

NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION
MANITOBA COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH – MASTERS
RE: COVID-19 UPDATE
SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

The Notices issued by the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench Masters on March 17, 2020, April 7, 2020, April 24, 2020 and May 11, 2020, are being updated with the changes noted below, **which are to take effect September 7, 2021, and continue in place until further notice.** These changes, which reflect a cautious approach to reopening during this transition period, should be read in conjunction with the other Court of Queen's Bench Family and General Division notices, including the most recent notice, issued August 20, 2021. During this transition period, we will be enhancing the in-person provision of services before the masters wherever possible, while balancing the health and safety of the court participants.

Maintenance Enforcement Dockets

Maintenance Enforcement dockets in all judicial centres will recommence on a regularly scheduled basis starting on September 13, 2021. Debtors who are summoned to appear on a Maintenance Enforcement docket in Manitoba 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 court will remain in place during this time.

Child Protection Dockets

These dockets will continue remotely via teleconference in all judicial centres in Manitoba serviced by the masters in accordance with the process set out in the April 7, 2020, Notice from the Masters. During the transitional period, and as we move forward during this unpredictable time, the masters will commence discussions with the stakeholders on a feasible and safe return to in-person dockets.

Masters' Civil and Family Uncontested List

The Masters' Uncontested Lists will continue to operate via teleconference, in the manner described in the Notice issued by the Masters on May 11, 2020. The call-in number and ID for those matters on the daily uncontested list remain as follows for the Winnipeg Centre:

Toll-free dial-in number: 1-855-342-6455

Conference ID number: 5589296

For all other centres, the call-in numbers and ID remain the same as confirmed within prior notices from the court.

Bankruptcy Dockets

The Bankruptcy dockets will continue to proceed remotely via teleconference until further direction from the court, in accordance with the May 11, 2020, Notice.

Upon request, and where appropriate, appearances in person or via video conference for the necessary provision of viva voce evidence, including cross examination, will be arranged. These matters, where required, will be set off the docket in accordance with directions provided by the presiding registrar.

Contested Motions

Contested motions will continue to be heard via teleconference unless otherwise agreed with the presiding master. Upon request, where video capacity allows and all parties are represented by counsel, arrangements may be made to have contested motions heard via video conference rather than teleconference. These matters may be arranged in the normal course, either at the uncontested list appearance, or through the Masters' Coordinator with leave of the presiding master.

Uncontested Passing of Accounts and Hearings for Directions

During the transition period, all uncontested Passing of Accounts or Hearings for Directions in respect of references, accountings or any other matters, will continue to proceed during the transition period via teleconference. Dates for appearances may be obtained in accordance with the rules and as set out in the May 11, 2020, Notice to the Profession issued by the Masters.

Matters involving the provision of viva voce evidence

All matters in which the master will be hearing viva voce evidence, in keeping with the directions for the General and Family Division of the Court of Queen's Bench, will occur in person, including where one or more party is self-represented. However, given the increased availability of video capacity, counsel are encouraged to also consider requests to the presiding masters to permit a witness to appear by video conference where it is reasonable, having regard to issues of access, expediency and proportionality. Video hearings in whole or in part, where capacity allows, may be requested only where all parties are represented by counsel.

In-person attendance court Covid-19 protocols remain in place, and will be respected at all in-person hearings as set out in the Notice of the Court of Queen's Bench of August 20, 2021.

All other matters being addressed by the masters will continue as set out in the Notice to the Profession issued by the Masters on May 11, 2020.

ISSUED BY:

“Original signed by Senior Master Clearwater”

Senior Master K. L. Clearwater
September 1, 2021