



COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH FOR SASKATCHEWAN

November 19, 2020

Court postpones jury trials as transmission rate of COVID-19 increases

Saskatchewan's Court of Queen's Bench is postponing all jury trials scheduled to begin between now and the end of December, as a result of the worsening COVID-19 situation in the province.

Jury trials require the participation of many members of the public from a fairly broad geographic area, particularly during the selection process. As well, it requires more people to be physically present in the courtroom each day for the duration of the trial. These and other factors weighed in favour of the postponement.

"As an essential service, it's important that the public continues to have access to the critical and necessary services the Court provides," noted Martel D. Popescul, Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench. "However, the Court recognizes the public health risks posed by COVID-19 and is committed to taking the steps necessary to safeguard the health of everyone in our courtrooms and court facilities."

To that end, Popescul said the Court would continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in the province and adapt its operations to the changing circumstances as needed.

After first being postponed in the spring with the outbreak of the pandemic, jury trials resumed in September at off-site locations and with strict adherence to physical distancing and other public health protocols. Four jury trials have proceeded in that time.

There were an additional four jury trials scheduled for the remainder of 2020. Those will now be spoken to on the date originally set for the trial to begin. Accused individuals can re-elect trial by judge alone (in which case the trial would proceed in the scheduled time frame), or have the matter adjourned to a date in the new year. These adjournments will receive rescheduling priority from the Court.

For more information:

Dawn Blaus
Courts Communication Officer
306-533-1114