



Courts of Saskatchewan Communications Office  
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March 17, 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.

#### Provincial Court

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

Cleaning protocols have been increased inside courtrooms as well as secure and common areas of the court facilities. All persons in court facilities are asked to cooperate with recommended handwashing and use of hand sanitizer practices and ensure social distancing by keeping 1 to 2 metres of space between yourself and other individuals.

Effective March 23, 2020, access to Provincial Court court houses in Saskatchewan will be restricted to only those persons who are necessary to the proceedings before the Court. This will include counsel, litigants, accused, witnesses, support workers, treatment court workers, and members of the media.

The Court will post further information as it becomes available, so please continue to check the Provincial Court COVID-19 Update webpage for updates (see end for address).

#### People showing COVID-19 symptoms

No one who is experiencing any COVID-19-related symptoms or who has been advised to self-isolate should attend the court houses. Persons who fall within that category and who have scheduled court appearances including those who have been subpoenaed for court are to immediately contact the [appropriate Court office](#) or, if not available, the provincial prosecutions office for directions.

## Circuit Courts

Starting the week of March 16, 2020, all circuit courts at the northern circuit fly-in locations will be closed and the remaining circuit courts will be closed starting March 23, 2020.

Court proceedings are being adjourned to dates past May 31, 2020.

If you don't have a lawyer helping you, we encourage you to contact the [Court office responsible](#) for the circuit court in advance of your scheduled date. Staff will assist you.

In some circuit locations, trials and preliminary hearings for in-custody accused may proceed if possible and determined to be urgent by the presiding judge, in consultation with Crown and defence lawyers. All other trials and preliminary hearings will be adjourned to court dates after May 31, 2020.

All in-custody accused from the circuit points should appear at the local permanent court point by video, telephone, agent or in-person depending on the circumstances. Lawyers should contact the local permanent court office if they have a client in-custody to determine how that client can appear in court.

Notices will be posted on the doors at each of our circuit locations providing information to affected individuals of adjourned court dates and contact numbers.

### Permanent Court Locations

#### CRIMINAL MATTERS – IN-CUSTODY ACCUSED

All 13 permanent Provincial Court locations will remain open.

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

Wherever possible the Court will make full use of video and audio technology to effectively address criminal matters involving accused persons who are in-custody.

If possible, bail or sentencing hearings will be conducted by use of video/audio conference instead of in-person unless otherwise directed by the judge. Lawyers are urged to appear by telephone on behalf of their clients, with arrangements being made in advance.

#### CRIMINAL MATTERS – NON-CUSTODY ACCUSED

Effective March 23, 2020, trials and preliminary hearings for accused who are not in-custody will be adjourned to dates after May 31, 2020. Where feasible, lawyers are encouraged to arrange early appearances in docket court.

Police will make all new first appearances returnable after May 31, 2020.

Those matters already scheduled will still be spoken to at that docket time and date except that judges will be urged to use video and audio technology where possible. Lawyers are urged to appear by telephone on behalf of their clients, with arrangements being made in advance. If further adjournments are requested, matters will be adjourned to dates after May 31, 2020.

If you do not have a lawyer helping you, you should call the court in advance of your scheduled court date to arrange to appear on a date after May 31, 2020. Your matter can be adjourned without you being present, using a Court Order called a "bench warrant held by the Crown" which will require you to attend Court on the new court date. If you do not appear on the new date you may be arrested.

A list of adjournment dates will be posted to the Courts of Saskatchewan website.

#### Child Protection Matters

Applications with respect to urgent Child Protection matters can proceed at Provincial Court permanent locations. Local judges will determine whether 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 need to be adjourned. You must 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.
- Time to pay extensions, time to pay requests and not guilty pleas can be made by contacting the local court office by phone.
- We will be adjourning tickets to dates that are 10 weeks or more from your court date and you will be able to refer to the Court's website for your adjourned 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 for a date between March 23, 2020, 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 particulars and 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 between March 23, 2020, and May 31, 2020. You will need to contact the local municipal office to discuss the rescheduling of your matter.

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>