

NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION:

The Courts Division is implementing a policy to recover operating and set-up costs for videoconferences and teleconferences. This policy is applicable in all court offices throughout the province. *Effective immediately, counsel/parties will be charged for the videoconference and teleconference costs incurred by the Division where the conference is set for the convenience of the lawyer/party who would otherwise be required to appear in person.*

Videoconferences

After a judge approves a hearing by videoconference and sets a date, counsel may book the conference on a fee recovery basis with the court office in the Regions or the Winnipeg Courts Video Coordinator in Winnipeg. The fees cover the Division's costs incurred in setting-up and testing the videoconference link. Division costs will be recovered from government users by internal charge-back. Members of the profession will receive a billing and should remit payment by cheque, payable to the Minister of Finance. Members of the public must remit payment by certified cheque, payable to the Minister of Finance, for the set-up costs before a video test will be conducted. In addition, the booking of a video facility at the far end site and all far-end site costs are the responsibility of counsel or the member of the public.

Teleconferences

After a judge approves a hearing by teleconference and sets a date, counsel may book the teleconference with the court clerk. The court clerk will set up the teleconference using available court teleconferencing equipment. The clerk will

ensure that long distance charges are charged to the participant's telephone account. For conference calls, the clerk will arrange for a 'conference bridge' provided the participant pre-arranges with the conference bridge provider to have the bridge costs charged to them. Bridge services may be booked through MERLIN, the Department of Education's distance education department or through MTS by calling the conference operator.