



NOTICE

Further Update Regarding Online Booking for Civil and Family Matters

On **November 1, 2024**, the Court will be expanding the Court Online Booking System (COBS).

While online booking has been available for Case Planning Conferences (CPCs), Judicial Case Conferences (JCCs), and Trial Management Conferences (TMCs) for several years, beginning November 1, 2024, online booking will also be available for trials in civil and family matters. COBS will be further expanded to include online booking for lengthy chambers hearings in civil and family matters at a later date.

More information about the expansion of COBS is available [here](#).

Booking trials online in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminister

Beginning November 1, 2024, there will be two processes for booking civil and family trials online in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminister: one for newly released trial dates, and one for trial dates that were previously released by the Court but remain available.

a) Booking newly released trial dates

In Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminister, new trial dates are released 18 months out on a rolling basis on the first business day of each month. Because demand for newly released trial dates in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminister exceeds the Court's supply, parties and counsel currently compete to secure such dates by telephoning Scheduling at their earliest opportunity on the first business day of each month when the new dates are released. Scheduling then allocates the newly released dates on a "first to call" basis.

Beginning November 1, 2024, there will be a new process to ensure the supply of newly released trial dates in civil and family matters in Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminister is fairly distributed among parties and counsel seeking to book those dates:

- Parties and counsel will submit, within a booking window of seven days (during which the booking window will be open 24 hours a day), a ranked list of their preferred dates among the newly released trial dates offered by the Court.

- Court time then will be allocated among those who submitted booking requests within the booking window, so that all users have an equal opportunity to secure newly available trial dates.
- After the booking window has closed, parties and counsel who submitted requests within the booking window will receive an email confirming whether their requests were successful or not.

b) Booking otherwise available trial dates

For trial dates that are available, but are no longer considered to be “newly released” (i.e. trial dates that remain or become available after the 7-day booking window process has been concluded), parties and counsel will be able to book those dates in the same way they would book a CPC, JCC or TMC: by logging into COBS and selecting from the Court’s available dates.

Booking trials online in other British Columbia court locations

In British Columbia court locations other than Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, there will be a single process for booking civil and family trials online: parties and counsel will log into COBS, view the Court’s available trial dates, and select from those dates.

In locations other than Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster, new trial dates are released 12 months out on a rolling basis on the first business day of each month. However, as the Court’s supply of newly released trial dates in such locations is generally sufficient to meet the demand of court users, the Court will not be using the “booking window” process for allocating newly released trial dates in locations outside of Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster. Parties and counsel in such locations will book newly released trial dates in the usual way: by logging into COBS and selecting from the Court’s available dates.

Scheduling staff remain available to assist

Online booking through COBS is intended to meet the needs of parties and counsel booking conferences and trials in civil and family matters in the normal course. Scheduling staff will remain available to assist individuals who, due to exceptional circumstances, are unable to meet their booking needs through COBS. Parties and counsel requiring special assistance may continue to telephone Scheduling staff in the relevant court location.

Accessing the online booking system

Parties and counsel will be able to access COBS by logging in using their BCeID. Parties and counsel who do not already have a BCeID will need to register for one in order to use COBS. Information about how to register for a BCeID is available [here](#).

Lawyers who are in good standing with the Law Society of British Columbia will also have the option of using the digital credentials in their BC Wallet to log into COBS. More

information for counsel on how to download the BC Wallet app, and add/use their digital credentials, is available [here](#).

We encourage parties and counsel to take steps now to prepare for this transition.

Dated October 4, 2024 at Vancouver, British Columbia

By Direction of Associate Chief Justice Heather J. Holmes
Supreme Court of British Columbia