



Courts of Saskatchewan Communications Office  
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March 22, 2020

## **Provincial Court of Saskatchewan Notice to Court Users and the Public**

This Notice replaces the Court's previous Notices respecting COVID-19 issued on March 15 and March 17, 2020.

The Provincial Court of Saskatchewan is reducing court operations to protect the health and safety of all Court users and help contain the spread of COVID-19, while maintaining meaningful access to the Court for those with urgent matters.

### **Access to Court Facilities**

Effective immediately, access to Provincial Court court houses in Saskatchewan is restricted to only those persons necessary to the proceedings before the Court, which includes counsel, litigants, accused, witnesses, support workers, treatment court workers, and members of the media. Court managers and deputy sheriffs will exercise discretion to admit other members of the public whose entry is deemed crucial.

### **People showing COVID-19 symptoms**

Anyone experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms or who has been advised to self-isolate should **NOT** attend the court house. Everyone in that category with a scheduled court appearance, including those who have been subpoenaed for court, must immediately call the [appropriate Court office](#) or the local provincial prosecutions office for instruction.

### **Telephone Appearances**

Crown and defense counsel have blanket permission to appear by telephone on **all matters EXCEPT trials and preliminary hearings** until further notice.

Counsel do not need to seek approval from the presiding judge to appear by phone, but must advise the [court office](#) of the telephone number where they may be contacted. The sooner this information is relayed, the more efficient the Court is able to be.

*Defense counsel* must notify the court office of:

- the time of the appearance,
- courtroom,
- phone number,
- name of client, and
- what they anticipate will happen (e.g.: adjournment, show cause proceeding, consent release, attendance requested to be waived, etc.).

*Crown counsel* must notify the court office of:

- the time of the appearance, and
- the courtroom in which they wish to appear.

If Crown counsel is not appearing on all matters on the docket, they must provide the court office with a list of matters on which they are appearing.

### **Circuit Court Appearances**

All circuit court locations are closed until after May 31, 2020.

*Docket court proceedings* at circuit court will be adjourned to dates past May 31, 2020.

Adjournment dates will be [posted on the website](#) and outside of the court facility.

Where an accused does not have a lawyer, the matter will be placed on the docket for the adjourned date. The accused person does NOT have to contact the Court, but MUST appear on the adjourned-to date.

*Trials and preliminary hearings* will be adjourned to dates after May 31, 2020. The reason for the adjournment will be clearly stated on the record and endorsed on the Information. If counsel believes an in-custody matter should proceed, arrangements must be made in advance of the scheduled date to have the matter put before a judge. The application will be heard by telephone.

If you do not have a lawyer helping you for your *trial or preliminary hearing*, you need to contact the [Court office responsible](#) for the circuit court before the originally scheduled date. Staff will assist you.

*Bail hearings and sentencing matters* for in-custody accused will proceed by telephone and video-conferencing at the local **permanent court point**, unless the Court orders otherwise.

Counsel who have reached a resolution on matters that have been adjourned may ask that the matter be brought forward and dealt with by phone and at the discretion of the presiding judge.

## **Permanent Court Locations**

All 13 permanent Provincial Court locations will remain open.

### **CRIMINAL MATTERS – IN-CUSTODY ACCUSED**

The scheduling and hearing of in-custody *criminal trials, preliminary hearings, sentencings, and bail hearings* will proceed unless adjourned by the Court on its own motion or on application by the accused or the Crown.

*Bail hearings and sentencing matters* for in-custody accused will proceed by telephone and/or video unless the Court orders otherwise.

### **CRIMINAL MATTERS – NON-CUSTODY ACCUSED**

#### *Non-custody docket*

All matters will be adjourned to dates after May 31, 2020. Adjournment dates will be [posted on the website](#) and outside the court house.

Docket matters already scheduled will be spoken to on the scheduled date and time. Counsel are reminded to arrange any telephone appearances with as much notice as possible.

Accused persons without counsel do NOT need to appear or contact the Court for *docket appearances*. The matter will be spoken to on the date currently scheduled, and a bench warrant will issue to preserve jurisdiction of the Court with the warrant held to the adjourned-to date. You MUST appear in Court on the adjourned-to date.

Docket size will be monitored when usual operations resume to ensure it remains reasonable.

#### *Pleas and resolutions*

Counsel who have reached a plea or other resolution on matters that have been adjourned, may request that the matter be brought forward and dealt with by phone and at the discretion of the presiding judge. Accused can appear by phone for purposes of sentencing at the discretion of the presiding judge and if prior arrangements are made.

#### *Non-custody trials and preliminary hearings*

All non-custody trials and preliminary hearings are adjourned. The reason for the adjournment will be clearly stated on the record and endorsed on the Information. If counsel believes a non-custodial matter should proceed, arrangements must be made in advance of the scheduled trial/preliminary hearing date to have the matter put before a judge. The application will be heard by telephone.

*Counsel Case Management conferences* will proceed by telephone. Case management is vital to ensuring the Court is prepared to manage the backlog when regular operations resume.

Adjournment dates will be [posted on the website](#) and outside the court house.

### **Child Protection Matters**

Applications with respect to urgent Child Protection matters can proceed at Provincial Court permanent locations. Local judges will determine whether and how hearings will take place.

### **Provincial Tickets**

All tickets and trials requiring your court appearance at all court locations (including Traffic Safety Court) between March 23 and May 31, 2020 will be adjourned. You need to exercise one of the following options:

- You may be able to make a voluntary payment. [Payments can be made online](#), by mail to the Fine Collection Branch, Box 5030, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3T9, or by telephone at (306) 787-7821 or toll-free at 1-888-935-5555.
- Contact the [local court office](#) by phone for time to pay extensions, time to pay requests and to enter not guilty pleas.
- Tickets will be adjourned to dates 10 weeks or more from your original court date and you will need to appear at that time. You will be able to refer to the Court's website for your adjourned-to date.

If you have any questions regarding your ticket please call the relevant [Provincial Court office](#).

### **Small Claims**

All Small Claims trials and case management conferences scheduled between now and May 31, 2020, are adjourned. Parties will be contacted by the court office and new dates will be provided for your Small Claims proceeding.

Small Claims documents can be filed with the Court by mail or by placing them in a drop box provided in the lobby of the court house for this purpose.

You will need to provide full contact information. After your documents have been reviewed a clerk will contact you and advise of next steps or whether revisions are required.

## **Bylaw Courts**

All stand-alone Bylaw Courts will be closed until May 31, 2020. Contact the local municipal office to discuss the rescheduling of your matter.

## **Public Health Requirements**

Court users are advised that cleaning protocols have been increased inside courtrooms as well as in secure and common areas of court facilities. Everyone attending court facilities must follow recommended handwashing and hand sanitizer practices.

All court users are required to follow social distancing protocols, keeping 2 metres of space between themselves and others.

The number of people permitted in any courtroom or area of the Court will be in accordance with the current Public Health Order concerning the size of gatherings. As of this date, March 22, 2020, that size is 25.

The Court will post further information as it becomes available, so please continue to check the Provincial Court COVID-19 Update on our website for updates.

*Chief Judge J.A. Plemel*

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 to keep up to date.

- 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>