



Notice to the Profession and Public Regarding Court Proceedings

December 22, 2020 NEW UPDATE

While the Ontario Superior Court of Justice remains open during the provincial lockdown, the court must respond to the current public health situation with great flexibility.

Effective December 29, 2020, all (non-jury) matters should proceed virtually unless it is absolutely necessary to hold the proceedings in-person. This applies to proceedings throughout the province and will remain in effect until the lockdowns in Northern and Southern Ontario are lifted or until further notice of this Court.

Counsel and parties should only request in-person hearings where absolutely necessary and I have requested all judicial officers, when exercising their authority, to only hold in-person hearings where absolutely necessary.

All SCJ courtrooms will be subject to a 10 person capacity limit. No new jury selection will commence during this period. Proceedings that are in progress may continue subject to the discretion of the trial judge.

Further notices affecting specific regions will be issued when lockdowns are lifted in those regions.

December 14, 2020 - update

Chief Justice Morawetz has extended the suspension of jury trials until at least January 29, 2021 in all areas of the province except Green Zones. Jury trials will recommence on Monday, Feb. 1, 2021 at the earliest.

November 21, 2020 Notice

On November 21, 2020, the Ontario Superior Court of Justice suspended new jury selection for new jury trials in all areas of the province except Green Zones until at least January 4, 2021.

By this update, the profession and public is notified that

In view of the public health situation, effective Monday, November 23, 2020, the Court will not commence any new jury selection in any court location except in those in a Green Zone as defined by the Ontario Government as of the date of this notice <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-response-framework-keeping-ontario-safe-and-open>.

This will remain in effect until at least January 4, 2021. An update will be issued on December 29, 2020.

To be clear, only court locations in Green Zones as of the date of this Notice will commence new jury selection until at least January 4, 2021.

Jury trials currently in progress can proceed, subject to the discretion of the trial judge.

Toronto and Peel

In the lockdown regions of Toronto and Peel, until further notice new (non-jury) matters that do proceed in-person will be required to maintain a 10-person limit in each courtroom.

Matters that are in progress involving greater than 10 persons in a courtroom, may continue at the discretion of the trial judge.

Virtual Proceeding Strongly Encouraged In All regions

In all regions, I strongly encourage the use of virtual proceedings wherever possible. I recognize that parties, counsel and participants may not be comfortable attending a courthouse or travelling to attend court. The Court must respond to this situation with great flexibility.

I have requested all judicial officers, when exercising their authority, to be as flexible as possible and to encourage virtual proceedings, wherever possible. Similarly, I request counsel and parties to be accommodating when requests for virtual hearings or other arrangements are made by opposing counsel or parties.

We must continue to do what we can to move matters forward while supporting public health efforts to stabilize the situation.

Geoffrey B. Morawetz
Chief Justice
Ontario Superior Court of Justice

