



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

**SUPREME COURT OPERATIONS IN THE GENERAL DIVISION LOCATIONS  
BEGINNING APRIL 1, 2021 (REVISED)**

On March 23, 2021, the Supreme Court issued three Notices to the Profession and General Public outlining planned changes to its operations in the Court on April 1, 2021. These changes were made in light of the Chief Medical Officer of Health's (CMOH) orders, issued on March 13, 2021, that lowered the COVID-19 Alert Level to Level 4 on the Avalon Peninsula and to Level 3 in all other areas of the Province.

In light of the CMOH's order lowering the COVID-19 Alert Level to Level 2, the Supreme Court is issuing this Notice to the Profession and General Public to clarify its operations in all *General Division locations across the Province* beginning April 1, 2021.

**OPERATIONS BEGINNING APRIL 1, 2021**

Beginning on April 1, 2021, the Supreme Court will continue with a hybrid in-person/virtual services model. Certain matters will presumptively proceed in-person and others will presumptively proceed virtually, subject to judicial direction otherwise. The Court will set new appearances and the registries will be open for in-person service. Details of the Supreme Court's operations in the 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. Everyone permitted to enter a courthouse is required to wear a mask, keep appropriate distance from others, and sanitize their hands frequently. Parties attending at the Court in-person should arrive at the Court ten minutes prior to their appearance for COVID-19 and point of entry screening.

**COURT APPEARANCES**

**Criminal Proceedings**

Beginning on April 1, 2021, all criminal jury trials will be proceeding *in-person*.

Criminal judge-alone trials and hearings will also proceed *in-person*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the matter will be held virtually. Counsel are also encouraged to identify any such matters that might be heard by tele/videoconference and to apply to appear virtually in accordance with the *Criminal Code* and the *Criminal Proceedings Rules of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador*.

Conferences in criminal matters, including case management conferences; pre-trial conferences, and resolution conferences will be held *virtually*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the matter will be held in-person.

### **Civil Proceedings**

Beginning on April 1, 2021, civil hearings that will take more than 5 minutes and civil trials will proceed *in-person*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the matter will be held virtually. Counsel are also encouraged to identify any such matters that might be heard by tele/videoconference and to apply to appear virtually in accordance with Rule 47A of the *Rules of the Supreme Court, 1986*.

The following appearances in civil matters will proceed *virtually*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the matter will be held in-person.

- Hearings that are expected to take 5 minutes or less;
- Any appearance relating to scheduling;
- Case management meetings;
- Pre-trial conferences; and
- Settlement conferences.

### **Family Proceedings (for General Division locations that hear family matters)**

Beginning April 1, 2021, all family appearances, other than settlement conferences, will proceed *in-person*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the matter will be held virtually. Counsel are also encouraged to identify matters that might be heard by tele/videoconference and to apply to appear virtually under Rule F41 of the [\*Supreme Court Family Rules\*](#).

Settlement conferences will proceed *virtually*, unless the Court contacts parties/counsel to inform them that the settlement conference will be held in-person.

## **REGISTRIES**

### **St. John's**

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 and mail hubs will remain available at the front of courthouses to permit contactless drop-off and pick-up of documents. The drop boxes and mail hubs 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.*

### **All other General Division Locations**

Registries in the Supreme Court General Division judicial centres outside of the Avalon Peninsula re-opened on March 16, 2021, and will remain open to the public.

### **General Information about Filing/Processing Documents**

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**