

NOTICE

PROVINCIAL COURT OF MANITOBA

Re: COVID-19 SUSPENSION AND RESTRICTION OF HEARINGS

November 30, 2020

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic all levels of Court have taken proactive preventative measures to protect the health and safety of all court users to help contain the spread of COVID-19. Further to our notice of November 10, 2020, given the current situation in Manitoba and the number of COVID-19 cases in the Province including the testing positivity rate, the Provincial Court of Manitoba will extend the current suspension of court operations while continuing to ensure meaningful access to those with urgent matters.

All circuit court sittings throughout Manitoba will remain cancelled until January 4, 2021 or until further notice. All circuit court matters will be adjourned to the first scheduled sitting of that circuit following January 4, 2021, unless the Court has made arrangements to conduct a “virtual docket” in an open court center.

For all adult and youth **in custody** circuit matters counsel are encouraged to schedule teleconference case management meetings to discuss alternative options for hearings.

In addition to all circuit locations being cancelled, all adult and youth **out of custody** appearances in Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin, The Pas and Thompson, including first appearances and trials set between now and January 4, 2021 are cancelled. Those having an appearance between these dates are encouraged to contact their lawyer, check the Manitoba Courts website or contact the court centre for specific appearance dates.

The Provincial Court of Manitoba remains open to deal with **in custody** matters in all court centres (Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin, The Pas and Thompson), and is available to hear applications with respect to other urgent matters. This includes any urgent matters regarding out of custody proceedings and where the matter can be dealt with remotely.

Adult and youth **in custody** bail and disposition courts will continue to sit, with accused persons appearing by telephone or video if available. Efforts will be made to facilitate counsel appearing by telephone when requested (for matters scheduled up to half a day).

Child Protection proceedings are considered to be a priority in the essential services provided by the Court during this time and therefore Child Protection dockets from the courts circuit points will occur in the court centers of Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas,

Dauphin and Portage la Prairie, on the same date the child protection docket was to take place in the circuit court. The practices set out in our notice of April 16, 2020 will be in place again. Parents, guardians, parties to the proceedings and social workers will not be allowed to attend court in person. Counsel may attend but are encouraged to appear by telephone for the child protection dockets.

Child Protection trials are cancelled until and including January 4, 2021, unless an application is made for the matter to be heard by video appearance. Counsel are encouraged to contact the appropriate court centre to arrange teleconference case management meetings to discuss alternative options. The court remains available to hear applications with respect to urgent matters, especially where those can be arranged with the parties attending remotely.

Protection Order applications will continue to be heard by Judicial Justices of the Peace.

The Provincial Court continues to work towards increasing the number of matters that can be heard remotely. The Provincial Offences Court Office at 373 Broadway Avenue, Winnipeg, will be piloting some remote provincial offence trials and dispositions. You will be contacted by the Court if your matter can proceed remotely prior to January 4, 2021. If the matter cannot proceed remotely, it will be adjourned without you being present and rescheduled for a later date. Notification of the new date and time will be sent to you. If you have any questions regarding your ticket please call 204-945-3156 or 1-800-282-8069 EXT 3156 or by email to POC@GOV.MB.CA

Case Management Conferences will continue as scheduled, but will be conducted by teleconference.

The Provincial Court of Manitoba will continue to assess the situation on an ongoing basis.

ISSUED BY:

“Original signed by:”

**The Honourable Chief Judge
Margaret Wiebe**

DATE: November 30, 2020