

MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERAL COURT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ottawa, March 13, 2020 – The Federal Court has been actively monitoring developments related to COVID-19 and has issued the following statement:

As a national trial court, Federal Court judges and prothonotaries routinely travel to cities across the country to hear cases. The safety and health of employees, of those who come into our Courthouses, and of Court members are a top concern for us. At the same time, the Court must remain accessible to Canadians. Balancing these two priorities, the following interim measures are being adopted. They will be subject to ongoing monitoring as this extraordinary situation evolves. An update to this notice will be made before March 25, 2020.

ACCESS TO COURT FACILITIES

Court facilities will be closed to visitors, though the Court will remain open for urgent case-related matters.

COURT HEARINGS

For matters before the Federal Court previously scheduled between March 16 and March 27, 2020:

Urgent Matters

The Court will continue to hear any urgent motions or requests pursuant to Rule 35 of the Federal Courts Rules by teleconference.

General Sittings

All General Sittings of the Court are cancelled. Matters already made returnable at a General Sittings during that period will be placed on the roll of the next scheduled General Sittings for that City.

Telephone Conferences

Hearings, special sittings and case conferences that are already scheduled to proceed by way of telephone conference during that period will proceed as scheduled, unless a request is made to adjourn.

Adjournments

All other hearings and trials of the Court previously scheduled to proceed during this two-week period are adjourned *sine die*. Between April 1 and April 15, 2020, the parties are to provide the Court with their mutual dates of non-availability until December 18, 2020.

Request to Proceed

For any hearing not exceeding 90 minutes, parties may, on consent and without delay, serve and file a joint written request that the matter proceed as previously scheduled, by way of telephone conference or be considered in writing rather than be adjourned *sine die*.

For any trial or longer hearing, parties may, without delay, serve and file a written request including the other party(ies)' position on the request, that the matter proceed by way of telephone conference, videoconference or in person, or be considered in writing, rather than be adjourned *sine die*.

The Court will endeavour to accommodate all requests for a teleconference hearing.

Contact for Requests

Requests should be sent to the Registry at the following e-mail address:

FC_Reception_CF@cas-satj.gc.ca

FILING DEADLINES

Parties may informally request an extension of time. Please consult the Notice entitled [Informal Requests for Interlocutory Relief](#), which provides an informal process for interlocutory procedural requests, including requests for extension of time.

ELECTRONIC FILING AND SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

Parties are encouraged to use the Court's [E-filing portal](#), which provides a safe method for submitting documents to the Court. For more information regarding electronic filing and electronic service of documents between parties, consult the Federal Court's [Notice to the Profession](#) and [Annex](#) thereto.

Paper copy exemption: for any document filed electronically for the duration of this Notice (March 16, 2020 to March 27, 2020), parties are exempted from filing paper copies.

E-Filing ToolKit: The Court is developing an e-Filing Toolkit to assist litigants with the process of preparing and filing documents electronically. It is expected that this will be complete later in March 2020, and it will then be published on the E-filing portal page listed above.

FLEXIBILITY

The Court is committed to being as flexible as reasonably possible in assisting the public to deal with this extraordinary situation and the hardship that it may cause.

Chief Justice Paul Crampton

Associate Chief Justice Jocelyne Gagné