



Courts of Saskatchewan Communications Office
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March 16, 2020

Saskatchewan Courts respond to COVID-19

Saskatchewan's courts are actively responding to the COVID-19 situation in an effort to both stem the spread of the virus and maintain operations to the extent possible.

Each of Saskatchewan's three courts faces very different operational issues in responding to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Watch the COVID-19 Update webpage for each court (at end of this update) to keep up to date.

Court of Queen's Bench

Directive in relation to Child Protection Chambers Proceedings in the Judicial Centres of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina as of March 16, 2020

The Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench is committed to taking the steps necessary to safeguard the health of everyone in our courtrooms and court facilities while ensuring access to justice, upholding the rule of law, and continuing court operations as effectively and efficiently as possible.

As such, in response to the most recent information available concerning the public health risks posed by novel coronavirus (COVID-19), Chief Justice M. D. Popescul has issued this directive in relation to Child Protection Chamber matters in the Court of Queen's Bench judicial centres of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

The application of this direction to Child Protection Chamber matters is subject to evolving information concerning the virus. Everything included in the direction below builds upon the postponement of Child Protection Chamber matters during the week of March 16 to 20, 2020, set out in the court's earlier announcement on Sunday, March 15, 2020.

Effective immediately, all Child Protection Chamber matters appearing in the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench will be governed and limited by the following direction. This direction is obviously based upon the Court of Queen's Bench's desire to do all that is possible to act preventatively and proactively to avoid or limit the spread of COVID-19, while at the same time providing a principled approach to the provision of essential judicial services.

Prince Albert Judicial Centre

- Child Protection Chamber matters previously scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020, in the judicial centre of Prince Albert are scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2020, and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; 12:30 p.m.; and 2:00 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the new date and times.
- Until further notice, all other Child Protection Chamber matters scheduled in the judicial centre of Prince Albert shall be scheduled on a Monday, other than a statutory holiday and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; and 12:30 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the date and times.

Regina Judicial Centre

- Child Protection Chamber matters previously scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020, in the judicial centre of Regina are scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2020, and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; 12:30 p.m.; and 2:00 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the new date and times.
- Until further notice, all other Child Protection Chamber matters scheduled in the judicial centre of Regina shall be scheduled on a Tuesday and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the date and times.

Saskatoon Judicial Centre

- Child Protection Chamber matters previously scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2020, in the judicial centre of Saskatoon are scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2020, and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; 12:30 p.m.; and 2:00 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the new date and times.
- Until further notice, all other Child Protection Chamber matters scheduled in the judicial centre of Saskatoon shall be scheduled on a Tuesday and shall be set at staggered times of 10:00 a.m.; 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. The Local Registrar in consultation with counsel for the Ministry, shall set the hearing schedule for the Child Protection Chamber matters and notify the parties accordingly of the date and times.

Effective immediately and until further notice, all participants in regularly scheduled Child Protection Chamber matters are required to attend by phone as follows:

- Ministry lawyers, lawyers representing a party, the chief of a Band, the chief's designate or the agency, if any, that is providing family services to the members of the child's band, or the representative of the Indigenous governing body acting on behalf of the Indigenous group, community or people to which the child belongs, as the case may be, shall participate by telephone conference call as directed by the Local Registrar.
- Parents, care providers, and persons of sufficient interest wishing to participate in the hearing are expected to be available by phone at the time set for the commencement of their chambers matter until they are called. The Local Registrar will call them at the phone number set out in their address for service unless the participant makes arrangements with the local registrar to be contacted at another number.

Until further notice, Ministry workers or supervisors shall not be required to be in attendance during Child Protection Chamber matters, either on the conference call or in the hearing room. However, they shall be available at the time of the hearing by telephone in the event the presiding judge determines their appearance was required during the hearing of the matter.

In the event a participant appears in Court during a Child Protection Chamber matter, that participant shall maintain a safe social distance from other participants following the directions of the Chief Medical Officer for the Province of Saskatchewan and any additional directions given by the presiding judge. Information related to COVID 19 can be found on the Provincial Government's website at: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca>.

Contact information for the Judicial Centres of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina:

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Chief Justice M.D. Popescul

For more information, please watch the COVID-19 Update webpage for each court:

- Court of Appeal: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/index.php/home/court-of-appeal/covid-19>
- Court of Queen's Bench: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/index.php/home/court-of-queen-s-bench/covid-19-update>
- Provincial Court: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/index.php/home/provincial-court/covid-19-update>