



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

Notice to the Media Regarding Access to Supreme Court Proceedings

COVID-19 Notice No. 37

Date: July 13, 2020

This notice replaces:

- **COVID-19 Notice No. 17 – Media Access to Supreme Court Proceedings**

The Supreme Court of British Columbia recognizes the critical importance of the open court principle, including in the exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Court proceedings must remain open to public scrutiny, and the media plays a special role in that regard.

The Court has been steadily expanding the number of hearings across the province since May. As of July 13, 2020, hearings are being scheduled at most registries. As a result of measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in-person hearings at courthouses around the province have been greatly curtailed. [COVID-19 Notice No. 27 – In Court Measures During the Pandemic](#) and the Ministry of Attorney General's information about [Court Recovery Operations](#) set out the public health and safety measures in place at courthouses and guidelines for attendance. Seating at media tables and in the gallery for media and the public has been reduced to allow for appropriate physical distancing.

Some hearings are proceeding by telephone or by remote video conferencing using Microsoft Teams.

Media should be aware of the options below for observing and reporting on court proceedings during this exceptional time.

Hearing lists

Members of the media should monitor the daily hearing lists for each Supreme Court location, which are posted on the website [here](#). Accredited media are emailed daily hearing lists for all locations across the province every morning and sentencing hearing lists every two weeks.

In-person attendance

Members of the media may attend a hearing in person in a courtroom if the space can accommodate adequate and appropriate physical distancing. Members of the media attending in person must follow the procedures in [COVID-19 Notice No. 27](#), referred to above, and the directions of the Sheriffs.

Accredited media: attendance by telephone

If members of the accredited media wish to attend a particular proceeding on the daily hearing list by telephone, they should contact The Honourable Bruce Cohen, Superior Courts Communications Officer, at SCJCommunicationsOfficer@bccourts.ca as soon as possible for information about how to dial in. Telephone participation by accredited media in a court proceeding may be subject to limits on the number of callers that can be connected through a single dial-in number.

Although as of July 7, 2020 some hearings are proceeding by Microsoft Teams, at present media can only attend such hearings by telephone. Please contact the Honourable Bruce Cohen to obtain information about how to dial in.

In the event that accredited media are able to participate in a proceeding by telephone the following conditions apply:

- the caller must dial in to the proceeding by not later than 5 minutes prior to the time of commencement of the proceeding;
- the caller's telephone must be placed on mute at all times during the proceeding;
- the [Policy on the Use of Electronic Devices in Courtrooms](#) applies to the caller's participation in the proceeding;
- if the caller does not dial in at the set time, the caller cannot be connected to the proceeding; and
- if the caller's line becomes disconnected, the court will not disrupt the proceeding to connect the caller.

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

Dated July 13, 2020, at Vancouver, British Columbia

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