

THE HONOURABLE ROBERT J. BAUMAN
CHIEF JUSTICE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



THE LAW COURTS
400 - 800 HORNBY STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C.
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COURT OF APPEAL

Notice to the Public Regarding Access to Court Proceedings during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dated 21 December 2020

This Notice replaces all previous Notices to the Public Regarding Access to Court Proceedings during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

The Court of Appeal is taking the following steps to ensure that accredited media and other members of the public have access to, and can observe, court proceedings during this exceptional time. The Court of Appeal is committed to the open court principle and will be examining additional steps to ensure all members of the media and public can access Court proceedings. The Court asks for patience as it works to fulfill its appellate function and Constitutional functions while adopting new technology and procedures.

Access to Video and Teleconference Proceedings

The Court's [weekly hearing list](#) and [chambers list](#) are updated daily and indicate which matters are proceeding by video conference, in the courtroom or by teleconference.

Access to Video Conference Proceedings

To observe matters proceeding by video conference click on the public link provided on the Court's [weekly hearing list](#). This will allow you to join the video conference as an observer live from your device. Note that the public link may not be posted until the morning the video conference is set to proceed and, if you do not already have the Zoom application downloaded on your device, you can follow the prompts to install it, or join the meeting over the web. In order to maintain appropriate decorum during a video conference proceeding, the judges and the people making submissions to the court will not be able to see or hear the people observing.

Access to Hearings in the Courtroom

On 9 November 2020 the Chief Justice of British Columbia directed that all appeals proceed by video conference unless otherwise directed. This direction was made in response to BC public health orders aimed at minimizing travel and social contact and encouraging people to work from home where possible. Anyone who wishes to observe an appeal hearing scheduled to take place in a courtroom should be familiar with the information below and should monitor the [BC Court of Appeal announcements page](#) for any special instructions e.g. regarding overflow space or telephone access.

To observe matters proceeding in the courtroom, check the Court's [weekly hearing list](#) or on the bulletin board in the lobby at 800 Smithe. The lists will indicate the name of the proceeding, the mode of hearing and, if applicable, the courtroom number.

For information about adjustments to physical facilities, masking requirements and other information about attending a courtroom in person, see [Notice to the Public Regarding the Court of Appeal for British Columbia's Response to COVID-19](#) at section 3.3.2.

Access to Teleconference Proceedings

To observe matters proceeding by teleconference submit a [Request to Attend Teleconference Proceedings](#) no later than 12 noon the day before the hearing date. Late requests cannot be processed in time to respond with the dial-in information you will need.

The number of callers that can be connected through a single teleconference number is limited and priority will be given to parties to the proceeding and members of accredited media. More than one person may listen to the proceeding from a single phone.

Note that counsel are permitted to share connection details with their co-counsel and clients if they will be listening from separate phones, however, connection details should not be shared with anyone else. Counsel are asked to inform the registry if they require connections for more than 10 separate telephones.

In order to maintain appropriate decorum during a teleconference proceeding you must dial into the teleconference at the set time. The court will not disrupt ongoing proceedings to connect you. Additionally, anyone observing must mute their microphone so as to limit the possibility of disruptions from background noise.

Policy on use of electronic devices in courtrooms

The Court's [Policy on the use of electronic devices in courtrooms](#) applies to all court proceedings including those conducted remotely by video or teleconference. This means that members of accredited media may audio record proceedings for the limited purpose of verifying their notes. Any other audio or video recording of the proceeding including screen shots or other photographs is prohibited. Anyone who uses an electronic device in a manner prohibited by the policy is subject to sanction, including prosecution for contempt of court.

Media Participation in Court Proceedings

In any appeals where the media wishes to make submissions, such as where a publication ban is opposed or challenged, accommodations for participation will be arranged in the same manner as for other parties, detailed in the [Court's Notice to the Public Regarding the Court of Appeal's Response to COVID-19](#).

Media Access to Digital Audio Recordings (DARS)

Any requests for access to court audio recordings (post-hearing) by accredited media should be made by completing the usual [access to audio request form](#) and attaching a [remote access to DARS undertaking](#) to the automatically generated email before submitting the request. Requests will be processed by Court Services Branch personnel in the usual manner. If access is granted the requestor will receive an email confirmation and a link to a digital FTP site to remotely access the requested audio recording.

Access to Court Records

The Court will continue processing requests for access to the court record in the usual manner as prescribed under the Court of Appeal's [Record and Courtroom Access Policy](#).

Dated 21 December 2020, at Vancouver, British Columbia

By Direction of Robert J. Bauman
Chief Justice of British Columbia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Bauman', written in a cursive style.