



THE LAW COURTS
800 SMITHE STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C.
V6Z 2E1

Notice to the Profession, the Public and the Media Regarding Criminal Proceedings

COVID-19: Suspension of Regular Supreme Court Operations

Date: March 18, 2020

Effective March 19, 2020 and until further notice, the Honourable Chief Justice Hinkson has suspended regular operations of the Supreme Court of British Columbia at all of its locations to protect the health and safety of court users and to help contain the spread of COVID-19.

This direction replaces the Court's announcement issued Friday, March 13, 2020.

I. REGULAR CRIMINAL MATTERS

All criminal matters scheduled for any type of appearance between March 19, 2020 and May 1, 2020, are adjourned, unless directed otherwise by the Court. To preserve jurisdiction, a bench warrant will be issued for all accused persons who have scheduled appearances during that time period. The bench warrant will be held and not executed until the date of the next scheduled appearance as identified below (dates are subject to change depending on circumstances closer to the time). If the accused person appears personally or through counsel on that date, the bench warrant will be vacated.

- For a matter scheduled for the period between March 19 and April 9, 2020, the next appearance will be set on the fix date list of the court location where the matter was scheduled to be heard, on the dates set out in **Appendix A**.
- For a matter scheduled for the period between April 14 and May 1, 2020, the next appearance will be set on the fix date list of the court location where the matter was scheduled to be heard, on the dates set out in **Appendix B**.

Counsel must contact the local Manager of Supreme Court Scheduling the week prior to the fix date appearance to canvass new dates. Scheduling information by location can be found [here](#).

If the public health situation improves before May 1, 2020, to a point where the Court can begin to resume regular operations, Supreme Court Scheduling will contact counsel

(and the accused if not represented by counsel) to arrange for an earlier appearance, if possible.

II. ESSENTIAL & URGENT CRIMINAL MATTERS

In order to maintain the rule of law and its core function, the Court will continue to hear essential and urgent matters during the suspension period. Hearings will be by telephone where possible and appropriate, or by video appearance where appropriate and available. Essential and urgent criminal matters include the following:

- Judicial interim release (bail) and bail review hearings;
- Scheduling and detention review hearings under s. 525 of the *Criminal Code*;
- *Habeas corpus* applications, or other applications by in-custody accused persons and offenders that require prompt attention;
- Applications under Part VI of the *Criminal Code*, applications for search warrants or arrest warrants, or other related applications that should not be delayed.

For matters not listed above, counsel, or accused persons not represented by counsel, who believe that their matter is urgent may submit a request to the Court that the matter be heard.

III. WITNESSES, LAWYERS AND JURORS

Witnesses, lawyers and jurors should not attend court for trials or any matters between March 19 and May 1, 2020, unless specifically directed to do so by the Court after the date of this Notice. Jurors and witnesses will be re-notified of when to attend. Unless ordered otherwise, ongoing trials will be adjourned to a date after May 1, 2020.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR URGENT MATTERS

The Court has established the following two-part procedure to facilitate the hearing of essential and urgent criminal matters (other than s. 525 scheduling hearings, which will continue to be scheduled by the Detention Review Coordinator in accordance with CPD-4). First, the applicant will submit a request to the Court for an urgent hearing using an online form. Parties will then submit unfiled materials in order that the Court can assess the urgency of the matter. Second, if the Court determines that the matter is essential and urgent and a hearing is required, the Court will set a date and direct the parties to file their materials electronically in accordance with a modified process.

A. Requesting a Hearing

1. A request for the hearing of an urgent matter must be made by completing an online **Request for Urgent Hearing form**.

https://www.bccourts.ca/supreme_court/scheduling/Request_for_Urgent_Hearing/

2. Upon receipt of the request form, the Court will send the parties an email confirming receipt of the request form.
3. The parties must follow the instructions in the request acknowledgement email and provide relevant unfiled materials to assist with the Court's determination as to whether the matter is of sufficient urgency to require a hearing. If the respondent's unfiled materials are not received within a reasonable time, the Court will review the applicant's request without the responding materials.
4. A judge of the Court will review the request form and related materials and make a determination as to whether the matter requires an urgent hearing.

B. Instructions for Filing Materials

5. If the judge determines that a hearing is required, the Court will set a hearing date and provide directions to the parties about filing and service of materials. Materials will be filed electronically, if possible.

C. Conduct of Hearing

6. Parties will appear by telephone where possible and appropriate, or by video where appropriate and available.

THE FOREGOING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ANY UPDATED DIRECTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE COURT'S WEBSITE.

Dated 18 March 2020, at Vancouver, British Columbia

By Direction of Chief Justice Christopher E. Hinkson
Supreme Court of British Columbia

APPENDIX A

Campbell River	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Chilliwack	Monday, May 11th at 2:00pm
Courtenay	Monday, June 1st at 10:00am
Cranbrook	Monday, May 11th at 2:00pm
Dawson Creek	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Duncan	Wednesday, May 6th at 2:00pm (In Victoria)
Fort St. John	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Kamloops	Monday, May 4th at 2:00pm
Kelowna	Monday, May 4th at 10:00 am
Nanaimo	Monday, May 4th at 2:00pm
Nelson	Tuesday, May 19th at 2:00pm
New Westminster	Thurs., May 7th at 2:00pm or Thurs., May 14 at 2:00pm
Penticton	Monday, June 8th at 10:00 am
Port Alberni	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Powell River	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Prince George	Monday, May 11th at 9:30am
Prince Rupert	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Quesnel	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Revelstoke	Monday, May 11th at 10am
Rossland	Monday, May 4th at 2:00pm
Salmon Arm	Tuesday, May 12th at 10:00am
Smithers	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Terrace	Tuesday, June 23rd at 10:00am
Vancouver	Wed., May 6th at 2:00pm or Wed., May 13th at 2:00pm
Vernon	Monday, May 11th at 10:00 am
Victoria	Wednesday, May 6th at 2:00pm
Williams Lake	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am

APPENDIX B

Campbell River	Monday, June 8th at 10:00am
Chilliwack	Tuesday, May 19th at 2:00pm
Courtenay	Monday, June 22nd at 10:00am
Cranbrook	Monday, June 8th at 2:00pm
Dawson Creek	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Duncan	Wednesday, June 3rd (in Victoria)
Fort St John	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Kamloops	Monday, May 11th at 2:00pm
Kelowna	Tuesday, May 19th at 10am
Nanaimo	Tuesday, May 19th at 2:00pm
Nelson	Monday, June 1st at 2:00pm
New Westminster	Thurs., May 28 th at 2:00pm or Thurs., June 4 th at 2:00pm
Penticton	Monday, June 8th at 10:00am
Port Alberni	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Powell River	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Prince George	Tuesday, May 19th at 9:30am
Prince Rupert	Monday, May 11th at 10:00am
Quesnel	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Revelstoke	Monday, June 8th at 10:00am
Rossland	Monday, June 22nd at 2:00pm
Salmon Arm	Tuesday, June 9th at 10:00am
Smithers	Monday, May 4th at 10:00am
Terrace	Tuesday, June 23rd at 10:00am
Vancouver	Wed., May 27th at 2:00pm or Wed., June 3rd at 2:00pm
Vernon	Tuesday, May 19th at 10:00am
Victoria	Wednesday, June 3rd at 2:00pm
Williams Lake	Tuesday, May 19th at 10:00am