



COVID-19: SUPREME COURT ACCEPTING FILINGS ELECTRONICALLY

Thursday, March 26, 2020 (Halifax, NS) – Until further notice, unless a judge directs otherwise, the Supreme Court, including the Family Division, will no longer accept hard copies of documents at courthouses, due to the risk of the COVID-19 virus. Instead, counsel and self-represented individuals should email or fax those documents that need to be filed in relation to urgent and essential matters.

A list of email addresses and fax numbers for all Supreme Court locations is available at https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm.

Individuals who need to file documents but do not have access to a computer or fax machine should contact the courthouse for further directions.

These measures further reduce the number of people who need to visit the courthouses in person and help protect the health and well-being of the employees and judges still working at the courthouses.

Last week, the Supreme Court adopted an essential services model. Proceedings in the Supreme Court, including Family Division, will be limited to urgent or essential matters, as determined by a judge. Those matters that do proceed will be handled primarily by telephone or video. Social distancing measures will be practised for those few court matters that proceed in person.

Like many sectors right now, the judicial system is operating with significantly reduced staff. The staff available are focused on processing documents related to the urgent and essential matters that are proceeding.

With that in mind, counsel and self-represented individuals should not file documents unless they are related to an urgent or essential matter. Documents related to matters not proceeding in the immediate future should be held until the court has resumed normal operations.

Documents filed by email or fax will not be accepted by the Court until reviewed by staff for compliance with the Civil Procedure Rules. Any single document filed by email or fax must be limited to 50 pages or less. Original paper copies of all court documents that come in electronically must be filed within fourteen (14) business days of the Court resuming normal operations.

Normally, the Civil Procedure Rules require that affidavits be sworn in person prior to being filed. Until further notice, the Court will accept unsworn affidavits, unless a judge directs otherwise. A sworn copy of the affidavit is required at the hearing. Alternatively, the individual will be required to affirm their affidavit evidence at the hearing.

In most instances, payment for filing will be done through an invoicing system. An invoice will be provided once documents are accepted by the Court. In some instances, individuals may be asked to submit the filing fee by another means. Please check with Court Administration staff at the courthouse as to the preferred method for that location.

These measures will remain in effect until such time that the Court stops operating under an essential services model.

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