

SUPREME COURT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

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REPORT OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE & ASSOCIATE CHIEF JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION

Together, we ensure that the law is upheld and applied to all persons equally. We work to protect and maintain respect for the rule of law.

The Supreme Court of British Columbia is a court of inherent jurisdiction and the superior trial court in the province. As the Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice, we lead the Court which is made up of judges who are appointed by the federal government under the *Judges Act*, and associate judges and the registrars who are appointed by the provincial government under the *Supreme Court Act*. Together, the judges, associate judges, and the registrar of the Court are responsible for fulfilling our role as a neutral and impartial arbiter of disputes in a wide range of subject areas. Together, we ensure that the law is upheld and applied to all persons equally. We work to protect and maintain respect for the rule of law. We preside over trials, chambers applications, and a wide variety of conferences. We hear appeals from decisions of judges of the Provincial Court of British Columbia and from some administrative tribunals. The Court sits in 30 locations around the province, of which almost half have resident judges. The Court is supported by a team of judicial staff judicial administrative assistants, legal counsel, judicial law clerks, scheduling staff, IT staff and other administrative support staff. Judicial staff report to the judiciary and are separate from other courthouse staff including court clerks, registry clerks and sheriffs.

Public confidence in the justice system is increasingly strained by three interconnected challenges.

- First, the role of the courts and judges in our democratic system is often misunderstood, particularly in relation to the other branches of government. The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch implements and enforces laws, and the courts interpret and apply laws. Misunderstanding about the role of each branch can lead to misplaced criticism when court decisions are unpopular but legally required.
- Second, chronic underfunding has left the justice system struggling with delays, limited resources, and barriers to access, undermining both efficiency and fairness.

- Finally, growing public and political attacks on judicial institutions, coupled with broader democratic backsliding, risk eroding respect for the rule of law itself. Together, these pressures threaten not only the effective functioning of courts but also the foundational principle of an independent judiciary in a healthy democracy.

These efforts reflect a deliberate strategy to respond thoughtfully to present pressures while positioning the Court of better serve the public in the years ahead

In response, courts must consider how to adapt while preserving their essential role. This includes engaging more proactively with the public—carefully and thoughtfully—to improve understanding of judicial independence, decision-making processes, and the proper role of courts. Transparent communication, plain-language resources, and responsible outreach can help bridge the gap between legal institutions and the communities they serve. At the same time, modernization of court processes is critical to meeting the real needs of users. Enhanced use of technology, simplifying procedures, and designing services around accessibility and efficiency can strengthen public trust—so long as these reforms respect due process, fairness, and the core values that safeguard judicial integrity.

In the pages that follow, we will discuss the work of the Court in greater detail including the concrete steps we are taking to address these challenges and opportunities before us. We describe the reforms underway to improve access, modernize processes, and strengthen early resolution, as well as initiatives aimed at reinforcing institutional independence, advancing reconciliation, and enhancing public communication and education. Together, these efforts reflect a deliberate strategy to respond thoughtfully to present pressures while positioning the Court to better serve the public in the years ahead.

COURT PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Criminal Rules Revision Project

Through the Criminal Law Committee, the Court is in the process of revising the *Supreme Court Criminal Rules*, which have not been updated since the late 1990s. We would like to express our appreciation to the organizations and individuals who have been devoting time and care to assisting the Court in this project in a variety of ways. The first of the new *Criminal Rules* will be issued in Spring 2026.

Civil and Family Chambers Practice Review

In 2025, the Court struck the Civil and Family Chambers Practice Working Group to review chambers practice and to recommend reforms to reduce delay and increase efficiency. As part of that work, in July, the Court held a public consultation to seek feedback about issues arising in chambers practice as well as suggestions for improvement. The Court heard from litigants, lawyers, law firms, and organizations representing legal professionals about delay in accessing chambers and inefficient use of chambers time, and the associated impacts on court users. A summary of the feedback is available on the Court’s website. The Court extends its sincere appreciation to those who took the time to participate.

Over the next year, the Chambers Practice Working Group, informed by the feedback arising from the consultation, will develop recommendations for reforms to chambers practice. Some changes to current practice will require further engagement, including with Court Services Branch and the Supreme Court Civil and Family Rules Committee. The Court anticipates adopting a phased approach to implementation of reforms.

The Court remains committed to continuing to engage about changes to civil practice and procedure in future, as part of its efforts to achieve a more responsive, user-centred justice system.

Expansion of Online Scheduling

In 2025, the Court continued to enhance the ability of parties and counsel to schedule hearings using an online platform. Online scheduling was originally introduced in 2019 as a pilot project for trial management conferences and expanded in 2022 to include case planning conferences and judicial case conferences. In late 2024 as funding became available, the Court increased the availability of online scheduling to include trials, and in 2025, work was undertaken to expand online scheduling to long chambers applications. Expanding online booking has long been a priority for the Court. Online booking reduces the stress and uncertainty that often accompanied the old phone-in booking method and it ensures that no one is unfairly disadvantaged by a busy phone line. Online scheduling also provides the Court with better data about “unmet demand”; the cases where the parties wanted a hearing but were unable to secure a hearing date. This data will be used to support requests for additional resources to support the Court’s operation including additional associate judges and technology infrastructure investments.

Online booking reduces the stress and uncertainty that often accompanied the old phone-in booking method and it ensures that no one is unfairly disadvantaged by a busy phone line.

Truth and Reconciliation

In 2024, the Court struck a Reconciliation Working Group to examine the Court's role in advancing reconciliation. This year, the Reconciliation Working Group sought to better understand the ways in which Indigenous people interact with the Court and to learn more about the approaches taken by courts across the country to advance reconciliation.

In May 2025, the Court invited Indigenous peoples and organizations, members of the bar, and the public to provide feedback on the Court's role in advancing reconciliation. Following a four-month feedback period, the Court received a number of submissions from Indigenous organizations, bar associations, law firms, and members of the public. Submissions grappled with what reconciliation means and what it should look like on a practical level. The Reconciliation Working Group extends its gratitude to the individuals and organizations who took the time to provide feedback.

Over the next year, the Reconciliation Working Group will be considering the feedback provided and developing recommendations on next steps.

This year the Reconciliation Working Group has also been planning a full-day judicial education conference focussing on Indigenous issues. The 2026 conference will feature speakers from British Columbia, the Federal Court, the Manitoba Court of King's Bench and the New Zealand Supreme Court.

Associate Judges Chambers Pilot Project

The Associate Judges Chambers Pilot Project allows for the submission of electronic application records using Court Services Online for applications scheduled for 30 minutes or less in associate judges' chambers. In 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Attorney General's Court Services Branch, the Associate Judges Chambers Pilot Project was expanded to allow participants to appear in virtual chambers in most registries in the province. Looking forward to 2026, we hope to make the virtual chambers available in all registries. We are also considering whether to expand the availability of virtual chambers for longer matters. The use of virtual chambers is an important part of how the Court is working to increase access to justice outside of major population centres and to support the efficient use of judicial resources.

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Judicial Education

Judges have an ongoing professional obligation to stay current with developments in the law, enhance their judicial skills and learn about the social context in which they work. Continuing judicial education is essential for judges to provide the highest quality judicial services to the public. The Canadian Judicial Council guidelines for judicial professional development require judges to spend at least ten days per year at professional development programs including local court-based programs and national programs offered by the National Judicial Institute. The Court's Education Committee organizes two annual education conferences as well as monthly professional development sessions. More details about the Court's professional development programs are described in the Education Committee report on p. 43 of this Report.

Strategic Planning

The Court is currently engaged in a strategic planning process, with the intent of publishing the Court's first ever strategic plan later this year. The strategic plan will provide a framework for establishing priorities and operational objectives with a view to enhancing the Court's ability to carry out its core functions.

The principal cause of bumping is a mismatch between the volume of applications that litigants and counsel seek to have heard and determined and the availability of judges and associate judges to hear those matters.

THE WORK OF THE COURT

Civil and Family Long Chambers and Trials

Through most of 2025, the Court continued to struggle with having too few judges to meet the demand for trials and long chambers resulting in the need to reschedule ("bump") an unacceptably large number of trials and long chambers applications. The principal cause of bumping is a mismatch between the volume of applications that litigants and counsel seek to have heard and determined and the availability of judges and associate judges to hear those matters. The Court recognizes the burden and disruption that this causes for parties, litigants and counsel including from the expense of wasted preparation time, travel costs for witnesses and experts, and the general stress and anxiety that the lack of certainty brings.

Long Chambers

In 2025, 16.7% of all scheduled long chambers applications in British Columbia had to be rescheduled (bumped) because the Court was unable to

assign a judge for the scheduled date. The bumping rate only takes account of the long chambers applications for which dates were successfully scheduled; it does not reflect those which were unsuccessful in scheduling dates. The 2025 bumping rate marks an improvement from the rate of 19.1% in 2024; however, it is still too high.

Trials

The Supreme Court held 851 trials in 2025 while 111 scheduled trials had to be rescheduled. The Lower Mainland continued to be the region with the most trials, at 487 followed by Vancouver Island at 129, the Southern Interior at 162, and the Northern Interior at 73.

Trial Management Conferences

Data from 2025 continues the trend to fewer trial management conferences as the result of amendments to the *Supreme Court Civil Rules* and *Supreme Court Family Rules* that remove the mandatory trial management conferences for all civil and family proceedings in most proceedings. The move away from mandatory trial management conferences has allowed the Court to allocate its limited judicial resources to where they are necessary.

For more detailed information about conferences, long chambers applications and trials, please see Tables 3 - 13 at pp. 63 - 69 of this Report.

The Court must balance several competing obligations including completing criminal cases within a reasonable time and providing reasonable access to justice in the civil and family proceedings.

Criminal Caseload

The Court's criminal caseload continues to increase in volume and complexity. This is mainly the result of increases in a) sexual offence cases, b) long and complex cases, c) jury proceedings and d) direct indictments. To date, the Court has generally managed to complete its criminal cases within the timelines set out in *R. v. Jordan*. However, this has been because the Court has given priority to its criminal work over its civil and family work. The Court must balance several competing obligations including completing criminal cases within a reasonable time and providing reasonable access to justice in the civil and family proceedings.

Criminal Processes

Faced with a steady increase in its criminal work, the Court has introduced a number of measures designed to more effectively and efficiently manage Court's criminal caseload.

Assigning s. 551.1 Case Management Judges for Criminal Pre-trial Applications and Voir Dires

Associate Chief Justice Holmes issued a [Notice to the Profession](#) advising that case management judges may be assigned to hear applications and *voir dires*, and a different judge assigned to hear the trial. This measure helps the Court respond to the scheduling challenges posed when several different periods are needed for pre-trial applications or *voir dires* in addition to the trial. These challenges have increased significantly with the volume of criminal work in the Court. The measure is expected to help conserve judicial resources and to help ensure that applications and *voir dires* are heard as promptly as possible.

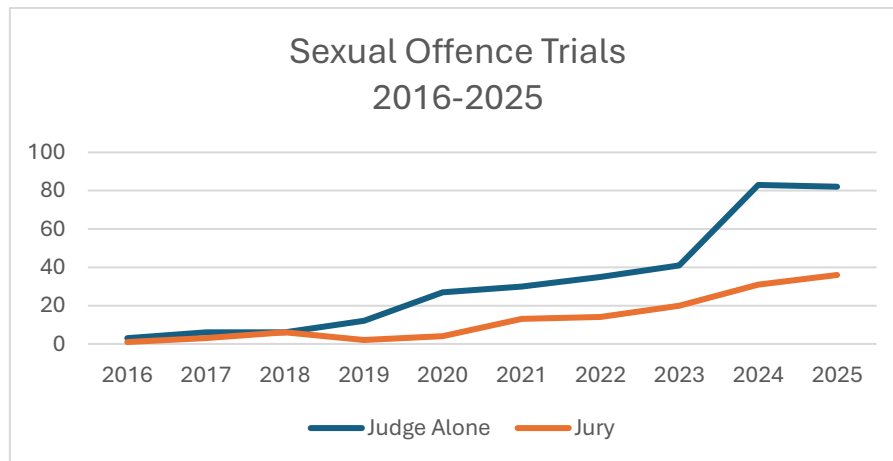
Stage 1 Applications under s. 276/Kinamore in Sexual Offence Cases

As another measure to help manage the volume of criminal cases, the Court is creating a desk order (written) process for stage 1 defence applications under s. 276 of the *Criminal Code* and Crown *Kinamore* applications. This is in the early phases of development.

Sexual Offences

Between 2016 and 2025, the Court heard over 450 sexual assault trials. The increase over the last 5 years has been dramatic. Sexual assault trials are difficult proceedings for all participants. They also present unique scheduling challenges for the Court given that most involve at least one to two pre-trial applications or *voir dire* proceedings held at separate times from each other and the trial, and because conventionally the same judge is assigned to the applications and to the trial. Because of their complexity, these cases typically require a great deal of case management, usually several and sometimes as many as eight to ten pre-trial conferences before the trial.

Sexual Offence Trials			
	Judge Alone	Jury	Total
2016	3	1	4
2017	6	3	9
2018	6	6	12
2019	12	2	14
2020	27	4	31
2021	30	13	43
2022	35	14	49
2023	41	20	61
2024	83	31	114
2025	82	36	118



Complex Criminal Cases

The increase in the number of long or particularly complex criminal cases in the Supreme Court that we have experienced over the last five years continues. The common features of complex criminal cases include multiple accused persons, serious charges (e.g., murder, organized crime offences, terrorism), extensive evidence (e.g., digital records, wiretap evidence, tracking data, documents and data seized under judicial authorization), numerous pre-trial applications and *voir dire* hearings, special security measures, and risks of delays. Complex criminal cases require significant judicial, administrative, and court resources from the time of the accused person’s first appearance in the Court through to the end of the process. This places a significant strain on the Court’s judicial and administrative resources, as well as on other system resources (e.g., courtroom availability, court clerks, and sheriffs).

The Court proactively manages the most complex criminal cases and assigns a case management judge early in the proceedings to oversee the pre-trial process. The Court’s process is set out in [Criminal Practice Direction 3 \(CPD-3\)](#). Another indicator of the increasing complexity of the Court’s criminal work is the increase in the number of criminal cases started by direct indictment. Many direct indictment cases had no preliminary inquiry and therefore require more court time in our Court than they would otherwise. Proceedings brought by direct indictment tend to be more serious and are less likely to resolve without a trial. The Court continues to see an increase in the number of direct indictment proceedings. There is also an increase in the number of appearances for direct indictment proceedings and proceedings being case-managed pursuant to CPD-3.

Direct Indictments		
Year	DI cases	Number of DI cases that started in the Provincial Court
2020	24	3
2021	30	6
2022	27	2
2023	41	15
2024	66	18
2025	87	33

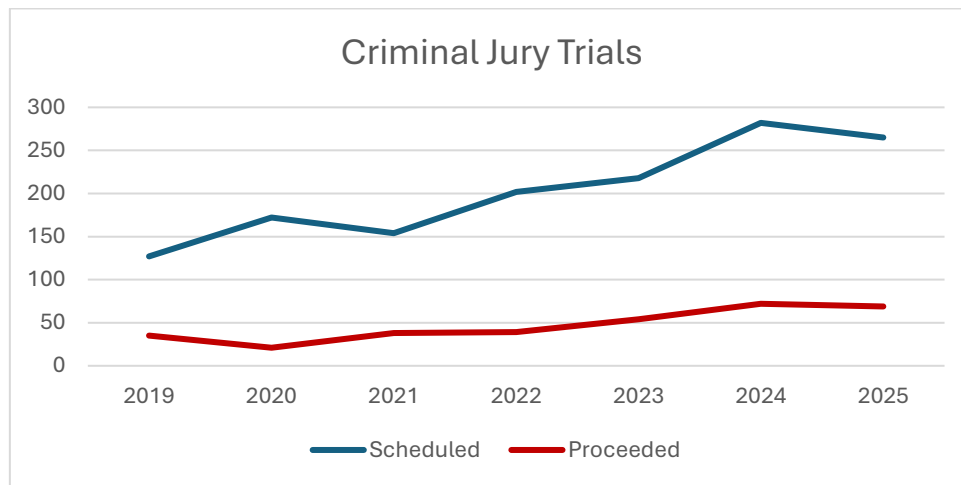
CPD-3 Appearance Days		
Year	CPD-3 or DI	CPD-3 Only
2020	477	341
2021	520	452
2022	497	350
2023	517	341
2024	637	366
2025	897	500

Criminal Jury Proceedings

The number of criminal jury trials continues to increase. Criminal jury trials have a significant impact on the work of the Court and draw heavily on judicial, courtroom, and other resources. The Court has a limited number of

courtrooms built to accommodate a jury. In addition, criminal jury trials typically require more court time than non-jury trials and they require more sheriff resources to support and manage the jury. Also, where a mistrial takes place (because the jury is unable to reach a verdict, or for some other reason) a second trial is necessary.

Criminal Jury Trials		
Year	Scheduled	Proceeded
2019	127	35
2020	172	21
2021	154	38
2022	202	39
2023	218	54
2024	282	72
2025	265	69



Detention Review Hearings

By the end of 2025, the Court had received almost 10,000 new s. 525 files, all opened since the start of new s. 525 process in 2019. Section 525 of the *Criminal Code* provides for a review of the detention of an accused person when that person’s trial is delayed. Before the decision in [R v. Myers, 2019 SCC 18](#), relatively few s. 525 files came to the Court for a detention review hearing. After the *Myers* decision, the Court worked with the Provincial Court judiciary, Crown counsel, defence counsel, Legal Aid BC, BC Corrections,

Court Services Branch, the BC Sheriff Service and others, to develop a process to ensure that accused persons detained pending trial in the Provincial Court or this Court are brought before the Court promptly to have their detention reviewed in accordance with s. 525 unless the detained accused waives the right to a hearing. This process, and the detention review hearings that result, are another aspect of the Court’s criminal work that has substantially increased.

Reasons For Judgment

Reserved Reasons for Judgment

A judgment, also called reasons for judgment or reasons, is the explanation that the court gives at the conclusion of a trial, hearing or application explaining why an order is being made. Reasons for judgment may be delivered in writing or given orally by the judge in the courtroom.

While occasionally a judge may be ready to provide their reasons for judgment immediately at the end of a hearing or trial, often they will need to take some time – hours, days, weeks, or months – to consider the matter before providing the parties with oral or written reasons. This is known as “reserving judgment”.

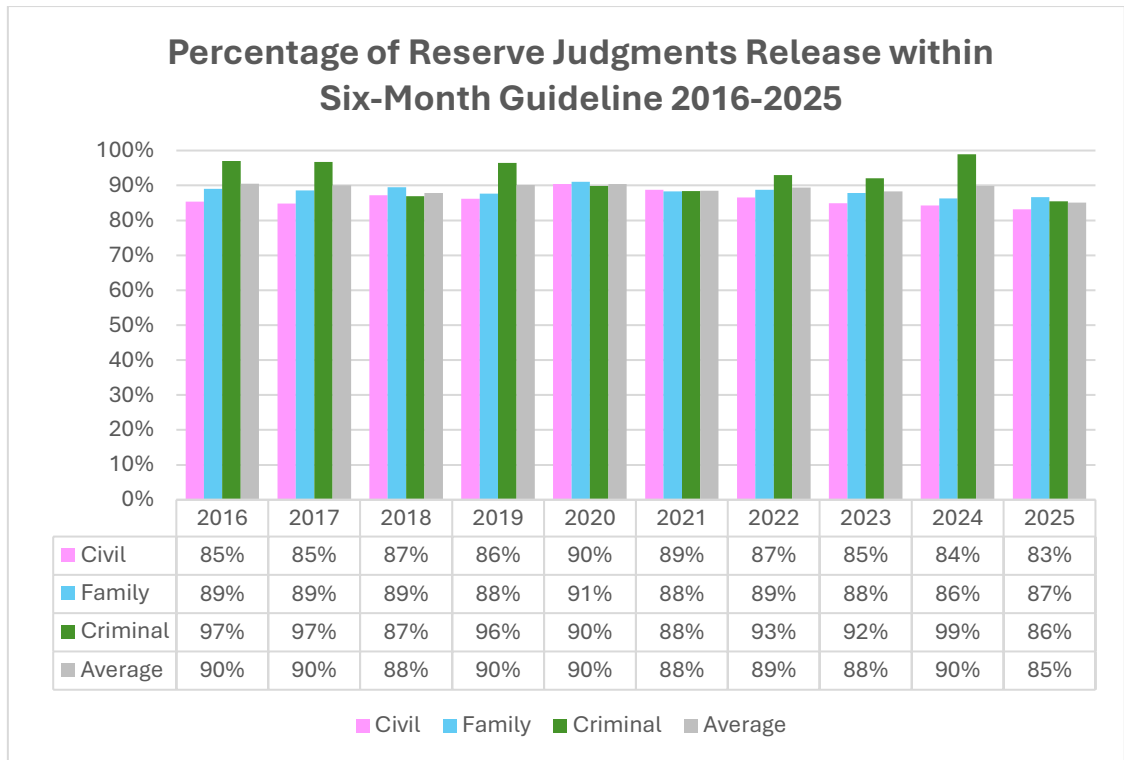
All judges strive to deliver their judgments as soon as possible. The length of time the judge may take to issue a judgment may depend on several factors, including:

- The urgency of the matter;
- The nature of the interests at stake;
- The length and complexity of the court proceeding;
- The level of assistance given to the Court by the parties;
- The judge’s workload including hearing other cases and writing other judgments; and
- The sufficiency of court and judicial administrative resources.

The Canadian Judicial Council has resolved that reserved judgments should be delivered within six months, except in special circumstances. (See s. 3.B.2 of the [Ethical Principles for Judges](#)).

All judges strive to deliver their judgements as soon as possible. The length of time the judge may take to issue a judgment may depend on several factors.

The chart that follows shows the percentage of Supreme Court reserve judgments delivered within six months as recommended by the Canadian Judicial Council, sorted by civil, criminal, family and total reserve judgments.



Notes:

1. For the purpose of this chart, the Court has counted only its reserved written judgments, as reserved oral judgments are usually delivered shortly after the conclusion of the hearing.
2. As this chart is focused on reserved written judgments issued by the Court, it is only capturing a portion of the criminal work done by the Court because:
 - a. most reasons for judgment issued by the Court in criminal cases are oral rather than written; and
 - b. jury trials do not result in written reasons for judgment – the jury simply renders a verdict at the conclusion of the trial. While the judge does not produce reasons for judgment, the judge must prepare the charge to the jury. A jury charge is a set of instructions given to a jury that outlines the legal standards and principles they must apply in their deliberations and an overview of the evidence heard during the trial. Jury charges can be complex, and their preparation is often times difficult, challenging and time-consuming.

Published Reasons for Judgment

The Court publishes reasons for judgment on the Court’s website. Reasons for judgment are generally available the day after they are released to the parties

(or their counsel). More information about the Court’s published reasons for judgment, can be found in Tables 14 – 16 at pp. 68-69 of this Report.

Access to the Court Record

The open court principle is a core part of Canada’s justice system, ensuring court proceedings and records are generally open to the public to promote transparency and confidence in the administration of justice. Public access is typically provided through attendance at court proceedings and through media reporting, as well as access to court records such as documents, recordings, judgments, and orders. In British Columbia, the Court oversees and determines appropriate access to court records, balancing openness with legal and constitutional considerations, while the Ministry of Attorney General Court Services Branch maintains the records and administers access through courthouse registries. Although openness is presumed, access may be restricted when necessary to protect other important interests.

Under the Supreme Court [Policy on Access to the Court Record](#), the process for requesting access to the court record varies depending on the nature of the proceeding (civil, family, or criminal) and the type of record being sought. Some records can be accessed directly from the registry or Court Service Online while others must be requested through a request form, or by bringing a court application on notice to the relevant parties. (For details, please consult the [Access Policy](#).)

The ability to provide timely access to the court record can be affected by various factors, including availability of staff resources and other tasks of priority to the judiciary and the registry. In addition, the timeframes required for access to records that are stored off-site will necessarily be longer than for records stored on-site at the courthouse.

In recent years, the Supreme Court has noticed a significant increase in the number of requests to access the court record submitted by journalists, members of the public, and academics. Many of these access requests relate to trials or other criminal proceedings that took place long ago, sometimes many decades ago; others seek access to the entire court file as opposed to specific records. The process of locating and reviewing archived records (most of which exist in paper format only, and which may include things like cassette tapes and handwritten notes) can be very time-consuming. It can also be challenging to ascertain whether court orders were made in the proceeding restricting access, and the extent to which those orders remain in effect.

The Court oversees and determines appropriate access to court records, balancing openness with legal and constitutional considerations, while the Ministry of Attorney General Court Services Branch maintains the records and administers access through courthouse registries.

These factors affect how long it takes the Court to consider and respond to these requests for access.

PRACTICE RESOURCES

Practice Directions

The Supreme Court’s formal processes and procedures are set out in the *Supreme Court Civil Rules*, the *Supreme Court Family Rules* and the *Supreme Court Criminal Rules*. The Court also issues practice directions and administrative notices to provide guidance in the conduct for applications, trials or other appearances in civil, family and criminal proceedings. The directions and notices are one of the tools used by the Court to

- manage cases efficiently, consistently, and in accordance with the law
- address gaps in the formal rules
- standardize the use of technology;
- develop new processes and procedures to address developments or gaps in the law (e.g., 525 Detention Review Process; automatic publication ban in relation to conferences in criminal cases per CPD-9) or introduce new ways of proceeding (e.g., AJ Pilot Project); and
- clarify court processes and expectations.

In 2025, the Court issued or amended a number of its practice directions and administrative notices:

Number	Title
<i>Civil Practice Directions</i>	
PD - 24	<i>Witness Oaths and Affirmations</i>
PD - 66	<i>Foreclosure Proceedings</i>
PD - 67	<i>Gowning Policy for Counsel</i>
PD - 68	<i>Associate Judges Chambers Pilot Project</i>
PD - 69	<i>Requirements for Written Submissions in Civil and Family Proceedings</i>
<i>Family Practice Directions</i>	
FPD - 20	<i>French Language and Bilingual Divorce Act Proceedings</i>

Number	Title
<i>Criminal Practice Directions</i>	
CPD - 4	<i>Procedure for Detention Reviews Under s. 525 of the Criminal Code</i>
CPD - 9	<i>Restriction on Publication of Information from Conferences in Criminal Proceedings</i>
CPD - 10	<i>Language of the Accused</i>
CPD - 11	<i>Notice of Applications to Challenge Potential Jurors for Cause</i>
<i>Administrative Notices</i>	
AN - 8	<i>Pre-Hearing Conferences in Registrars' Matters</i>
AN - 15	<i>Emergency After-Hours Applications in Vancouver - Civil & Family</i>
AN - 18	<i>General Requirements for Microsoft Teams Video Hearings</i>
AN - 20	<i>Service of Documents during the Postal Disruption</i>

The Court also rescinded a number of practice decisions and administrative notices. For more details please see the [Cumulative Index](#)

French Language Resources

In 2025, the Court launched a new collection of French language materials including practice directions, administrative notices, and other resources for parties and counsel. This collection aims to provide clearer, more helpful and more easily accessible information for parties and litigants to address the growing demand for French language resources flowing from recent amendments to the *Divorce Act* and developments in case law regarding constitutionally protected French language rights.

- [Criminal Law Materials](#)
- [Family Law Materials](#)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PUBLIC OUTREACH

In addition to their normal workload of hearing cases and applications, deciding issues, writing and issuing reasons for judgment, issuing desk order divorces and electronic orders, and presiding at case conferences, the Court's judges, associate judges and registrars participate in a wide variety of activities in their communities and devote considerable time to public outreach and education events. Judges, associate judges and the registrar regularly speak to high school students and preside at moot court

competitions. They speak at continuing legal education programs and conferences for both the legal profession and for more general audiences. Members of the Court welcome opportunities to contribute to a greater understanding of the justice system and its essential role as part of the foundation of our democratic society. In 2025, the judges, associate judges, and registrars of the Court volunteered with a many local, provincial, federal and international organizations and at several events and conferences, including the following:

American College of Trial Lawyers	Inns of Court
Amici Curiae Friends of Court Society	Insolvency Institute of Canada
Annual Review of Insolvency Law and Society	International Association of Women Judges
BGuiled Debate Society	International Bar Association
Black Law Students' Association of Canada - Julius Alexander Isaac Moot	International Insolvency Institute
British Columbia Bankruptcy Practice Committee	International Organization of Judicial Training
British Columbia Council of Administrative Tribunals	International Society for the Reform of Criminal Law
British Columbia Law Schools Moot Program	International Society of Barristers
British Columbia Model Insolvency Order Committee	International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation
Canadian Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals	Judges and Juniors Program
Canadian Bar Association, BC Branch	Justice Education Society
Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice	Kamloops Bar Association
Canadian Insolvency Judges	Kelowna Bar Association
Canadian Judicial Council	L'Association des juristes d'expression française de la Colombie-Britannique
Canadian Superior Courts Judges Association	Law Society of British Columbia
Capilano University	Law Students Legal Advice Program
Commonwealth Lawyers Association	Le Barreau du Québec
Continuing Legal Education BC	Medical Legal Society of B.C.
Courthouse Libraries	National Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics
Dalhousie University, Schulich School of Law	National Judicial Institute
Department of Justice National Litigation Symposium	New Westminster Bar Association
East Barriere Lake Ratepayers Association	Osgoode Hall Law School
Family Law Advocates Group	Penticton Bar Association
Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers	Rise Women's Legal Centre
Fraser Valley Bar Association	Sedona Canada Steering Committee
Gale Cup Moot	Selkirk College
Immigration and Refugee Board, Immigration Appeal Division	Sopinka Cup Moot
	South Asian Bar Association of British Columbia
	The Advocates Society
	Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law
	Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia

Turnaround Management Association
University of British Columbia, Allard School of
Law
University of British Columbia, Alumni Association
University of British Columbia, School of
Journalism, Writing, and Media

University of Victoria, Faculty of Law
Vancouver Bar Association
Wilson Moot
Women's Probus Club of Vancouver
Young Insolvency Professionals
Victoria Bar Association

COURT GOVERNANCE

To carry out our responsibilities for the administration of the judges, associate judges, registrars and for the administration of the Court more generally, we receive assistance from several internal court committees.

To carry out our responsibilities for the administration of the judges, associate judges, registrars and for the administration of the Court more generally, we receive assistance from several internal court committees. The Executive Committee supports us with respect to the administration of the Court. The Court is supported by three substantive law committees: the Criminal Law Committee, the Family Law Committee, and the Civil Law Committee which consider developments in the law and in practice and procedure in their specific areas of the law. The Court also has a number of specialized committees including the Education Committee, the Law Clerks Committee, the Public Affairs Committee, the Courthouse Facilities Committee, the Joint Courts Technology Committee and the Library Committee. The focus of each of these committees is varied; however, they all share a common purpose of considering matters within their subject matter expertise and providing advice and guidance to us and to the Court generally. The membership of these committees is drawn from the judges, associate judges, registrars, legal counsel, and judicial staff. Through their work, the committees strengthen and enhance the Court's effective and efficient management. Reports from the Court's committees begin on p. 35 of this report. The Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice are grateful for the significant contributions made by the members of the various committees to the life and work of the Court.

JUDICIAL POSITIONS

As of December 31, 2025, the Supreme Court had 109 justices: 86 regular justices and 23 supernumerary judges leaving the Court with 7 judicial vacancies. The federal government is responsible for appointing judges to fill judicial vacancies. Members of the Court who are retiring or electing supernumerary status typically provide at least 6 months' written notice. The Court appreciates efforts made by the federal government to fill judicial vacancies promptly. In 2025, the federal government appointed 10 new

justices to the Supreme Court; details about the Court’s newest judges and associate judges begin at p. 26 of this Report.

Despite the appointments, the seemingly intractable problem of the Court being chronically short of its full-time complement continues to affect access to timely and effective justice. The fact of vacancies increase the workload for the Court’s existing judges and place an unfair and unsustainable burden on the Court’s internal staff resources that support all the members of the Court. In 2025, the Court asked the federal government to increase the number of judicial positions on the Supreme Court by adding a second Associate Chief Justice position and a number of regular judge positions. The request for additional judges reflects the fact that the Court simply lacks sufficient judicial resources to properly and effectively deal with the volume of cases coming through our doors.

The addition of a second Associate Chief Justice would distribute Court leadership responsibilities more effectively.

The current leadership structure of the Supreme Court which has been in place since 1990 when the Supreme Court and the County Court merged creating a single court, has not kept pace with the growth of the Court. The addition of a second Associate Chief Justice would distribute Court leadership responsibilities more effectively, allowing for greater focus on the critical tasks of judicial administration and supporting the growing number of judges and cases in the province. It would also address the disparity that currently exists between British Columbia and smaller superior trial courts across the country, most of which have two associate chief justices.

The Court’s complement of associate judges also needs to be increased. Currently, there are 12 full-time associate judges and two senior (part-time) associate judges. The work of associate judges is essential to ensuring litigants obtain a “just, speedy and inexpensive determination of every proceeding on its merits”. As the work of the Supreme Court continues to shift to more chambers work, the role and work of the associate judges becomes increasingly important for efficient court operations. On just about every day, the matters that are scheduled to be heard by associate judges exceed the available court time by a significant margin. An increase in the number of associate judge positions is necessary for the Court to meet its obligations to the public in an efficient, timely and effective manner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to recognize the dedication, extensive efforts, and wide-ranging contributions of the Court’s staff, including the Judicial Administrative

Assistants, Document Management Clerks, Judicial Law Clerks, Library Staff, and the Judicial Administration team. While judges are the public face of the Court, the behind the scenes work of this group of people who work at courthouses across the province and the professionalism and steadfast commitment they bring to their work is integral to the effective administration and daily delivery of justice to the people of the province.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to Heidi McBride, KC, Chief Legal and Executive Officer of the Superior Courts Judiciary, for her calm, consistent and exemplary leadership in guiding the Court's operations. We are also grateful for the work of the Court's Legal Counsel for their valued legal expertise. We are also indebted to Ryan Wirth, Director of Information Technology, for his direction and continued technical support of the Court's network, and Jessica Gill, Manager of Judicial Support Services for her leadership of the team of judicial administrative assistants that work with all members of the Court. The Court, its judges, associate judges and the registrar are well-served by the professionalism, commitment, and integrity of this group of people and the teams they lead. Their combined efforts are fundamental to the Court's ability to fulfil its duties to the public.

We also wish to recognize the significant contributions of Cindy Friesen, the Director of Supreme Court Scheduling, who retired from her position in early 2026. Ms. Friesen had held her position since 1997 and prior to that had worked in Supreme Court Scheduling for over 15 years in a number of different roles. The Supreme Court Scheduling department that Ms. Friesen led is responsible for scheduling the work of approximately 125 judges, associate judges and the registrar across the Court's 30 registries. Ms. Friesen was at the heart of that work dealing with a constantly changing set of demands and requirements – from developments in case law, legislative amendments, rule changes as well as from operational challenges such as travel disruptions, unexpected absences and judicial vacancies. It is hard to overstate the importance of Ms. Friesen and her team and the work they do to support the Court's operations. We are grateful for Ms. Friesen's unwavering commitment to the Court and for her service to all of the litigants and counsel that appear in the Court. We wish her the best on a well deserved retirement.

The Court also recognizes the continued dedication of the Attorney General, Court Services Branch including court clerks, registry staff, and sheriffs who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Their contributions range from managing court records, supporting registries, providing essential courtroom and courthouse security and managing juries and they are integral to the Court's functioning.

Finally, we wish to express our thanks to our judicial colleagues – the judges, associate judges, and registrars of the Supreme Court for their support and insight on matters relating to the operation of the Court.

Ronald A. Skolrood
Chief Justice

Heather J. Holmes
Associate Chief Justice

THE COURT'S ROLE AND STRUCTURE

SUPREME COURT

The Supreme Court of British Columbia has jurisdiction to hear and decide any matter that comes before it, unless a statute or rule limits that authority or grants exclusive jurisdiction to some other court or tribunal. The Supreme Court's inherent jurisdiction allows it to control its own processes and procedures to ensure fairness and to prevent abuse of process. The Supreme Court hears civil, family, and criminal cases, as well as appeals from the Provincial Court. The Supreme Court also reviews the decisions of certain administrative tribunals, including the Labour Relations Board, Workers Compensation Appeal Tribunal, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal, and residential tenancies arbitration decisions.

CHIEF JUSTICE AND ASSOCIATE CHIEF JUSTICE

The Chief Justice is responsible for the management and direction of matters related to judicial functions, which includes matters related to the preparation, management, and adjudication of proceedings in the Court, as well as the assignment of judges. From time to time, these responsibilities are delegated to the Associate Chief Justice.

SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

As of December 31, 2025, the Supreme Court had 109 justices: the Chief Justice, the Associate Chief Justice, 90 full-time justices, and 19 supernumerary justices. As of December 31, 2025, there were 5 vacancies, meaning, no new judges had been appointed to replace full-time judges who were appointed to the Court of Appeal, elected supernumerary status or retired.¹

Section 2(2) of the *Supreme Court Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 443 provides that the Supreme Court consists of 95 full-time justices in addition to the Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice. A judicial vacancy is created when a full-time judge retires or elects to become a supernumerary judge. The retirement of a supernumerary judge does not create a judicial vacancy on the Supreme Court.

¹ Section 2(2) of the *Supreme Court Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 443 provides that the Supreme Court consists of 95 full time justices in addition to the Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice. A judicial vacancy is created when a full time judge retires, elects to become a supernumerary judge or is appointed to a different court; the retirement of a supernumerary judge does not create a judicial vacancy.

SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE JUDGES

Associate judges are judicial officers appointed by the provincial government by Order in Council after it has received recommendations from an ad hoc committee consisting of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Attorney General, the President of the Law Society of British Columbia, and the President of the B.C. Branch of the Canadian Bar Association.

As of December 31, 2025, the Supreme Court had 14 associate judges: 12 full-time associate judges and two senior associate judges. The associate judges are resident in Abbotsford, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria. Associate judges sit in all 30 Supreme Court registries across the province. They also conduct remote hearings using audio and videoconferencing.

Associate judges preside in civil and family chambers and hear applications in chambers on a wide variety of matters, including interim orders in family proceedings, interlocutory applications in civil proceedings such as production of documents, and foreclosure proceedings. Associate judges also have the jurisdiction of registrars and preside as registrars throughout the province as required.

SUPREME COURT REGISTRAR

The Supreme Court has one registrar who is resident in Vancouver but regularly sits in other registries. Like judges and associate judges, the registrar also conducts remote hearings using audio and videoconferencing.

The registrar is appointed pursuant to s. 13 of the *Supreme Court Act*. The registrar hears a wide variety of matters, including reviews of lawyers' accounts, bankruptcy discharge applications and bankruptcy taxations, assessments of bills of costs, subpoenas to debtors, passing of accounts, and references of various types. The registrar also settles orders.

The registrar is also responsible for overseeing the province's deputy district registrars, who work in court registries across the province. The registrar serves as a liaison between the Court and the Ministry of Attorney General Court Services Branch regarding registry issues including practice, procedure and policy.

SUPREME COURT REGISTRIES AND LOCATIONS

The Supreme Court is a circuit court in which all the judges and associate judges travel throughout the province to preside over cases. The Supreme Court sits in

seven judicial districts and has resident judges in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Courtenay, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Nelson, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam, Prince George, Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria, and Williams Lake. The Supreme Court also sits as required in other locations that do not have a resident judge or associate judge including Campbell River, Cranbrook, Courtenay, Dawson Creek, Duncan, Fort St. John, Penticton, Port Alberni, Powell River, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Revelstoke, Rossland, Salmon Arm, Smithers, and Terrace.



CHANGES TO THE COURT'S MEMBERSHIP

APPOINTMENTS

The Honourable Justice Lorianna Bennett

The Honourable Justice Lorianna Bennett was appointed to the Supreme Court in Kamloops on February 28, 2025. Justice Bennett was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Justice Sheri A. Donegan was appointed to the Court of Appeal.

Justice Bennett received a Bachelor of Science degree in animal biology from Thompson Rivers University in 1994. In 1997, she earned a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Alberta and was admitted to the British Columbia Bar in 1998.

Justice Bennett spent the entirety of her legal career practicing in Kamloops at Paul & Company, becoming a partner in 2013, focusing on family law representing both private and legal aid clients in Provincial and Supreme courts, with additional time spent in personal injury litigation and solicitor's work.

Justice Bennett was appointed to the Provincial Court of British Columbia in 2021 with assigned chambers in Kamloops. Justice Bennett has also instructed at Thompson Rivers University and volunteered extensively throughout Kamloops, earning her recognition as a TRU Distinguished Alumni for Community Service as well as from the British Columbia branch of the Canadian Bar Association. Justice Bennett has served on several government boards, including the BC Employment & Assistance Appeal Tribunal, the BC Health Professions Review Board and the BC Provincial Health Services Authority and Emergency Health Services of BC.

The Honourable Justice Richard S. Fowler

The Honourable Justice Richard S. Fowler was appointed to the Supreme Court in Vancouver on February 28, 2025. Justice Fowler was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Justice Nigel P. Kent resigned.

Justice Fowler earned a Bachelor of Sciences from the University of Birmingham in England before relocating to Montreal in 1990. Justice Fowler earned his LL.B. from McGill University in 1994 and was called to the British Columbia Bar in 1995. He was called to the Yukon Bar in 2011.

Justice Fowler practiced criminal law mostly in his own firms, Gibbons Fowler and later Fowler and Blok. He has regularly appeared as counsel before the Court of

Appeal for British Columbia and the Court of Appeal of Yukon and has argued cases before the Supreme Court of Canada.

A former adjunct professor at the Peter A. Allard School of Law, Justice Fowler was a regular contributor to various continuing legal education conferences and has appeared at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, and the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. He was a member of the Legal Aid Committee of the BC Law Society before helping found the Association of Legal Aid Lawyers and has been a member of the executive and the board of governors of the Trial Lawyers Association of British Columbia. He was awarded the University of Calgary Law School Milvain Chair in Advocacy and was appointed King's Counsel in 2014.

The Honourable Justice Julie K. Gibson

The Honourable Justice Julie K. Gibson was appointed to the Supreme Court in Victoria on November 17, 2025. Justice Gibson filled the vacancy created when Mr. Justice Geoffrey R. J. Gaul elected to become a supernumerary judge.

Justice Gibson was born and raised in Toronto. She earned her Honours Bachelor of Science (Loran Scholar) from the University of Toronto in 1999, and a Juris Doctor from the University of British Columbia in 2002. Justice Gibson was called to the British Columbia Bar in 2003. Justice Gibson obtained a Master of Laws (Administrative Law) from Osgoode Hall Law School in 2013.

Justice Gibson practised at Harper Grey LLP in Vancouver for more than 15 years and was appointed to the Civil Resolution Tribunal from 2015-2021. Justice Gibson then joined the Ministry of Attorney General, Legal Services Branch, where she was lead counsel in several cases about COVID-19 pandemic public health measures.

Justice Gibson spent many years as a volunteer lawyer coordinator for the Law Students' Legal Advice Program (UBC's Britannia Clinic) and was co-Chair of the Policy and Research Committee with the British Columbia Council of Administrative Tribunals. There, she introduced and supported strategies to make administrative justice more inclusive and accessible. In addition, Justice Gibson has guest lectured at Uvic Law School, co-written a chapter for CLE-BC's Administrative Law Practice Manual and served as a long-standing Legal Member of the BC Cancer Agency's Research Ethics Board.

The Honourable Justice C. Richard Hewson

The Honourable Justice C. Richard Hewson was appointed to the Supreme Court in Kelowna on February 28, 2025. Justice Hewson was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Justice Gary P. Weatherill elected to become a supernumerary judge.

Born in Kingston, Ontario, Justice Hewson spent a year travelling abroad after graduating from secondary school, followed by enrolment in the Royal Military College. In 1987, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History and promptly joined the Canadian Army, completing a peacekeeping tour in Cyprus in 1988. Justice Hewson served at a series of postings both in Canada and abroad, commanding infantry platoons in Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the Canadian Airborne Regiment. In 1994, he earned his law degree from the University of Victoria and was admitted to the British Columbia Bar in 1995.

Justice Hewson articulated and began practicing law at Bolton Muldoon in Vancouver before establishing a criminal law practice in the Okanagan. In 2013, he was appointed to the Provincial Court of British Columbia where he presided over family, civil, child protection, and criminal cases. Justice Hewson sat in the Kootenays, the Okanagan, and the Thompson Valley, as well as on a circuit court in the land of Sekani people at Tsay Keh Dene and Kwadacha. Justice Hewson was a frequent presenter at judicial education seminars and also worked on the Provincial Court's Criminal Law and Judicial Independence Committees.

The Honourable Justice Gregory W. Koturbash

The Honourable Justice Gregory W. Koturbash was appointed to the Supreme Court in Kelowna on November 17, 2025. Justice Koturbash filled the vacancy created when Justice D. Allan Betton resigned.

Originally from Saskatchewan, Justice Koturbash obtained a combined Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Juris Doctor from the University of Saskatchewan in 1992 before being called to the bar of Saskatchewan in 1993 and the bar of British Columbia in 1998. Justice Koturbash worked for the BC Prosecution Service until he was appointed to the Provincial Court in 2012. At the time of his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Koturbash was the Regional Administrative Judge for the Interior Region.

Justice Koturbash has mentored future members of the legal profession as a sessional faculty member at Thompson Rivers University, Faculty of Law. He has authored texts on Canadian criminal law and contributed extensively to judicial

education, as well as national discussions on the evolving mergence of artificial intelligence and the justice system.

The Honourable Justice Lorne D. Lachance

The Honourable Justice Lorne D. Lachance was appointed to the Supreme Court in New Westminster on November 17, 2025. Justice Lachance filled the vacancy created when Madam Justice Shelley C. Fitzpatrick elected to become a supernumerary judge.

Justice Lachance earned his law degree at the University of Ottawa in 1991 and was called to the Ontario Bar in 1993, moving to British Columbia the following year and being called to the British Columbia bar in 1995.

After five years focusing on civil litigation, employment, and criminal law in a general practice firm, Justice Lachance joined the Department of Justice Canada in 2000, where he conducted civil litigation involving torts, contracts, regulatory, administrative, and constitutional laws. Justice Lachance also gained expertise in class actions, was a founding member of the department's national class-action committee and a member of the Federal Court's Bench and Bar Class Committee for class actions. In 2023, Justice Lachance joined the Attorney General of British Columbia as a senior counsel then was promoted to Deputy Supervising Counsel.

Throughout his legal career Justice Lachance advocated before all court levels in British Columbia as well as the Federal Court, Federal Court of Appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada. He was also a regular organizer of and contributor to continuing legal education conferences, a principal to numerous articling students and a mentor to counsel.

The Honourable Justice Julia E. Lawn

The Honourable Justice Julia E. Lawn was appointed to the Supreme Court in Vancouver on March 7, 2025. Justice Lawn filled the vacancy created when Justice Heather MacNaughton was appointed to the Court of Appeal.

A native Ontarian born in Brockville, Justice Lawn has spent most of her life in British Columbia. After obtaining her BA in 1991 and an LLB in 1997, both from the University of Toronto, Justice Lawn clerked at the British Columbia Supreme Court. She was called to the British Columbia Bar in 1998.

For twenty five years, Justice Lawn specialized in legal research and, eventually, served in a management capacity at the Vancouver commercial litigation boutique of Nathanson Schachter & Thompson LLP. She has served as a director on the

boards of the British Columbia Law Institute and the Mulgrave Independent School Society.

Justice Lawn has written articles on injunctions and on section 8 of the Charter and is the author of two chapters of *Government Liability: Law and Practice* (Horsman JA and Morley J, eds).

The Honourable Justice Kate Saunders

The Honourable Justice Kate Saunders was appointed to the Supreme Court in Victoria on November 17, 2025. Justice Saunders filled the vacancy created when Madam Justice Barbara M. Young elected to become a supernumerary judge.

Justice Saunders graduated from the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Law in 2006. She was called to the British Columbia Bar in 2007 and to the Alberta Bar in 2009.

Justice Saunders' legal career focused on civil and public law litigation and she spent the first decade of her career in private practice appearing as counsel before all levels of court in British Columbia and Alberta, as well as before many administrative tribunals. In 2015, Justice Saunders joined the Legal Services Branch with the BC Ministry of Attorney General where she practised until her appointment. In 2019, she became Supervising Counsel of the Legal Services Branch's Litigation Group.

Justice Saunders was appointed King's Counsel in 2024 and in 2025 she received the King Charles III Coronation Medal. Justice Saunders served as a sessional instructor at the UVIC Faculty of Law, a lawyer adjudicator with the Law Society of BC Tribunal, and board member of the Advocates' Society, the Lawyers Assistance Program, and various research ethics boards. In 2010, Justice Saunders was recognized for contributions to her community with the CBA (National) Young Lawyers Pro Bono Award.

The Honourable Justice Mark G. Underhill

The Honourable Justice Mark G. Underhill was appointed to the Supreme Court in Vancouver on February 28, 2025. Justice Underhill was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Justice E. David Crossin retired.

Justice Underhill was born and raised in King City, Ontario, and obtained a Bachelor of Commerce from Queen's University in 1992. He obtained a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Victoria in 1995 before being admitted to the British Columbia Bar in 1996.

After practicing with Arvay Finlay for ten years, Justice Underhill started his own firm in 2005. In 2017, he reconstituted Arvay Finlay with the late Joseph J. Arvay, O.C., O.B.C., Q.C. and other former firm members. With a special expertise in Aboriginal, administrative and environmental law, Justice Underhill acted for numerous First Nations across the country in governance and Aboriginal title and rights matters, as well as various administrative tribunals and independent officers of the legislature at all levels of Court, including the Supreme Court of Canada.

Justice Underhill was President and Chair of the Board of Directors of West Coast Environmental Law, and the founding Vice President of the Pacific Centre for Environmental Law and Litigation. Justice Underhill was appointed King's Counsel in 2022.

The Honourable Justice John N. Walker

The Honourable Justice John. N. Walker was appointed to the Supreme Court in Vancouver on February 28, 2025. Justice Walker was appointed to fill the vacancy created when Justice Kathleen M. Ker elected to become a supernumerary judge.

Born and raised in Delta, BC, Justice Walker obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology from Simon Fraser University in 1991, and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Victoria in 1994. Admitted to the British Columbia Bar in 1995, he articulated and practiced at Chilliwack's Patten Crabtree before joining the British Columbia Prosecution Service as Crown counsel in 1997.

Starting in the Surrey office, Justice Walker later worked in Vancouver as a member of the Air India Prosecution team. In 2003, he joined what is now the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC), acquiring a wealth of experience in conducting trials and appeals, advising on complex investigations, and acting as a Crown agent for wiretap authorizations. His practice largely involved complex criminal organization prosecutions, conspiracies, and wiretap matters. Justice Walker represented the Crown on a significant number of appeals in both the British Columbia Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada.

Justice Walker was a member of the National Litigation Committee, Confidential Informer and Agent Committee, and the British Columbia Appeals Committee, also regularly providing training to police agencies and Crown counsel at the PPSC's annual School for Prosecutors. He taught Canadian Law for Legal Interpreters and Translators at Simon Fraser University from 2014 to 2023.

Associate Judge Amy Peck

Associate Judge Amy Peck was appointed to the Supreme Court in Vancouver on September 5, 2025.

Associate Judge Peck was born and raised in Surrey, BC. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of British Columbia in 2000 and her law degree, also from the University of British Columbia, in 2003, graduating as the Law Society Gold Medallist. After clerking at the Supreme Court of British Columbia, Associate Judge Peck was called to the BC Bar in 2005. She pursued her litigation career in the construction litigation group at Borden Ladner Gervais' Vancouver office until 2012 and then served as in-house counsel at O2E Brands Inc. and Western Forest Products. She moved back into private practice at Whitelaw Twining in 2019 and, as a partner there, worked in commercial litigation and professional liability, specializing in real estate claims, fiduciary duty claims, and general contract disputes.

Associate Judge Peck was also an ad hoc tribunal member with the Civil Resolution Tribunal from 2017-2020, where she adjudicated strata and small claims disputes. Associate Judge Peck is known for her professionalism in high-conflict matters, especially with self-represented litigants, and a strong commitment to access to justice.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE COURT OF APPEAL

The Honourable Justice Michael J. Brundrett

The Honourable Justice Michael J. Brundrett was appointed to the Court of Appeal on November 17, 2025. Justice Brundrett filled the vacancy created when Justice Patrice M. E. Abrioux elected to become a supernumerary judge. Justice Brundrett his law degree from the University of Toronto in 1991 and was called to the BC bar in 1992. Justice Brundrett was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2017.

The Honourable Justice Amy D. Francis

The Honourable Justice Amy D. Francis was appointed to the Court of Appeal in Vancouver on November 17, 2025. Justice Francis filled the vacancy created when Madam Justice Lauri Ann Fenlon elected to become a supernumerary judge. Justice Francis obtained her law degree from the University of Toronto in 2000 and was called to the Ontario bar in 2001 and to the BC Bar in 2006. Justice Francis was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2019.

The Honourable Justice Heather MacNaughton

The Honourable Justice Heather MacNaughton was appointed to the Court of Appeal on March 7, 2025. Justice MacNaughton filled the vacancy created when Justice David C. Harris elected to become a supernumerary judge. Justice MacNaughton her law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School in 1982 and was admitted to the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1984. Justice MacNaughton was appointed an associate judge of the Supreme Court in 2011 and as a justice of the Supreme Court in 2016.

The Honourable Justice Andrew P. A. Mayer

The Honourable Justice Andrew P. A. Mayer was appointed to the Court of Appeal on March 3, 2025. Justice Mayer filled the vacancy created when Justice Susan A. Griffin elected to become a supernumerary judge. Justice Mayer obtained a law degree from the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University in 1999 and was called to the bar of British Columbia in 2000. Justice Mayer was appointed to the British Columbia Supreme Court in 2017.

The Honourable Justice Lisa A. Warren

The Honourable Justice Lisa Warren was appointed to the Court of Appeal on March 3, 2025. Justice Warren filled the vacancy created when Justice Ron A. Skolrood was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Justice Warren obtained her law degree from the University of British Columbia in 1990 and was admitted to the BC bar in 1991. Justice Warren was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2013.

RETIREMENTS

The Honourable Mr. Justice E. David Crossin

The Honourable Justice E. David Crossin retired on February 19, 2025. Justice Crossin obtained a law degree from the University of British Columbia in 1976 and was called to the bar in 1977. Mr. Justice Crossin was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2017. Prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Crossin had a diverse litigation practice including criminal law, civil and commercial litigation, and administrative law. Justice Crossin was a member of the Court's Criminal Law Committee and a regular contributor to the Court's education events.

The Honourable Justice Nigel P. Kent

The Honourable Justice Nigel P. Kent retired on February 3, 2025. Mr. Justice Kent obtained a law degree from Dalhousie University in 1981 and was called to the Alberta bar in 1982 and the British Columbia bar in 1991. Justice Kent was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2013. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Justice Kent practice areas included civil litigation, insurance law, corporate and commercial law, personal injury, and professional liability law. Apart from his judicial duties, Mr. Justice Kent was a member of the Court's Civil Law Committee and a frequent contributor at the Court's education conferences.

The Honourable Justice Catherine A. Wedge

The Honourable Justice Catherine Wedge retired on December 31, 2025. Justice Wedge obtained a law degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1980 and was called to the British Columbia Bar in 1981. Justice Wedge was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2001. Prior to her appointment, Justice Wedge practiced union-side labour and employment law. Justice Wedge was a long-serving member of the Court's Criminal Law Committee and the Public Affairs Committee. Justice Wedge was also a regular contributor to the Court's education conferences as well as those presented by the National Judicial Institute and the Canadian Institute for the Administration of Justice.

Associate Judge Carolyn Bouck

Associate Judge Bouck retired on June 30, 2025. Associate Judge Bouck obtained a law degree from the University of Victoria in 1986 and was called to the British Columbia bar in 1987. Associate Judge Bouck was appointed District Registrar of the Supreme Court in 2002 and in 2009, she was appointed as an Associate Judge. Prior to her appointment, Associate Judge Bouck's practice involved civil and commercial litigation and some criminal work. Associate Judge Bouck was a long-serving member of the Court's Civil Law Committee.



Photo: Pedro Costa

COMMITTEE REPORTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Maisonville (*Chair*)

Chief Justice Skolrood (*ex officio*)

Associate Chief Justice Holmes (*ex officio*)

Justice Basran

Mr. Justice Caldwell

Justice Devlin (*until May 2025*)

Mr. Justice Hori

Justice Jackson

Justice MacNaughton (*until March 2025*)

Justice Norell

Madam Justice Sharma

Justice Warren (*until March 2025*)

Justice Wilson

Associate Judge Harper

Heidi McBride, KC, *Chief Legal & Executive Officer (ex officio)*

Jennifer Millerd, *Legal Counsel*



Kamloops Law Courts

MANDATE

The Executive Committee of the Supreme Court of British Columbia meets monthly to assist the Chief Justice and Associate Chief Justice in formulating and implementing policy initiatives and in coordinating the work of Court committees.

MEMBERSHIP

The judicial membership of the Committee represents their regions (Vancouver, New Westminster and the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, Okanagan/Kootenays, Kamloops/North), with the Associate Judges and Registrars also having a representative. Members are elected to three-year terms, with a two-term limit.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Committee's work included the ongoing liaison of the Court with government and external organizations such as the Canadian Bar Association and the Law Society. Issues addressed by the Committee included strategic planning for the Court; the membership of Court committees; courthouse facilities issues and renovation projects; legislative changes likely to impact court operations; updates to the Court's Policy on

Access to the Court Record; updates to internal court manuals, policies and protocols; and proposed amendments to practice directions.

The Committee is grateful to Jennifer Millerd for her support of its work.

CIVIL LAW COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Milman (*Chair*)

Justice Baker

Justice Blake

Justice Caldwell

Justice Giltrow

Justice Kirchner

Justice Latimer

Justice Matthews

Justice Stephens

Justice Thomas

Justice Veenstra

Associate Judge Vos

Lisa Phillips, *Legal Counsel*



Chilliwack Law Courts

MANDATE

This committee considers developments in civil practice and procedure and provides input on these matters to the Chief Justice, Associate Chief Justice and other members of the Court.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Court struck the Civil and Family Chambers Practice Working Group to review chambers practice and to recommend reforms to reduce delay and increase efficiency. As part of that work, in July, the Court held a public consultation to seek feedback about issues arising in chambers practice as well as suggestions for improvement. The Court heard from litigants, lawyers, law firms, and organizations representing legal professionals about delay in accessing chambers and inefficient use of chambers time, and the associated impacts on court users. A summary of the feedback is available on the Court's website. The Court extends its sincere appreciation to those who took the time to participate.

Over the next year, the Chambers Practice Working Group, informed by the feedback arising from the consultation, will develop recommendations for reforms to chambers practice. Some changes to current practice will require further engagement, including with Court Services Branch and the Supreme Court Civil and Family Rules Committee. The Court anticipates adopting a phased approach to implementation of reforms.

The Court remains committed to continuing to engage about changes to civil practice and procedure in future, as part of its efforts to achieve a more responsive, user-centred justice system.

COURTHOUSE FACILITIES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

- Justice A. Ross (*Chair*)
- Mr. Justice Baird
- Madam Justice Church
- Justice Douglas
- Heidi McBride, KC,
Chief Legal & Executive Officer



Kelowna Law Courts

MANDATE

The mandate of the Committee is to provide facilities-related assistance, support and advice to the Chief Justice and the Associate Chief Justice.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the committee was involved in a number of facilities projects including:

- Completion of renovations of the former Law Courts Inn space at the Vancouver Law Courts.
- Continued building maintenance of the New Westminster Law Courts involving remediation of the exterior cladding, replacement of windows and major structural repairs in the secure parking area.
- Continued renovations to the Port Coquitlam Laws Courts including building maintenance issues (new roof, membrane replacements) and redesign and renovations of courtrooms and the registry to accommodate Supreme Court operations.

The Committee also consulted on a number of smaller projects in 2025.

CRIMINAL LAW COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Devlin (*Chair*)
Associate Chief Justice Holmes
Madam Justice Chan
Justice Doyle
Madam Justice Duncan
Mr. Justice Gaul
Justice Ker
Justice Maisonville
Madam Justice Murray
Justice Schultes
Justice Smith
Justice Tammen
Justice Wedge
Claire Wilson, *Legal Counsel*
Natasha Edgar, *Legal Counsel*



Cranbrook Law Courts

MANDATE

The role of the Criminal Law Committee is to consider developments in criminal practice and procedure and to provide input on these matters to the Chief Justice, the Associate Chief Justice, and other members of the Court.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Committee provided support and advice to the Associate Chief Justice regarding a variety of topics, including changes to the Court's Policy on Access to the Court Record, jury selections in smaller courthouses, and strategies for handling the increased workload in criminal cases as detailed below. The Committee also provided continued support to the Associate Chief Justice regarding a substantial revision of the Supreme Court Criminal Rules.

At the request of the Associate Chief Justice, the Committee provided input regarding ways to manage the ever-increasing volume and complexity of criminal cases before the Court.

The Committee developed and updated internal resources for judges, including on the topics of common criminal terms, publication bans, direct indictments, and conducting pre-trial conferences.

The Committee consulted on revisions to *CPD-4 – Procedure for Detention Reviews under s. 525 of the Criminal Code* to permit defence counsel to adjourn a matter for a longer period of time using the prescribed form. The Committee also consulted on the new *PD-67 – Gowning Policy for Counsel* which lists the criminal and quasi-criminal appearances at which counsel must be gowned.

The Committee consulted on the development of three new criminal practice directions:

- *CPD-9 – Restriction on Publication of Information from Conferences in Criminal Proceedings* imposes an automatic publication ban on pre-trial and other conferences, filling the gap left by s. 648(1) of the *Criminal Code*, and as suggested by the Supreme Court of Canada in *La Presse Inc. v. Quebec*, 2023 SCC 22;
- *CPD-10 – Language of the Accused*, provides an accused and their counsel the option of completing a form in either of Supreme or Provincial Court to fulfill the s. 530 language information right under the *Code*; and
- *CPD-11 – Notice of Applications to Challenge Potential Jurors for Cause*, replaced the previous Criminal Rule 2(7) and related notice. The new CPD requires that a challenge for cause application be filed at least 60 days before the jury selection and requires evidence in the form of an affidavit.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

There have been a number of changes to the Committee during the past year.

Justice Dley stepped down from the Committee at the end of 2024 and Madam Justice Church stepped down in June 2025. In November 2025 Justice Brundrett resigned from the Committee as a result of his translation to the Court of Appeal. The Committee thanks Justices Dley, Church and Brundrett for their contributions to the Committee’s work.

In addition, two valued senior members of the Committee retired from the Court in 2025. Justice Crossin retired in February 2025 and Justice Wedge retired in December 2025. The Committee wishes to recognize the many valuable contributions of both Justice Crossin and Justice Wedge to the Committee’s work.

Justice Tammen resigned from his role as Vice Chair in the spring due to his appointment as Co-chair of the Education Committee. He remains a valued member of the Committee.

The Committee welcomed Justice Greenwood as a new member in June 2025.

The Committee is extremely grateful to Supreme Court Legal Counsel, Natasha Edgar and Claire Wilson, for their support of its work.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Tammen (*Co-Chair*)
Justice McDonald (*Co-Chair*)
Justice Ahmad
Justice Crerar
Justice Forth
Justice Girn
Madam Justice Lyster
Madam Justice Morellato
Madam Justice Murray
Justice Ramsay
Associate Judge Robertson
Leah Pence, *Legal Counsel*



Abbotsford Law Courts

MANDATE

The Education Committee's mandate is to organize and present continuing education programs in order to assist the judges, associate judges and registrars of the Court to stay on top of current developments in substantive law, enhance judicial skills, and learn about social context and philosophical and ethical issues which relate to the Court's work.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee delivers its main programs at judicial education conferences held in May and November of each year. These conferences are developed and presented in partnership with the National Judicial Institute (NJI). The Committee is grateful for the assistance received from the staff at the NJI who support the development of our programs and also provide administrative, logistical and technical support for the conferences.

2025 CONFERENCES

The May 2025 conference was held in Kelowna and included sessions on understanding and managing self-represented and vexatious litigants, insolvency, the Hague Convention on Child Abduction, shareholder oppression remedy, neurodivergent children in family law cases, criminal jury instructions, and judgment writing. The seminar also addressed judicial conduct, ethics and independence.

The November 2025 conference was held in Vancouver. This conference included sessions on effective use of judicial case conferences, which included insights from the bench and

the bar. There were also sessions on pre-contractual dishonesty and class actions, elder law and incapacity, and criminal jury trials. The seminar also addressed forms of reasons for judgment and issues relating to judicial wellness, offering strategies to manage workload and empathic strain. Contributions from judges, academics, and mental health experts ensured a rich exchange of perspectives and provided participants with tools to support effective decision-making and timely delivery of reasons for judgment.

NEW APPOINTEES TRAINING

Starting in 2017, the Committee developed a program for newly appointed judges and associate judges designed to support them as they transition to our court from their prior legal careers. The new appointees training program is in addition to the opportunity provided to newly appointed judges to shadow one or more judicial colleagues for five days prior to beginning to sit and to the ongoing mentorship program.

In May 2025, the Committee delivered the eleventh session of new appointees training to 10 new judges. The training covered a wide variety of topics including writing and delivering decisions and managing reserve lists, managing chambers, the unique challenges presented in family law proceedings, tips, resources for being on the road, and an “ask us anything” session. The Committee is grateful to the senior members of the Court who agreed to serve as faculty in 2025.

In addition, in 2021, the Criminal Law Committee and the Education Committee developed a multi-day self study course focussing on the law of sexual assault. Drawing on materials prepared by the Ontario Superior Court and the NJI, the course covers the substantive law of sexual assault, interim motions, procedure, common myths and stereotypes, social context, decision making, and sentencing. In 2025, seven judges completed this course, bringing the total number of judges to have done so to approximately 70.

LAW AT LUNCH

The Committee facilitated regular online lunchtime seminars delivered by members of the Court on topics including sentencing, foreclosure law and practice, included offences, criminal pre-trial conferences, issues with affidavit evidence, and plans or arrangements/approval of infant settlements. In addition, there were presentations from Legal Aid BC providing an overview of their program, eligibility requirements, and forms of representation; and from the provincial Family Justice Services Division on the services they offer. There was also a seminar provided by the Court’s Director of Information Technology on modern tools for judicial work.

MENTORING

The Committee has organized various online networking events to introduce the Court’s newest appointees and provide opportunities for informal discussion and mentoring for judges throughout the province.

The Committee is grateful to members of the Court for their enthusiastic participation as speakers and facilitators in its programs, and for their receptiveness to its programs.

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

There were a number of changes to the membership of the Committee in 2025, including the resignations of Mr. Justice Ball, Justice Burke and Associate Judge Keim, as well as the resignations of Justice Mayer, Justice MacNaughton, Justice Brundrett and Justice Francis as a result of their appointment to the Court of Appeal. The Committee wishes to recognize the many valuable contributions of the outgoing members of the Committee and also gratefully acknowledges the significant contributions of Justice MacNaughton, who served as Chair of the Committee for many years, and Justice Francis who served as Co-Chair for much of the past year. The Committee welcomed five new members in 2025 to replace the members who stepped down: Justice Ahmad, Justice Girn, Justice Lyster, Justice Ramsay and Associate Judge Robertson.

The Committee also thanks Leah Pence for supporting its work.

FAMILY LAW COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Tindale (*Chair*)
Justice Veenstra (*Vice-Chair*)
Justice Bennett
Justice Caldwell
Justice Elwood
Justice Hamilton
Justice Hughes
Justice Lamb
Associate Judge Dick
Associate Judge Hughes
Associate Judge Krentz
Nikki Hair, *Legal Counsel*
Line B. Williams, *Legal Counsel*



Revelstoke Law Courts

MANDATE

The role of the Family Law Committee is to consider developments in family law practice and procedure and to provide input relating to these matters to the Chief Justice and other members of the Court.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee dealt with a variety of family law issues in 2025. The Committee provided recommendations and comments to Chief Justice Skolrood and the British Columbia Supreme Court Civil & Family Rules Committee.

The Committee consulted with Family Justice Services Division regarding s. 211 report writing processes and their availability of services. In collaboration with the Ministry of Attorney General, the Committee commenced work on a Supreme Court Early Resolution Project aimed at determining whether an early resolution process can be developed for the Supreme Court.

The Committee provided information and recommendations to the Court on issues of law and procedure with respect to a variety of family law issues. In collaboration with Chief Justice Skolrood, the Committee is focused on working to make JCCs a more meaningful first access point to the family justice system.

Together with the Civil Law Committee, the Committee recommended a new procedure for providing written submissions to the court, which was adopted in *Practice Direction 69 – Requirements for Written Submissions in Civil and Family Proceedings*.

In 2025, the Committee bid farewell to Justice Shergill, who served on the committee since 2018. Also leaving the Committee was Justice Brundrett and Justice Francis, who were both appointed to the Court of Appeal, who served on the Committee since 2019 and 2023 respectively. The Committee is grateful to Justice Brundrett, Justice Francis and Justice Shergill for their work and commitment to the committee.

The Committee is grateful to Nikki Hair and Line Williams for their support of its work.

LAW CLERKS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Mr. Justice Blok (*Chair*)
Justice Basran
Justice Jackson (*from April 2025*)
Madam Justice Francis (*until April 2025*)
Justice MacDonald
Madam Justice Sharma
Jennifer Millerd, *Legal Counsel*



Vernon Law Courts

MANDATE

The Law Clerks Committee is responsible for the management of the Judicial Law Clerk Program, which provides both a valuable resource for judges as well as a unique learning opportunity for new law school graduates who have achieved a high academic standard.

The Committee is directly involved in the recruitment and hiring of judicial law clerks each year. The Committee is assisted in its work by the Court's legal counsel, primarily Jennifer Millerd, to whom the day-to-day management and administration of the law clerks is delegated. The Committee is also assisted by the 23 judges of the Court who act as principals to the law clerks.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

The recruitment process begins two years before the start of the clerking term. In the fall of each year, updated information about the judicial law clerk program is posted on the Court's website. Representatives from the BC Superior Courts (judges and legal counsel) participate in virtual and in-person information sessions for law students interested in judicial clerkships.

The application and interview process takes place about 18 months before the start of the clerking term. In the early spring, Committee members interview up to 40 applicants from a group that has been shortlisted through screening interviews conducted by the Court's legal counsel.

At present, there are 23 judicial law clerk positions with the Supreme Court: 17 in Vancouver, three in New Westminster, two in Victoria, and one in Kamloops. In 2025, the following 23 clerks began their clerkships with the Court:

Vancouver	Eleanor Aston, Allison Bilenkey, Justin Chhuor, Eric Cook, Timothy Falco, Kevin Hughes, Gabrielle Kalla, Michelle Liu, Patrick McDermott, Rianna Melnik, Tyler Murphy, Avery Pasternak, Miranda Pinter-Collett, Kylie Schatz, Stephanie Shin, Matthew Starker, Dalal Tubeishat
New Westminster	Prince Dhillon, Eric Killeen, Charlotte Taylor-Baer
Victoria	Emma Conlon, Katrina Darychuk
Kamloops	Lucas O’Fee

One of the Committee’s continuing priorities is to increase diversity in our law clerk group. Through various outreach initiatives we have greatly improved both the number of diverse applicants and the number of diverse persons we have hired. This year, about half of our law clerks identify as racialized, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQI+, or as a person with a disability.

The Committee wishes to extend its gratitude and appreciation to the Court’s law clerks for the assistance that they provide to the judges of the Court. The enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication they bring to their work and to the work of the Court are invaluable.

The Committee would also like to express its gratitude to the judges of the Court who serve as principals to the law clerks. They provide great mentorship to our law clerks and allow the Judicial Law Clerk Program to continue to provide a rich educational experience.

Finally, the Committee expresses its thanks to the Court’s legal counsel for their efforts in recruiting, training, and supervising the law clerks.

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Kate Ker (*Chair*)
Justice Gail Dickson
Justice Sandra Wilkinson
Heidi McBride, KC, *Chief Legal and Executive Officer*
Sylvia Ranspach, *Librarian*



Vancouver Law Courts

MANDATE

This committee works with the Librarian to manage the Library’s collection, and makes recommendations for new acquisitions, subscriptions, and other materials.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Judges’ Library staff, under the leadership of librarian Sylvia Ranspach, maintained a SharePoint library site, library catalogue, finding tools and subject matter resource guides. The library distributed timely current awareness on case law, legislation, publications, and upcoming events. Ms. Ranspach managed subscriptions to optimize electronic access while keeping the print collection current. Ms. Ranspach also continues to provide regular training to judges, law clerks, and other judicial staff. The Judges’ Library also continues to cull old and unused print volumes from courthouses across the province.

The judiciary continues to be very well served by Ms. Ranspach, along with library technician, Connie Kang.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Justice Milman (*Chair*)

The Honourable Bruce Cohen, *Superior Courts
Communications Officer*

Justice Bantourakis (*from April 2025*)

Justice Basran

Justice Brongers

Mr. Justice Gaul

Justice Morley (*from April 2025*)

Justice Shergill (*from April 2025*)

Justice Taylor

Justice Tindale (*until April 2025*)

Associate Judge Vos

Heidi McBride, KC, *Chief Legal & Executive Officer (ex officio)*

Jennifer Millerd, *Legal Counsel*

Negin Nia, *Superior Courts Communications Coordinator (until July 2025)*



Victoria Law Courts

MANDATE

In keeping with the open court principle, the mandate of the Committee is to promote activities that enhance public and media understanding of the Court's processes, and to address matters concerning public legal education and media and public relations. The Committee is also involved in initiatives respecting Supreme Court policies and Practice Directions relating to such matters as access to court records, communications with the Court, cameras in the courtroom, and the use of electronic devices in courtrooms.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Committee's work included helping the Court to develop a more proactive approach to public communications, engagement and outreach; considering updates to the Court's social media strategy; organizing the annual media lunch attended by accredited media, representatives of the Superior Courts and representatives of Court Services Branch; engaging with court communications officers from across Canada; and supporting projects and initiatives within the Court aimed at enhancing court openness.

The Committee is grateful for the court communications and media and public relations services performed by the Superior Courts Communications Officer, the Honourable Bruce Cohen. The Committee is also appreciative of the support it receives from the Court's legal counsel and other judicial staff.

JOINT COURTS TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Mr. Justice Masuhara (*Chair*)
Justice Griffin
Justice Branch
Madam Justice Fitzpatrick
Justice Giaschi
Justice Majawa
Associate Judge Nielsen
Timothy Outerbridge, *Registrar, Court of Appeal*
Heidi McBride, KC, *Chief Legal & Executive Officer*
Ryan Wirth, *Director, Information Technology*
Cindy Friesen, *Director, Supreme Court Scheduling*
Line B. Williams, *Legal Counsel*



Nelson Law Courts

MANDATE

The Committee's mandate is to review developments in technology and their impacts on the work of the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

In 2025, the Committee focused on the selection, purchase and deployment of new laptops and associated hardware and software to the judiciary.

In collaboration with Court Services Branch, the Supreme Court expanded the Associate Judges Chambers Pilot Project to create virtual associate judges' chambers where applications from across the province will be heard remotely. Initially virtual hearings are restricted to proceedings in registries outside Vancouver and New Westminster. If the project is successful, virtual chambers hearings may be further expanded.

In both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court, the online booking of hearings is increasing, with the Supreme Court announcing an expansion to online booking of civil and family long chambers hearings commencing January 1, 2026.

In collaboration with Court Services Branch, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court participated in and evaluated a pilot project to review the utility of AI-based automated transcription software.

The Committee continues to review the impacts of the rapid development and expansion of functionality of large language models on the Courts' work. The Committee remains concerned about professional and ethical issues arising with the use of artificial intelligence-based tools.

JUDICIAL ACCESS POLICY WORKING COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Leah Pence, *Legal Counsel, Supreme Court (Chair)*

Shirley Smiley, *Legal Counsel, Court of Appeal*

Caroline Berkey, *Senior Legal Counsel, Provincial Court (until March 2025)*

Laura Devries, *Legal Counsel, Provincial Court*

Dan Chiddell, *Executive Director, Corporate Support, Court Services Branch (until October 2025)*

Stephanie Delacretaz, *Director, Strategic Information & Business Applications, Court Services Branch*

Sarah Kay, *Secretariat and Legal Counsel, Legal Services Branch*

Jeanette Schoon, *Senior Policy Analyst, Court Services Branch*

Erin Turner, *Director, Policy, Legislation and Planning, Policy and Service Reform Unit, Court Services Branch*



Prince George Law Courts

MANDATE

The Chief Justices and Chief Judge of British Columbia’s courts have responsibility for the supervision and control of court records and judicial administration records. The Judicial Access Policy Working Committee (APWC) is a joint committee consisting of representatives from all three courts and Court Services Branch (CSB) employees. The APWC reviews applications for bulk, special and/or electronic access to court record information. The APWC no longer reviews applications to use reasons for judgment for a primarily commercial activity as those applications are submitted directly to the applicable court.

The APWC is not a decision making body, but rather a review and discussion forum for judicial representatives and CSB senior staff involved in policy, legislation, data custodianship, statistics and court systems management. Final decisions on applications made to the APWC for access to court records or court record information are made by the Chief Justice(s) and/or Chief Judge, as applicable, and communicated to the applicant through the APWC’s Secretariat.

In addition, the APWC develops and revises policies relating to access to court records, particularly those in bulk and electronic format, and seeks guidance and approval for such policies. The Chief Justices and Chief Judge give approval before a policy is adopted.

WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

As in previous years, in 2025, the APWC received, considered, and made recommendations in respect of a number of applications for access to court record information from a variety of sources including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private companies.

The Three Courts Policy on Bulk and Electronic Access to Court Records guided consideration of these requests. The policy provides that requests for bulk access to court records or court record information must be consistent with: the principles of judicial independence; the purposes of providing electronic filing and electronic access to information in court records - to better facilitate the conduct of court proceedings and to improve access to court record information where the public interest is served; maintaining public confidence in the integrity of the court system and understanding of the administration of justice; the law; judicial access policies, court rules and practice directions. Bulk or special access is not provided when the information is being collected, used or disclosed to further a commercial activity unless the applicant can demonstrate the primary purpose of the activity is a valid scholarly, journalistic, research or government purpose, or that granting access will otherwise support the administration of justice or is in the public interest. In addition, bulk or special access will not be provided if the technical functionality of the system cannot support the request or if there are insufficient resources to meet the requirements of the request. The APWC also reviewed electronic access agreements created for applications approved by the courts.

MEMBERS OF THE SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

The Honourable Chief Justice Ronald A. Skolrood

Associate Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

The Honourable Associate Chief Justice Heather J. Holmes

Justices of the Supreme Court

The Honourable Justice Alison J. Beames ► (*Kelowna*)

The Honourable Justice Catherine A. Wedge ▼ (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Brenda Brown ► (*Abbotsford*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice David M. Masuhara ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Lance W. Bernard ► (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Justice J. Miriam Gropper ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Joel R. Groves ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice Geoffrey R.J. Gaul ► (*Victoria*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice Paul W. Walker ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Kate Ker ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice John S. Harvey ► (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Justice Frits Verhoeven ► (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Justice Terence A. Schultes (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Justice Anthony Saunders ► (*Victoria*)

The Honourable Justice S. Dev Dley ► (*Abbotsford*)

The Honourable Justice Miriam A. Maisonville (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Madam Justice Shelley C. Fitzpatrick ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Madam Justice Jennifer A. Power (*Victoria*)

The Honourable Justice Trevor C. Armstrong ► (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice Murray B. Blok ► (*New Westminster*)

The Honourable Justice Ronald S. Tindale (*Prince George*)

The Honourable Justice Gordon C. Weatherill ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice Robin A.M. Baird (*Nanaimo*)

The Honourable Justice Gordon S. Funt ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Mr. Justice Kenneth W. Ball ► (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Douglas W. Thompson (*Nanaimo*)

The Honourable Justice Lisa Warren ▲ (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Gary P. Weatherill ► (*Vernon*)

The Honourable Justice Nigel P. Kent ▼ (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Madam Justice Jennifer M.I. Duncan (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Neena Sharma (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Emily M. Burke (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Martha M. Devlin (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Barbara M. Young ► (*Courtenay*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Marguerite H. Church (*Williams Lake*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Maria Morellato (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Heather MacNaughton ▲ (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Catherine Murray (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Andrew P.A. Mayer ▲ (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Ward K. Branch (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Carla Forth (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Michael J. Tammen (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Warren B. Milman (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Palbinder Kaur Shergill (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Michael J. Brundrett ▲ (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Mr. Justice E. David Crossin ▼ (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Francesca Marzari (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Jasvinder S. (Bill) Basran (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Diane C. MacDonald (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Barbara Norell (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Wendy A. Baker (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Sharon Matthews (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Thomas Crabtree (*Chilliwack*)
The Honourable Justice Christopher J. Giaschi (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Veronica Jackson (*Victoria*)
The Honourable Justice Stephen Wilson (*Kelowna*)
The Honourable Mr. Justice Dennis Hori (*Kamloops*)
The Honourable Justice Karen Douglas (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Amy Francis ▲ (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Elizabeth McDonald *Vancouver*
The Honourable Justice Alan Ross (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Sheila Tucker (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice David Crerar (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Matthew Taylor (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Andrew Majawa (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Sandra Wilkinson (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice William Veenstra (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Madam Justice Lyndsay Lyster (*Nelson*)
The Honourable Mr. Justice Ian Caldwell (*Abbotsford*)
The Honourable Justice Jasmin Ahmad (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Madam Justice Ardith Walkem (*Chilliwack*)
The Honourable Justice Simon Coval (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice F. Matthew Kirchner (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Julianne K. Lamb (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Lauren Blake (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Jan Brongers (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Bruce Elwood (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice K. Michael Stephens (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Michael G. Thomas (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Baljinder Kaur Girn (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice John Gibb-Carsley (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Jacqueline D. Hughes (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Briana Hardwick (*Kelowna*)
The Honourable Justice Joseph M. Doyle (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Kevin D. Loo (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Anita Chan (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Bradford F. Smith (*Kamloops*)
The Honourable Justice David K. Jones (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Jennifer L. Whately (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice J. Gareth Morley (*Victoria*)
The Honourable Justice Sandra M. Sukstorf (*Port Coquitlam*)
The Honourable Justice Christopher W. Greenwood (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Maegen M. Giltrow (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Karrie A. Wolfe (*Victoria*)
The Honourable Justice Y. Liliane Bantourakis (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Judith E. Hoffman (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Lisa J. Hamilton (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Shannon P. Ramsay (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Edlyn Laurie (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Alison M. Latimer (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Andrea L. Ormiston (*Abbotsford*)
The Honourable Justice Tina L. Dion (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice David M. Layton (*Port Coquitlam*)
The Honourable Justice Eric V. Gottardi (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Scott Morishita (*Vancouver*)

The Honourable Justice Elin Sigurdson (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Lindsay R. LeBlanc (*Victoria*)
The Honourable Justice C. Richard Hewson (*Kelowna*)
The Honourable Justice Lorianna Bennett (*Kamloops*)
The Honourable Justice John N. Walker (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Richard S. Fowler (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Mark G. Underhill (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Julia E. Lawn (*Vancouver*)
The Honourable Justice Gregory W. Koturbash (*Kelowna*)
The Honourable Justice Lorne D. Lachance (*New Westminster*)
The Honourable Justice Julie K. Gibson (*Victoria*)
The Honourable Justice Kate Saunders (*Victoria*)

Associate Judges of the Supreme Court

Associate Judge Shelagh Scarth ► (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Carolyn P. Bouck ▼ (*Victoria*)
Associate Judge Leslie Muir ► (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Sandra Harper (*Victoria*)
Associate Judge Sandra Dick (*Nanaimo*)
Associate Judge Terry Vos (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Steven Schwartz (*Kelowna*)
Associate Judge Jennifer Keim (*Kamloops*)
Associate Judge John Bilawich (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Kimberley Robertson (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Rory Krentz (*Abbotsford*)
Associate Judge Scott Nielsen (*New Westminster*)
Associate Judge Susanna Hughes (*New Westminster*)
Associate Judge Lawrence Robinson (*Vancouver*)
Associate Judge Amy Peck (*Vancouver*)

Registrar of the Supreme Court

Registrar Meg Gaily (*Vancouver*)

- ▲ *Appointed to the Court of Appeal*
- *Supernumerary Justice or Senior Associate Judge*
- ▼ *Retired Justice or Associate Judge*

SENIOR JUDICIAL STAFF

Chief Legal and Executive Officer
Director, Information Technology
Manager, Finance
Manager, Human Resources
Manager, Judicial Support Services
Manager, Provincial Registrar's Program
Judicial Coordinators
Legal Counsel

Director, Supreme Court Scheduling
Managers, Supreme Court Scheduling

Heidi McBride, KC
Ryan Wirth
Caroline Nguyen
Tracy Norman
Jessica Gill
Kristen Day
Linda Peter, Carrie Wilke
Natasha Edgar, Nikki Hair, Jennifer
Millerd, Leah Pence, Lisa Phillips, Line
Williams, Claire Wilson
Cindy Friesen
Janine Benson, Mikayla Bischoff, Tanya
Dixon, William Gallagher, Rhona
Ogston, Michelle Schley, Brenda Strain,
Rebecca Stock, Pamela Wallin



Nanaimo Law Courts

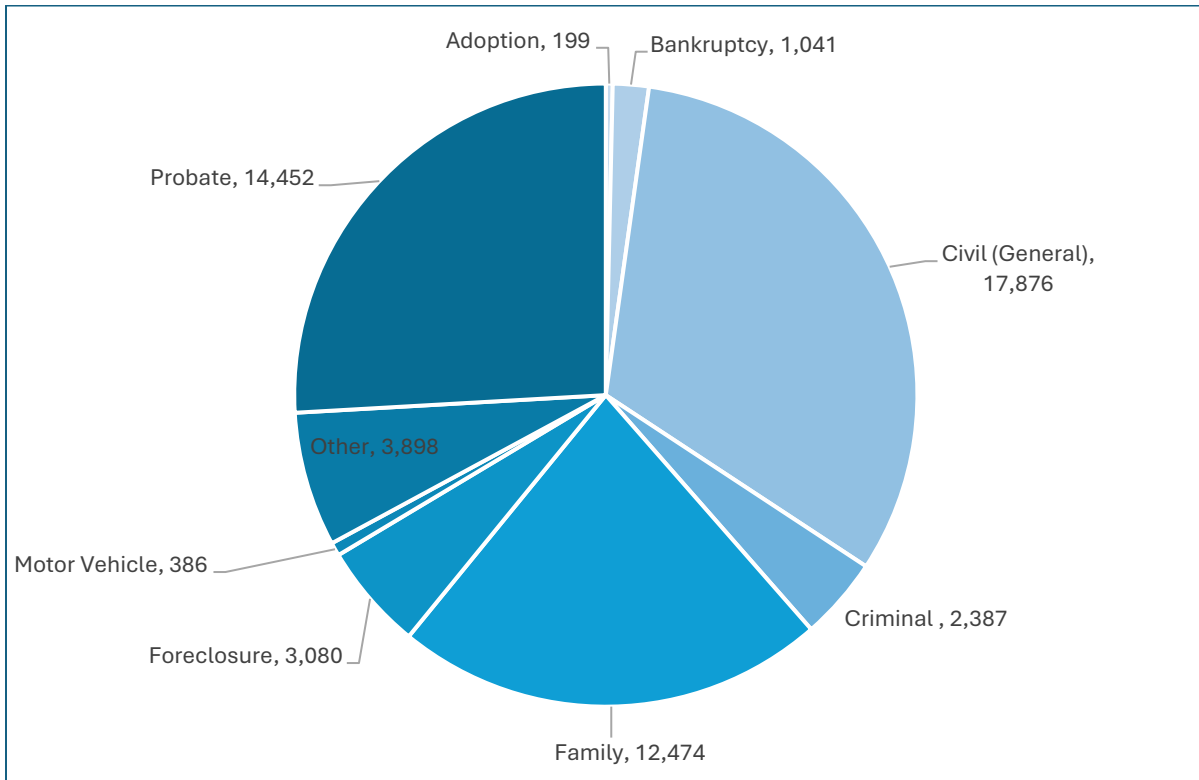
COURT STATISTICS

Table 1: New Criminal, Family and Civil Filings, 2016-2025

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Civil	58,497	60,332	66,184	69,138	61,508	48,159	42,452	39,538	38,977	40,733
Family	12,132	12,036	12,060	12,153	11,044	11,735	11,342	11,996	12,209	12,673
Criminal	1,336	1,347	1,642	3,675	2,283	2,203	2,314	2,486	2,396	2,387
TOTAL	71,965	73,715	79,886	84,966	74,835	62,097	56,108	54,020	53,582	55,793

Data Source: Courthouse Activity Cube and Criminal BI Database, extracted February 27, 2026

Table 2: New Filings by Category in 2025



Data Source: Courthouse Activity Cube and Criminal BI Database, extracted February 27, 2026

Table 3: Number of Conferences by Type, 2016-2025



Table 4: Hearing Hours by Conferences Type, 2016-2025

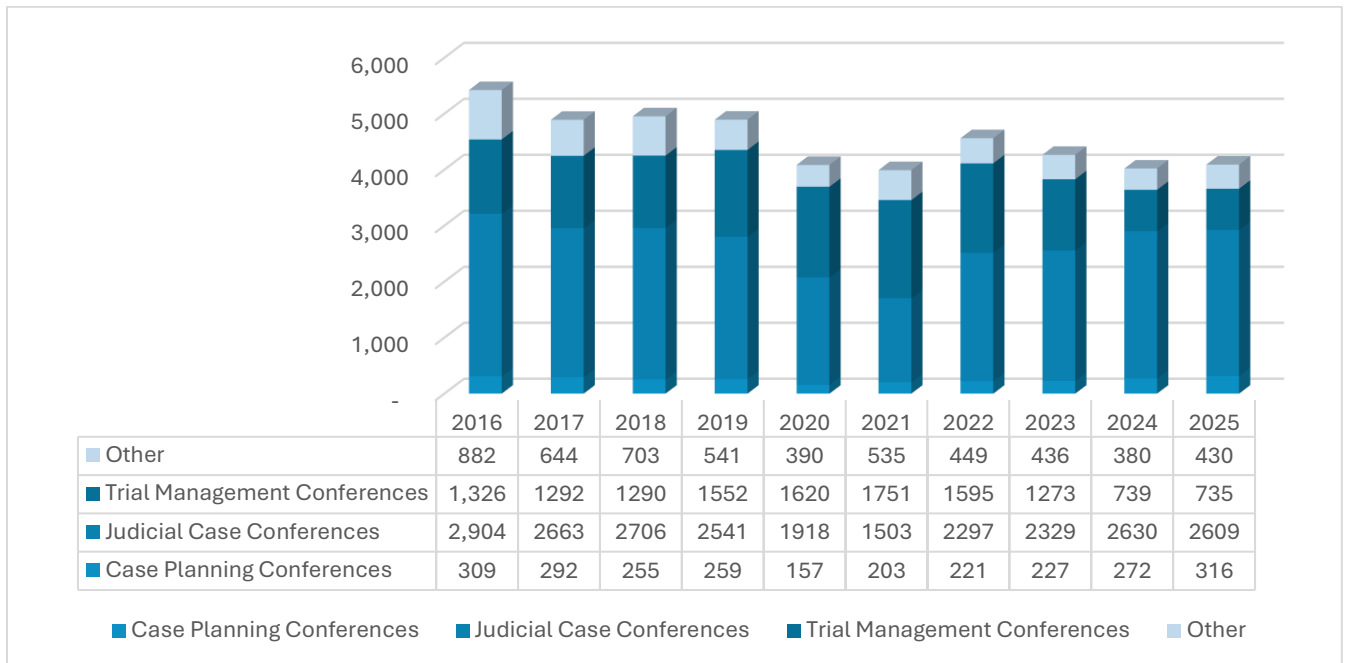


Table 5: Civil Trials and Long Chambers Applications Scheduled in Vancouver, 2016-2025

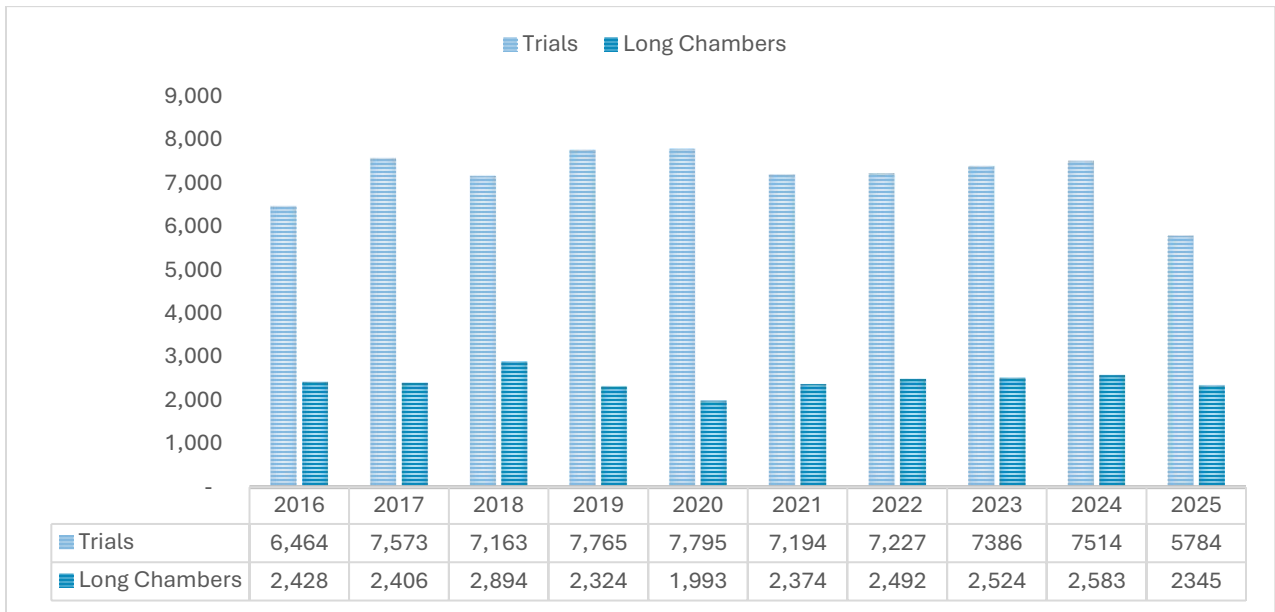


Table 6: Long Chambers Applications Scheduled and Heard in Vancouver, 2016-2025

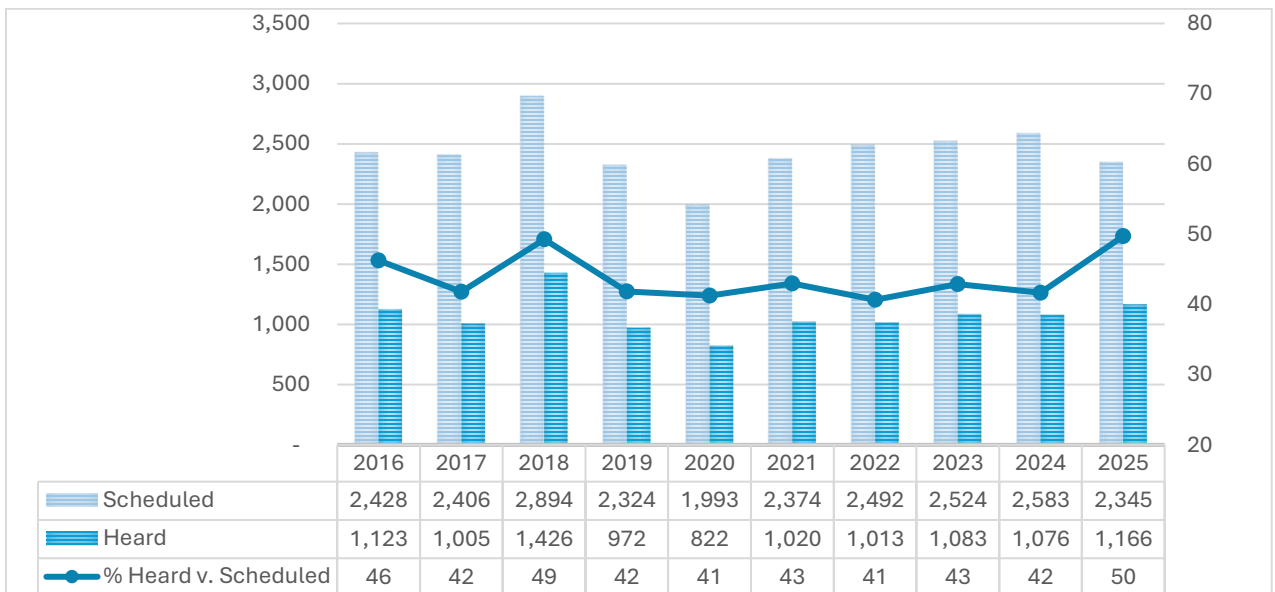


Table 7: Long Chambers Applications Heard and Bumped in British Columbia, 2016-2025

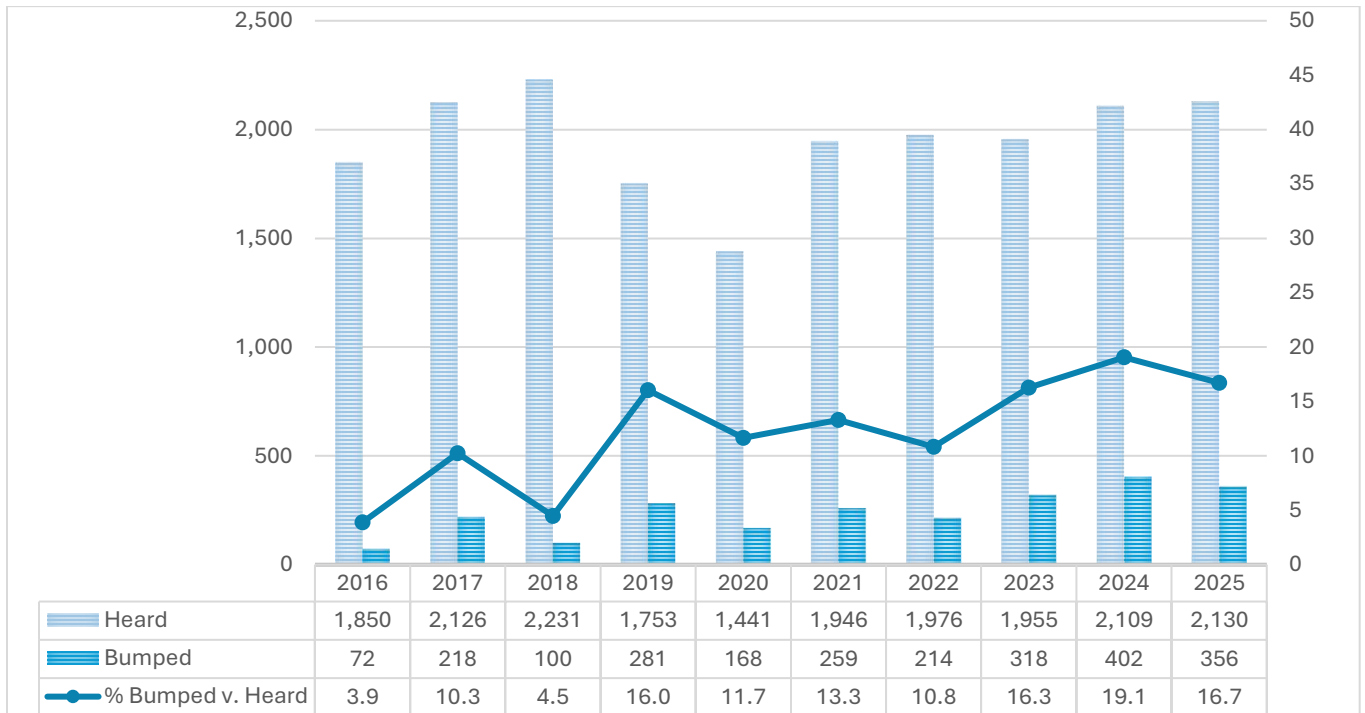


Table 8: Long Chambers Applications Heard and Bumped in Vancouver, 2016-2025

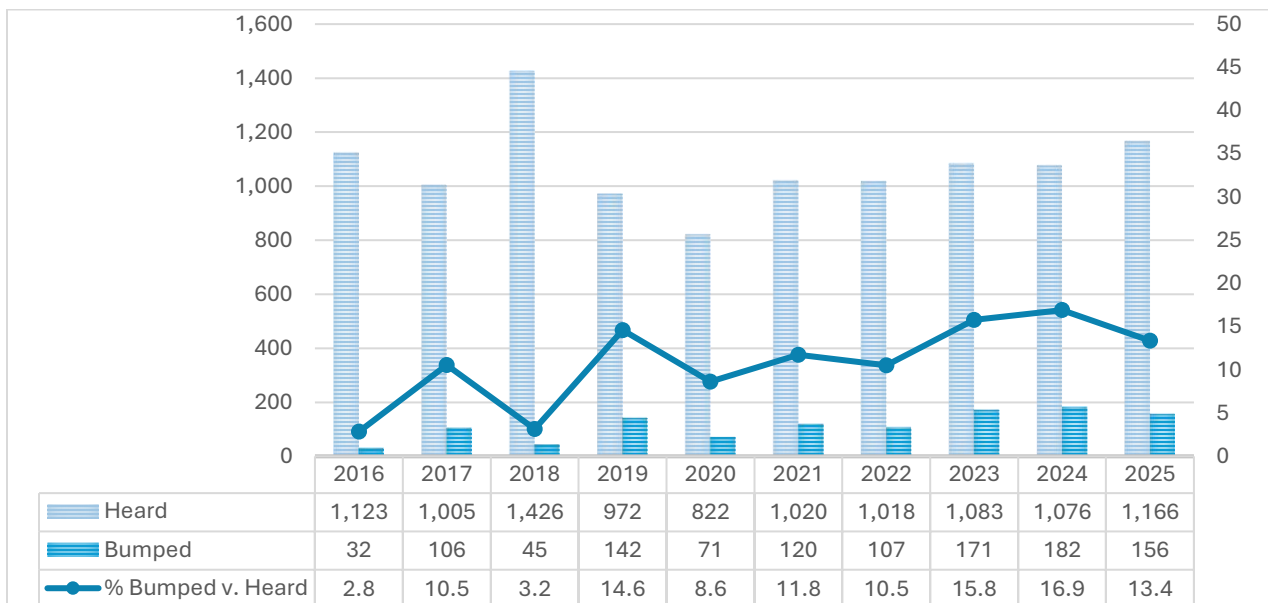


Table 9: Trials Heard and Bumped in British Columbia, 2016-2025

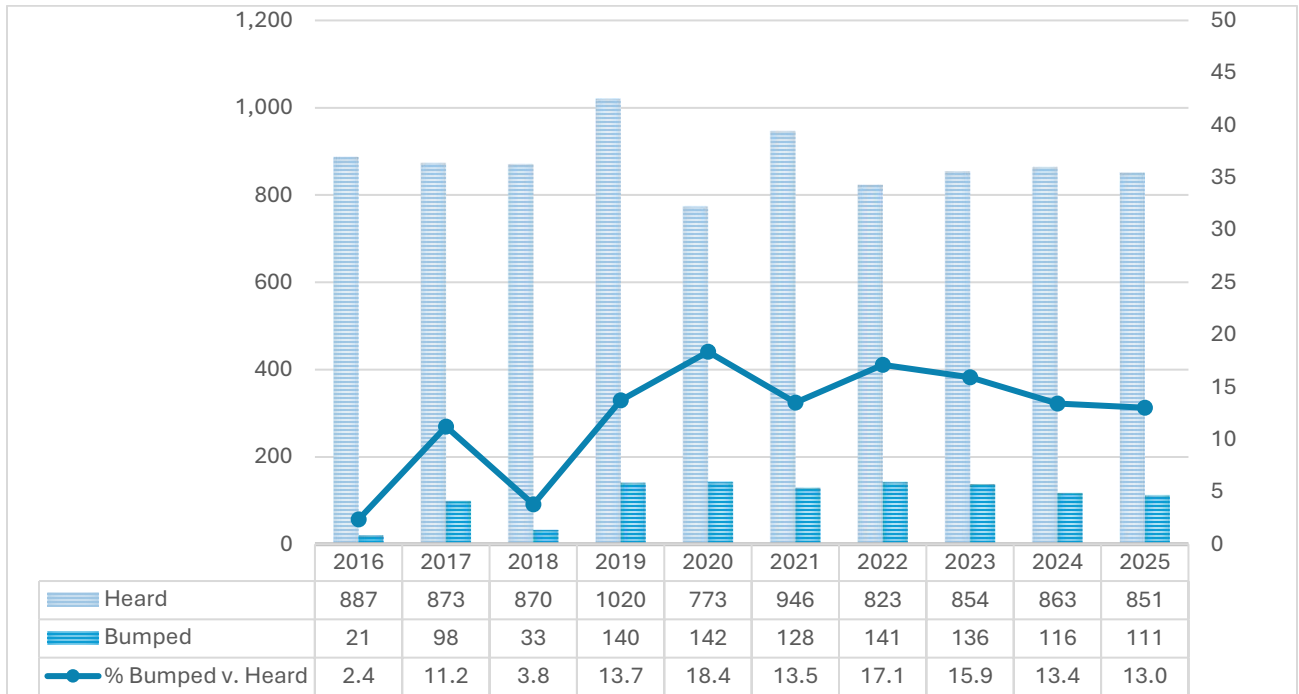


Table 10: Trials Heard and Bumped in Vancouver, 2016-2025

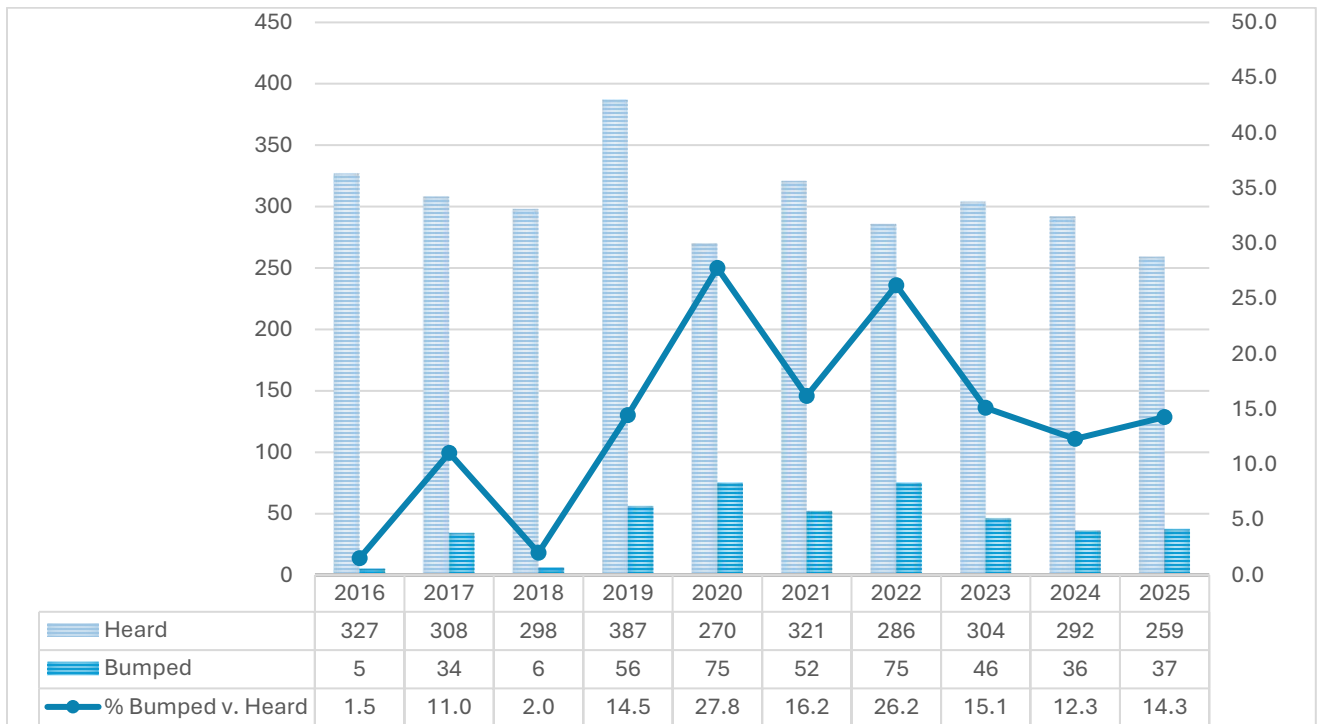


Table 11: Trials Heard and Bumped by Type and Location, 2025

	HEARD 2025				BUMPED 2025			
	Civil	Criminal	Family	Total	Civil	Criminal	Family	Total
LOWER MAINLAND								
Abbotsford	8	16	12	36	3	0	3	6
Chilliwack	3	5	12	20	1	0	0	1
New Westminster	49	57	41	147	18	0	5	23
Port Coquitlam	7	2	16	25	0	0	0	0
Vancouver	121	75	63	259	29	0	8	37
Region Totals	188	155	144	487	51	0	16	67
Region %	80%	39%	66%	57%	70%	0%	52%	63%
VANCOUVER ISLAND								
Campbell River	1	4	0	5	0	0	0	0
Courtenay	0	5	4	9	0	0	0	0
Duncan	0	13	1	14	0	0	0	0
Nanaimo	1	18	9	28	0	0	0	0
Port Alberni	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0
Powell River	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
Victoria	10	37	17	64	8	0	4	12
Region Totals	13	85	31	129	8	0	4	12
Region %	6%	21%	14%	15%	11%	0%	13%	11%
NORTHERN INTERIOR								
Dawson Creek	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0
Fort St. John	0	3	1	4	0	0	0	0
Prince George	2	27	6	35	0	0	1	1
Prince Rupert	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0
Quesnel	1	6	1	8	1	0	1	2
Smithers	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0
Terrace	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0
Williams Lake	0	13	1	14	0	2	2	4
Region Totals	3	58	12	73	1	2	4	7
Region %	1%	15%	6%	9%	1%	0%	13%	7%

	HEARD 2025				BUMPED 2025			
	Civil	Criminal	Family	Total	Civil	Criminal	Family	Total
SOUTHERN INTERIOR								
Kamloops	7	20	8	35	3	0	1	4
Kelowna	20	39	10	69	7	0	4	11
Vernon	0	11	4	15	1	0	0	1
Nelson	0	5	2	7	0	0	0	0
Cranbrook	1	6	4	11	1	0	1	2
Penticton	1	12	0	13	1	0	1	2
Salmon Arm	0	5	2	7	0	0	0	0
Rossland	2	2	1	5	0	0	0	0
Golden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revelstoke	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Region Totals	31	100	31	162	13	0	7	20
Region %	13%	25%	14%	19%	18%	0%	23%	19%
PROVINCIAL TOTAL	235	398	218	851	73	2	31	106
PROVINCIAL TOTAL %	28	47	26		69	2	29	

Table 12: Trials Heard by Registry in 2025

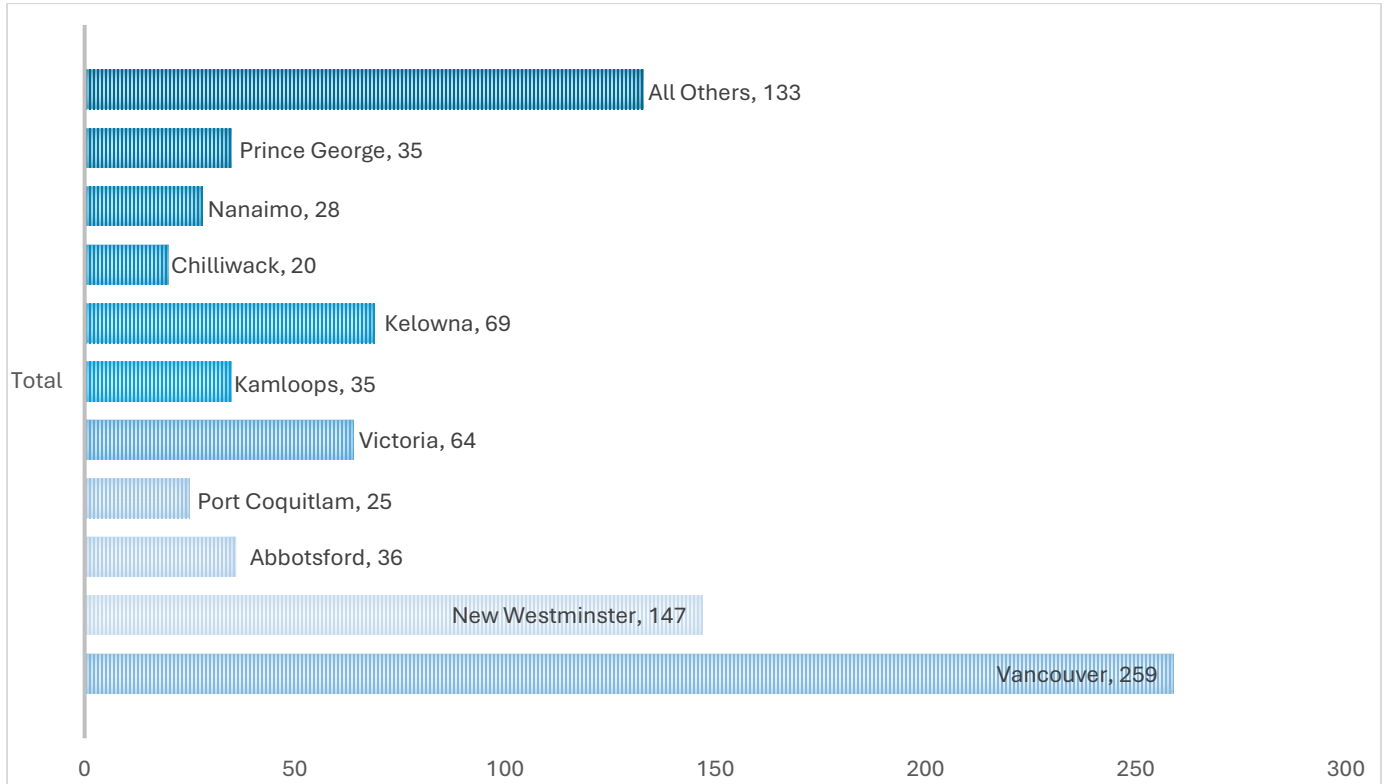


Table 13: Trials Heard by Region in 2025

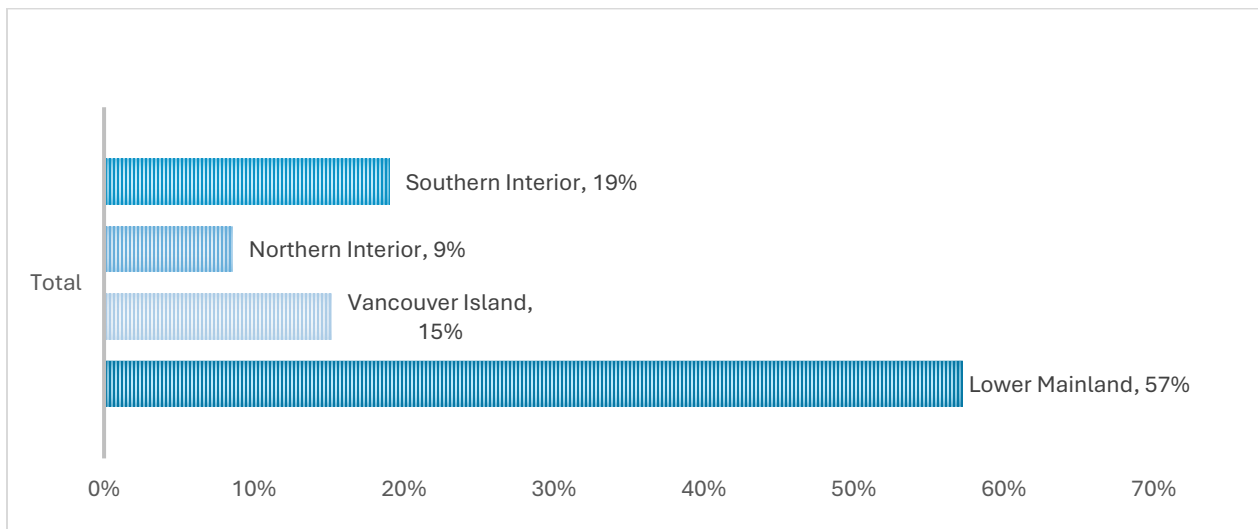


Table 14: Published Reasons for Judgment by Subject, Type, and Year, 2016-2025

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Civil										
Oral	306	340	305	309	267	379	327	389	396	395
Written	1,009	868	895	905	868	1,069	948	927	869	851
Total	1,315	1,208	1,200	1,214	1,135	1,448	1,275	1,316	1,265	1,246
Criminal										
Oral	280	344	377	371	248	314	163	246	306	272
Written	63	113	109	78	58	97	48	67	50	46
Total	343	457	486	449	306	411	211	313	356	318
Family										
Oral	94	86	95	64	76	108	94	114	104	113
Written	267	272	275	242	235	293	259	256	264	383
Total	361	358	370	306	311	401	353	370	368	496
TOTAL	2,019	2,023	2,056	1,969	1,752	2,260	1,839	1,999	1,989	2,060

Table 15: Published Reasons for Judgment by Year, 2016-2025

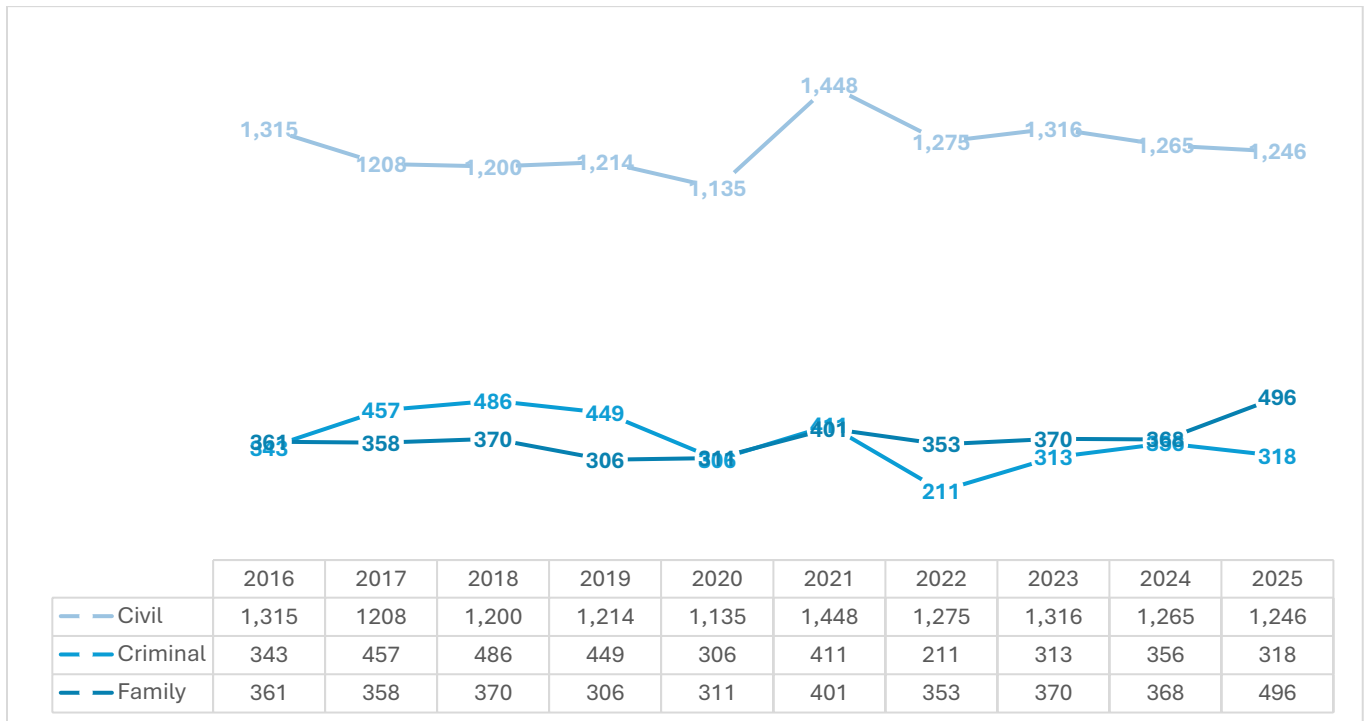


Table 16: Published Reasons for Judgment by Subject, Type, and Year

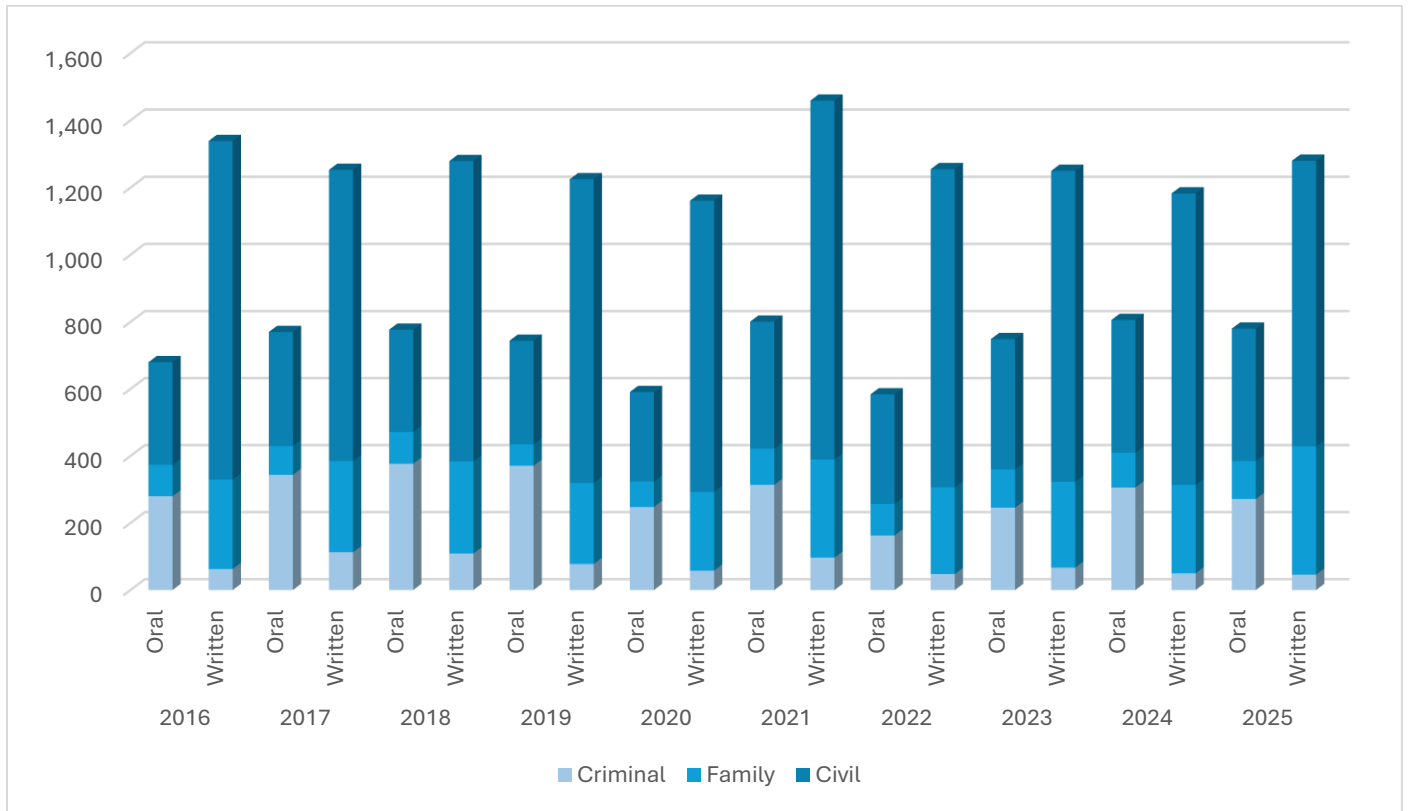


Table 17: E-Filed Documents in Supreme Court, FY2016/17 – FY2024/25

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Documents Filed	595,228	595,811	591,039	616,514	555,657	577,943	559,759	585,521	706,522
Documents E-Filed	246,026	259,148	262,846	279,645	346,203	314,293	297,546	321,435	381,053
% E-filed	41%	43%	44%	45%	62%	54%	52%	54%	54%

Table 18: E-Orders Processed in the Supreme Court, 2016-2025

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
E-Orders Processed	9622	10,987	10,902	11,206	13,535	14,014	14,669	17,613	19,591	21,696