



**SUPREME COURT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION AND GENERAL PUBLIC**

**SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS IN ST. JOHN'S GENERAL DIVISION  
BEGINNING APRIL 1, 2021**

On February 18 and March 4, 2021, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador issued Notices to the Profession and General Public outlining changes to its operations for the months of February and March 2021. The changes were implemented as a result of the Special Measures Order issued on February 12, 2021, which moved the Province to COVID-19 Alert Level 5, and the Special Measures Order issued February 26, 2021, which kept the Avalon Peninsula at Alert Level 5 but moved the rest of the Province to Alert Level 4.

On March 13, 2021, the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued two Special Measures Orders lowering the COVID-19 Alert Level to Level 4 on the Avalon Peninsula and to Level 3 in all other areas of the Province. As a result of this new guidance, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador will be making changes to its operations beginning on April 1, 2021. This Notice outlines the changes to operations in the **St. John's General Division**.

**OPERATIONS BEGINNING APRIL 1, 2021**

Beginning on April 1, 2021, the St. John's General Division will return to a hybrid in-person/virtual services model. After that date, the Court will continue to hold specified matters virtually but will also hold a number of matters in-person. The Court will resume setting new appearances and the registries will re-open for in-person appointments. Details of the Supreme Court's operations St. John's General Division are provided below.

Note that all matters that are proceeding in-person will be held in accordance with the [COVID-19 Guidelines](#) issued by the Court. Note that everyone permitted to enter a courthouse is required to wear a mask, keep appropriate distance from others, and sanitize their hands frequently.

**Trials**

- All criminal jury trials set to begin after April 1, 2021, will be proceeding in-person.
- Criminal and civil judge-alone trials set to begin on or after April 1, 2021, may proceed in-person, but the Court will carefully examine these matters to determine if they may be appropriately held virtually. Counsel are also

encouraged to identify matters that might be heard by tele/videoconference and to apply to appear virtually under the applicable legislation or rules of court.

### **Hearings and Conferences**

- The following hearings may, beginning April 1, 2021, proceed in-person, but the Court will carefully examine these matters to determine if they may be appropriately held virtually (counsel are encouraged to identify matters that might be heard by tele/videoconference and to apply to appear virtually under the applicable legislation or rules of court):
  - Hearings in civil matters that are expected to take longer than 5 minutes; and
  - Hearings in criminal matters.
- The following appearances will proceed virtually:
  - Any appearance relating to scheduling;
  - Case management meetings and case management conferences;
  - Pre-trial conferences; and
  - Settlement conferences.

### **Filing and Processing Documents**

- Beginning April 1, 2021, the registries in the St. John's General Division will re-open to the public. **Attendance at the registries will be by appointment only.** Appointments may be made [online](#).
- Drop boxes will remain available at the front of courthouses to permit contactless drop-off and pick-up of documents. The drop boxes will be accessible during the Court's normal business hours. **Documents filed before 4:30PM will be date stamped on the day they are filed but documents left in the drop boxes after 4:30PM will be date stamped on the following business day.**
- For documents left in drop boxes, filing fees must be paid in one of the following ways: (1) the filing party may include a cheque enclosed with the document being filed; or (2) the filing party may provide a contact name and number with the document so that the Court can process a credit card payment by phone.

- **Email filings will no longer be accepted (with the exception of email filings permitted in accordance with [Practice Note P.N. 2020-03](#)).**
- Forms may be downloaded from the [Court's website](#).
- Processing times may be delayed owing to reduced staffing levels.

## **UPDATES**

The Supreme Court will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation across the province to determine whether any further changes to operations are required. Please continue to consult the [Court's website](#) and Twitter account ([@NLSupremeCourt](#)) for the most up-to-date information.

**RAYMOND P. WHALEN**  
**Chief Justice**