



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

## Notice to the Profession, the Public and the Media Regarding Civil and Family Proceedings

### MASTERS CHAMBERS PILOT PROJECT NOTICE

**Effective Date: 2023/06/19**

**Updated Date: 2023/11/10**

Effective June 19, 2023, this notice rescinds and replaces COVID-19 Notice No. 54 – Masters Chambers Pilot on Vancouver Island.

#### Introduction

This Notice concerns the Masters Chambers Pilot Project (the “Project”), which provides a means for parties to submit chambers application records electronically for some matters using Court Services Online (“CSO”). The transition to and use of electronic application records will reduce overall costs for counsel, parties, and the Court and will provide greater flexibility for the Court to deal with chambers hearings effectively and efficiently for both in-person and virtual hearings.

The Project is being rolled out gradually. It commenced on August 15, 2022 at court locations on Vancouver Island and in Powell River, expanded to include court locations in the interior region as of June 19, 2023 and the northern region as of October 23, 2023. The Project is further expanding to court locations in Abbotsford, Chilliwack and New Westminster commencing on **Monday, December 4, 2023**. For the registries that are in scope, see Appendix A. This Appendix will be updated regularly as more registries are added.

Pursuant to Rule 23.1-2 of the *Supreme Court Civil Rules* and Rule 22.1-2 of the *Supreme Court Family Rules* (Electronic Transmission of Application Record Pilot Project), the usual requirements respecting application records are modified as set out in this Notice.

Parties are subject to the following expectations regarding electronic submissions of chambers application records.

#### I. Type of Matters

Until further notice, the Project applies to chambers application records for applications scheduled for 30 minutes or less in Masters chambers.

## II. Who Should Submit Electronic Application Records?

Where **all** parties are represented by counsel, counsel should submit an electronic chambers application record through CSO for all applications within the jurisdiction of a Master scheduled for 30 minutes or less. In proceedings where there is at least one self-represented party, it is optional for self-represented parties or counsel to submit an electronic application record via CSO.

If a party or counsel has submitted an electronic application record, there is no need to submit a paper copy of the application record to the registry.

## III. Formatting Application Records

Electronic application records submitted through CSO must comply with Rules 8-1(15) and 8-1(16) of the *Supreme Court Civil Rules* or Rule 10-6(14) of the *Supreme Court Family Rules*, whichever applies, except that if parties intend to rely on case law and other authorities at the hearing, they must include copies in their electronic application record.

Rule 8-1(15)(a) [requiring a ring binder or other secure binding] and Rule 8-1(15)(d) [prohibiting the inclusion of affidavits of service, authorities, and other documents] of the *Supreme Court Civil Rules* and Rule 10-6(14)(a) [requiring a ring binder or other secure binding] and Rule 10-6(14)(d) [prohibiting the inclusion of affidavits of service, authorities, and other documents] of the *Supreme Court Family Rules* do not apply to electronic application records submitted pursuant to this Notice.

Electronic application records submitted via CSO must be in Portable Document Format (“PDF”) and must combine all documents included in the application record into one organized, electronically tabbed and hyperlinked PDF document. Combining multiple files into one PDF document requires access to PDF software such as Adobe Acrobat Pro.

The electronic application record must comply with the following requirements and PDF standards:

Requirement	Description
<b>True Copies:</b>	Every document submitted must be an identical or true copy of the original document, whether that original is scanned from paper or saved into PDF from another program, such as Microsoft Word.

<p><b>Searchable Electronic Format:</b></p>	<p>All documents submitted must be searchable.</p> <p>Documents should be created electronically unless they have been scanned because the original requires a handwritten signature or an electronic version is not available. Documents that are scanned must be made searchable (see immediately below).</p>
<p><b>Scanned Records: Optical Character Recognized – OCR</b></p>	<p>If scanning is necessary because the original text-based document is only available in paper format or requires a handwritten signature (e.g., an affidavit), the scanned document must be processed using Optical Character Recognition (“OCR”) technology (i.e., it must be OCR’ed).</p> <p>OCR makes a PDF document searchable and allows text to be copied and pasted into another document.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Technical Instructions</a>.</p>
<p><b>Cover Page:</b></p>	<p>Parties should create a cover page as required by <a href="#">Administrative Notice 14</a>, with contact information (email addresses and telephone numbers) for all parties, which is to be included as the first item in the electronic application record.</p>
<p><b>Index:</b></p>	<p>Parties should include, as the second item in the electronic application record, a numbered index for the application record using hyperlinks (links in electronic documents that enable you to jump between different text elements in the document) to link to each bookmarked document included in the electronic application record (including authorities).</p> <p>See <a href="#">Technical Instructions</a>.</p>
<p><b>Bookmarks</b></p>	<p>All documents included in the electronic application record should be bookmarked. The title of the bookmark should <u>consistently, meaningfully, and clearly</u> describe the individual documents in the electronic application record, for example, “Affidavit #12 of John Doe (financial statement) filed June 1, 2023”. The bookmark panel should be shown by default when the electronic application record is opened. This can be accomplished by setting the initial view in Adobe Acrobat DC.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Technical Instructions</a>.</p>

<b>Authorities:</b>	<p>If necessary, parties should include an electronic book of authorities with bookmarks and sequential page numbering as part of the electronic application record. Parties should not hyperlink to external sources, because the presiding Masters will not be able to mark them up in PDF. Authorities should be saved in electronic format, or scanned and OCR'ed so that the text is searchable before being added to the electronic application record</p> <p>See <a href="#">Technical Instructions</a>.</p>
<b>Page Numbering:</b>	<p>All pages in the electronic application record should be page numbered sequentially (1, 2, 3, etc.).</p> <p>Page numbers should appear at the top centre of the page.</p> <p>Page numbering can start after the electronic application record index or on the cover page, so long as it matches the page numbering in the electronic application record index.</p> <p>Page searching in the PDF must match page numbering. If page numbering starts <i>after</i> the electronic application record index, this is done using the Page Labels function in Adobe; otherwise page 1 will be the cover page when searching.</p> <p>See <a href="#">Technical Instructions</a>.</p>
<b>Security Settings:</b>	<p>Parties must disable any security settings that might restrict or prevent the Court from viewing, printing, saving, annotating, or searching the electronic document. In other words, parties should not submit password protected documents.</p>
<b>File Size Limit:</b>	<p>Parties must ensure the electronic application record is optimized and does not exceed 50 megabytes (MB).</p>

#### IV. Draft Orders for Electronically Submitted Application Records

Counsel/parties or their designate may continue to attend the registry and have draft orders vetted in advance of chambers applications proceeding with electronic application records as part of the Program. For in-person hearings, the process to follow is as outlined in [Administrative Notice 17](#). For hearings that proceed by video using Microsoft Teams, the steps to be followed are:

- Counsel/party attends the registry with the draft order with a backing sheet that includes a mailing address.
- The registry vets order and, if approved, endorses the order.
- The registry keeps the original vetted order and returns a photocopy to Counsel.
- Counsel/party scans and OCR's the copy of the vetted order and includes it as part of the electronic application record.
- The registry retains vetted orders and provides them to the court clerk on the day of the chambers hearing.
- The court clerk provides the Master with vetted orders on the day of hearing.
- The Master signs the original vetted order on bench, if granted.
- The registry processes the approved order following the usual practice.

Orders will only be signed on the bench if the original vetted order is provided to the registry in advance, i.e., an order included in the application record, but not provided to the registry in advance of the hearing will not be signed at the hearing.

#### V. How to Submit Application Records and Timelines

- Electronic application records must be submitted through CSO.
- Parties who have never used electronic filing (e-filing) must create a [BceID](#) (either a Basic or Business account) or a [BC Registries and Online Services Account](#) and register it with [Court Services Online](#).
- Anyone having difficulty with e-filing should contact Court Services Online Support by email at [Courts.CSO@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Courts.CSO@gov.bc.ca) for assistance.
- An application record must be submitted **no later than 4 p.m. on the business day that is one full business day before the date set for the hearing of the application.**
- An application record that is not received by 4 p.m. on the business day that is one full business day before the date set for the hearing will not be placed on the hearing list.

#### VI. Service of Application Record Index

The applicant must serve a copy of the application record index on each application respondent **no later than 4 p.m. on the business day that is one full business day before the date set for the hearing** as set out in *Supreme Court Civil Rule 8-1(17)* and *Supreme Court Family Rule 10-6(15)*.

## **Adjournments**

If an electronic application record is submitted, and the matter is adjourned to a specific date, the electronic application record will remain available for the Court for the next scheduled date, and counsel/parties do not need to resubmit the application record.

If the matter is adjourned generally, counsel will need to resubmit the application record upon resetting the matter. Where matters are either adjourned generally or concluded, the electronic application record is automatically deleted from the Court's system after five days.

## **VII. Resources**

Numerous resources and free tools are available for working with PDF documents and creating a PDF binder.

The Supreme Court has posted [detailed instructions for working with PDF documents](#).

Anyone preparing PDF documents can email the Canadian Bar Association BC branch at [members@cbabc.org](mailto:members@cbabc.org) for assistance.

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

Dated **November 10, 2023** Vancouver, British Columbia

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

**APPENDIX A**  
**COURT LOCATIONS**

Region	Location
Vancouver Island and Powell River  (commencing August 15, 2022)	Campbell River Courtney Duncan Nanaimo Port Alberni Powell River Victoria
Interior  (commencing June 19, 2023)	Cranbrook Kamloops Kelowna Nelson Penticton Rossland Salmon Arm Vernon (Note: Golden and Revelstoke are not currently part of the Project as they do not have Masters sittings)
Northern  (commencing October 23, 2023)	Dawson Creek Fort St. John Prince George Quesnel Smithers Terrace (Note: Prince Rupert and Williams Lake are not currently part of the Project as they do not have Masters sittings)
Fraser and New Westminister (commencing December 4, 2023)	Abbotsford Chilliwack New Westminister