

NOTICE
MANITOBA COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH MASTERS
RE: COVID-19 NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION PROCEDURAL UPDATE
AUGUST 14, 2020

The notice issued by the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench Masters on May 11, 2020, will remain in effect until further notice.

However, starting in September the masters will be presiding at Maintenance Enforcement dockets. Debtors who are summoned to appear on a Maintenance Enforcement docket in Manitoba scheduled on or after September 8, 2020 are required to attend court in person. If debtors have legal counsel, counsel will also be required to appear in person.

COVID-19 Safety Procedures of the Courts will be in place as per the attached Notice.

ISSUED BY:

"Original signed by Senior Master Lee"

Senior Master F. A. Lee
Court of Queen's Bench (Manitoba)

DATE: August 14, 2020

COVID-19 and Resumption of Court Hearings for the Court of Queen's Bench Masters' Maintenance Enforcement Hearings

This Notice is to provide court stakeholders with information about the steps Courts are taking to ensure safe proceedings for all stakeholders and participants. Please note that these may be subject to change if there are changes in the COVID-19 situation in Manitoba.

COVID-19 Safety Procedures of the Courts

In order to ensure the safety of all participants of in person hearings, Manitoba Justice has implemented and encourages your cooperation in complying with the following safety measures:

- All persons entering a courthouse will be subject to a pre-screening process that includes answering specific questions regarding health and travel.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrance of every court facility. All persons attending court should sanitize their hands upon entry and exit of any court facility.
- Signage has been posted in all courthouses reminding people to adhere to social/physical distancing practices.
- People attending matters in courtrooms are asked to remain outside the courtroom and potentially the court facility until they are called in.
- Safe occupancy levels of courtrooms and public spaces will be determined and adjusted depending upon public health orders in force at the time. However, you will not be allowed to attend inside the courtroom unless your matter is being dealt with or you have the permission of the presiding master.
- Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance of each courtroom; all persons should sanitize their hands upon entry and exit of a courtroom.
- Signage has been placed outside of elevators, limiting use to one to two parties.
- Each courtroom is disinfected daily.
- All surfaces occupied by multiple individuals will be cleaned and sanitized before the next person is allowed in the area, including the witness box and counsel tables.
- The court will not be supplying masks for individuals attending court. However, personal masks may be worn, subject to the master requiring any person to remove their mask for any portion of the proceeding.
- Interview rooms will be sanitized frequently throughout the day.
- All other high traffic surfaces, including door handles and hand railings, are cleaned and sanitized frequently throughout the day.
- No physical touching will be tolerated.
- Water will not be available in the courtroom during this time.

- In cases where a clerk is providing a witness facial tissues, etc., the clerk will sanitize their hands before and after they touch the items or will wear gloves for the transaction and dispose of the gloves afterwards.
- All oath materials including Bibles and Eagle Feathers will be sanitized between uses or other arrangements will be made to ensure access in a safe way.
- Plexi-glass barriers have been installed in some public areas and courtrooms as an added precaution.
- Pens used to sign and witness documents will be sanitized between uses.
- A maximum of one (1) support persons per debtor will be allowed in the courtroom.
- Sheriff Officers are wearing re-usable masks and gloves when working with the public or prisoners. Eye protection has also been issued, to be worn when working in or attending to an isolation centre (WRC and parts of MYC), or when dealing with incidents. Due to the nature of work Sheriff Officers do, social/physical distancing is not always possible, wearing PPE is a preventative measure to mitigate their risk in these situations.
- Lawyer interview rooms in the Sheriffs' Lockup are being disinfected after each use - lawyer and inmate sides.
- The Sheriffs' Lockup and transport units are being disinfected daily.
- To allow for social/physical distancing on prisoner transport, Sheriff Services has implemented a limit of one prisoner in each compartment of prisoner transport containment unit (PTCU) and three prisoners per flight, seated in separate rows.

Everybody has a role to play when it comes to preventing the spread of COVID-19. Any person attending a court proceeding must follow the directions of Sheriff Officers and Masters. Failure to comply with safety measures may result in removal from court facilities.

Suzanne Gervais
Assistant Deputy Minister
Courts Division