



Courts of Saskatchewan Communications Office
2425 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 4W6
Tel: 306-787-9602 Cell: 306-533-1114

March 15, 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 to keep up to date on these and future responses.

Please see the following for more detail from each Court, including important postponement announcements related to jury trials and child protection chambers and filing direction from the Court of Queen's Bench and appearance guidance from all levels of court.

Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan is actively monitoring the advice being provided by public health experts with respect to COVID-19. It is working with the Court Services Division of the Ministry of Justice in order to maintain the operations of the Court to the extent reasonably possible during the course of the pandemic.

The Court very much understands that it provides essential dispute resolution services and that it does work necessary to protect liberty and safeguard the public. At the same time, the Court is also alert to the need to protect the health and safety of court and security staff and of all those people who are involved in its proceedings or who come to observe those proceedings. It will be taking all of this into very careful account as the Covid-19 situation continues to unfold.

At this time, there are no plans to cancel or reschedule Court of Appeal proceedings. However, all lawyers and self-represented individuals slated to appear in matters before the Court are being notified that they may make their submissions by way of telephone rather than in person. The Court is in the process of putting in place a system that will allow all of those involved in a matter to appear by way of audio-video link.

The Court will continue to evaluate the COVID-19 situation as it evolves and will make adjustments to its operations as necessary.

Chief Justice Robert G. Richards

Court of Queen's Bench

Directive and Advisory respecting COVID-19 as of March 15, 2020

The Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan 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 and advisory respecting Court of Queen's Bench operations. It applies to all Court of Queen's Bench judicial centres throughout the province.

The Court will continue to monitor the situation related to COVID-19 and will update this directive and advisory from time to time.

Effective immediately

- This directive takes effective immediately.

Symptoms related to COVID-19

- Information on the symptoms related to COVID-19 can be found on the Provincial Government's website at: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca>

Attending court

- Court houses remain open to the public and press and media may attend proceedings. However, court visits by classes and other groups have been cancelled effective immediately. To reduce the potential spread of COVID-19, it is recommended that only those persons who are necessary to the proceedings before the Court attend.
- Parties with scheduled matters including trials, pre-trial conferences and hearings are encouraged, where appropriate, to adjourn those matters to a future date.
- Further, if any person either has symptoms associated with COVID-19 or has been in contact with someone who has symptoms, they are asked not to come to the Court House. If the person has a scheduled court matter that has not otherwise been postponed in accordance with this directive, they should contact the appropriate Local Registrar's Office through their lawyer (if they have one) or by phone to either make arrangements to appear by phone or to determine if their matter is or will be adjourned.

Jury Trials Postponed

- All jury trials scheduled to commence between March 16, 2020, and May 30, 2020, will be postponed. Any person who has been summoned to attend Court for jury duty for a matter scheduled before May 30, 2020, are not to attend Court.

Jury Trials Postponed (ctd)

- The adjournment of jury trials will be spoken to in Court or by video or audio conference on the date the matter was originally set for trial.
- Jury trials that were commenced before March 16, 2020, and are underway shall continue as scheduled subject to the discretion of the trial judge.
- For affected criminal cases, arrangements may be made for a re-election to trial by judge alone, if the accused wishes to proceed on that basis, and the trial will proceed during the scheduled time period (if there is no other bar to the matter so proceeding). If there is no re-election and the trial must therefore be adjourned until after May 31, the Court will give the case priority for rescheduling once normal operations resume.

Civil and Family Chambers

- Parties to a proceeding that does not urgently need to proceed, are encouraged to delay bringing new applications to civil and family chambers (including matters involving maintenance enforcement and Inter-jurisdictional support orders) and to adjourn those already scheduled to a future date so long as the provincial government's restriction respecting public gatherings remain in place.
- Effective immediately and until further notice, all participants in regularly scheduled civil and family chamber applications (other than child protection chambers) are required to attend by phone. Participants are expected to be available by phone at the commencement of chambers 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.

Child Protection

- Child Protection Chamber matters scheduled for the week of March 16, 2020, to March 20, 2020, are postponed. All matters on the list for this week will be rescheduled by the Court to a future date and no person is required to attend court to speak to re-scheduling a matter. Parties will be contacted by the Local Registrar this week and will be advised when their matter will be heard.

Pre-Trial Conferences, Trials, and other scheduled matters.

- All conferences, trials and other hearings that are currently scheduled will continue. A party wishing to seek an adjournment should contact the Local Registrar so that the question of whether a matter may be adjourned can be decided. Should the Court determine that a matter should be adjourned due to the implications of COVID-19, the Local Registrar will notify the parties to attend a teleconference to discuss alternate scheduling.
- Also, in consultation with Court Services, the Court is encouraging the use of video and audio appearances for individuals in custody.

Pre-Trial Conferences, Trials, and other scheduled matters. (ctd)

- The Court will permit, when appropriate, applications to adjourn criminal proceedings, whether by consent or contested by telephone or video appearance. Criminal proceedings adjourned because of COVID-19 will receive priority for re-scheduling.

Local Registrar Services

- Effective immediately and until further notice, personal access to the offices of the Local Registrar is restricted and the following procedures will be implemented:
 - To obtain guidance on Court procedures or court schedules, contact the office of the Local Registrar by phone. Phone numbers for each office can be found on the Court's website: <https://sasklawcourts.ca/index.php/home/court-of-queen-s-bench/court-locations-and-sitting-times>
 - Documents to be filed should be placed in an envelope and delivered either to a drop box located in the hallway (where available) or on the LR counter. The envelope should clearly set out the phone number where the party filing the documents can be contacted. All documents delivered will be date stamped and issued on the delivery date unless the documents are insufficient. Local Registrars will notify persons who have filed documents by phone if their documents require amendment or completion before filing.
 - Documents that are required to be returned will be available for pick up the following day. Pick up locations at each location will be provided in the court house.
 - Until further notice lawyers or other parties who have a deposit account with the Court may file documents by email at the Local Registrar's official email address where appropriate. The official email for each Local Registrar's office is listed below.

Chief Justice M.D. Popescul

Judicial Centre Contact Information

Battleford

Box 340
291 23rd Street West
Battleford, SK S0M 0E0
Phone: (306) 446-7675
Fax: (306) 446-7737
Email: qblrbattleford@gov.sk.ca

Estevan

1016 4th Street
Estevan, SK S4A 0W5
Phone: (306) 637-4527
Fax: (306) 637-4536
Email: qblrestevan@gov.sk.ca

Melfort

Box 2530
409 Main Street
Melfort, SK S0E 1A0
Phone: (306) 752-6265
Fax: (306) 752-6264
Email: qblrmelfort@gov.sk.ca

Moose Jaw

64 Ominica Street West
Moose Jaw, SK S6H 1W9
Phone: (306) 694-3602
Fax: (306) 694-3056
Email: qblrmoosejaw@gov.sk.ca

Prince Albert

1800 Central Avenue
Prince Albert, SK S6V 4W7
Phone: (306) 953-3200
Fax: (306) 953-3210
Email: qblrprincealbert@gov.sk.ca

Regina

2425 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 4W6
Phone: (306) 787-5377
Fax: (306) 787-7217
Email: qblrregina@gov.sk.ca

Saskatoon

520 Spadina Crescent East
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3G7
Phone: (306) 933-5135
Fax: (306) 975-4818
Email: qblrsaskatoon@gov.sk.ca

Swift Current

121 Lorne Street West
Swift Current, SK S9H 0J4
Phone: (306) 778-8400
Fax: (306) 778-8581
Email: qblrswiftcurrent@gov.sk.ca

Yorkton

29 Darlington Street East
Yorkton, SK S3N 0C2
Phone: (306) 786-1515
Fax: (306) 786-1521
Email: qblryorkton@gov.sk.ca

Provincial Court

The Provincial Court of Saskatchewan is taking precautions in response to the identification of the COVID-19 virus in the province. In keeping with public health advice recommending social distancing, the Court is discouraging all unnecessary visits to the court.

Court visits by classes and other groups have been cancelled effective immediately.

In consultation with Court Services, the Court is encouraging the use of video and audio appearances for individuals in custody. Lawyers are asked to obtain designations of counsel in indictable matters so that the accused person is not required to appear at the docket stage. As well, counsel is asked to obtain instructions from their clients at the docket stage to reduce unnecessary appearances in summary conviction matters by accused.

Trials and preliminary hearings currently scheduled will proceed on the dates set. The Court's decision to proceed in this way will be revisited in the week of March 16. Until further notice, any lawyer or self-represented party who wishes to have their matter adjourned due to concerns about COVID-19 is encouraged to apply to the Court as soon as possible for an adjournment. This applies to proceedings conducted by Justices of the Peace as well as those held before Provincial Court Judges.

The Court continues to monitor the situation to ensure that the public continues to have meaningful access to justice, while also prioritizing the safety and well-being of all court participants.

Chief Judge J.A. Plemel

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>