



*SASKATCHEWAN COURTS*  
*COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER*  
2425 VICTORIA AVENUE,  
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, S4P 3V7

**NEWS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – February 2, 2006

**Tele-Bail Available in Saskatchewan**

Effective February 4, 2006, persons in police custody on weekends will now have the opportunity to have a judge conduct their bail hearings under a new, province-wide service called “Tele-Bail”.

Tele-Bail will be available between the hours of 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays when Provincial Court Judges will be available to conduct bail hearings by telephone. Generally, most bail hearings are done by judges during weekday court sittings. Previously, people taken into police custody on weekends who wanted a bail hearing in front of a Provincial Court judge had to wait until Monday or make special arrangements.

“This expanded weekend service provided by the Tele-Bail Judges helps provide equal access to court related services for citizens of Saskatchewan wherever resident in the province.” said Chief Judge Seniuk of the Saskatchewan Provincial Court.

Instituting Tele-Bail may also help reduce the volume of cases heard in court on Mondays, which are typically busy days due to arrests occurring over the weekend.

When a person is detained in police custody, the Criminal Code requires that he or she appear in front of a Justice of the Peace or a Judge “as soon as possible” or within 24 hours. Before this program, if the police did not release the accused, he or she could ask for a bail hearing in front of a Justice of the Peace or wait until the next regular court sitting for a hearing in front of a Judge. Tele-Bail now expands the accused person’s options to have a bail hearing before a judge on the weekend.

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For more information:  
Colleen Schmidt  
Saskatchewan Courts Communications Officer  
(306) 787-9602

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