend court in person, provided there is space available in the courtroom. The option to participate remotely by telephone or video will also continue.

As per the [May 27, 2021, Notice](#), masking will continue to be required in all public areas of courthouses. Disposable medical masks, rather than reusable cloth masks, are required for anyone making an in-person appearance in a courtroom, boardroom, jury room, or other enclosed space inside a courthouse. Sheriffs will provide a disposable medical mask to all witnesses, parties and defendants involved in an in-person court proceeding. Counsel is expected to provide their own, but supplies will be available, if necessary. Masking inside courtrooms is strongly encouraged but will be at the discretion of the presiding judge.

Effective Oct. 18, 2021, physical distancing requirements in courthouses and courtrooms will be reduced from two metres to one metre, allowing more people to attend court in person, provided the judge has approved in advance their request to attend.

Lexan barriers that were installed in the early months of the pandemic will remain in place for the foreseeable future, as will hand sanitizing stations and the availability of sanitizing wipes in courtrooms. Enhanced cleaning measures will continue until further notice for all high-touch surfaces in courthouses.

The [Operational Guidelines](#) for court-approved participants from outside Nova Scotia remain in place.

The All Courts COVID-19 Recovery Committee reminds all court participants that Public Health encourages everyone who is eligible to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The Recovery Committee will regularly assess the ongoing situation in Nova Scotia and across the country to determine when these court restrictions can be further eased. Any changes will be informed by advice from Public Health.

For more information about COVID-10 directives for each level of Court, please visit https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm.

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