

COVID-19 Pandemic Planning for the Scheduling of Matters in the Ontario Court of Justice

Public health officials have recommended that measures be taken to reduce the amount of time individuals spend in large crowds or in crowded spaces to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in a community. The Ontario Court of Justice is committed to ensuring that those with urgent matters continue to have meaningful access to the court. With that in mind, the Ontario Court of Justice has established procedures to reduce the number of people who attend court for [criminal](#), [family](#) and [Provincial Offences Act](#) matters.

As of Monday March 16, if you have a *Provincial Offences Act*, family or criminal court appearance in the Ontario Court of Justice you do not need to attend court, unless the matter is an in-custody or urgent criminal matter or an urgent family matter.

Note: Please do not come into a courthouse in person if you have been advised by public health officials, your doctor or the Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH) website (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>) to self-isolate.

The court will post further information as it becomes available, so please continue to check the Ontario Court of Justice website (<https://www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/>) for updates.

CRIMINAL MATTERS - IN CUSTODY ACCUSED

Criminal courts remain open.

The court is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, criminal matters involving accused persons who are in custody (including bail matters) that are ready to proceed are able to proceed.

Wherever possible, the court will make full use of video and audio technology to effectively address criminal matters involving accused persons who are in custody.

CRIMINAL MATTERS - OUT OF CUSTODY ACCUSED

Criminal courts remain open.

However, if you are not in custody and have a criminal court appearance in the Ontario Court of Justice between Monday March 16 and Friday April 3, you do not need to attend court.

If you do not attend court, your matter will be adjourned to another court date 10 weeks from the date of your scheduled appearance. (To find out what date your matter is being adjourned to, see [list of adjournment dates](#).) The court will adjourn your matter without you being present, using a court order called a "[bench warrant with discretion](#)" which will require you to attend court on the new date.

If your matter is urgent, you or your counsel may choose to come to court and speak to your matter.

If your criminal court appearance is after April 3, 2020, please check the Ontario Court of Justice website (<https://www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/>) for updated information.

If you have questions, please contact your local courthouse. Contact information for all courts in Ontario is available on the Ministry of the Attorney General website: https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses/

FAMILY MATTERS

Family courts remain open.

Urgent family matters will proceed on a prioritized basis. These matters include:

- *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*: place of safety hearings (s. 90); temporary care and custody hearings (s. 94), restraining orders (s. 137), status review hearings (s. 113), and secure treatment orders (s. 161);
- Domestic matters: urgent custody/access motions; motions for restraining orders; Hague applications and non-Hague abduction cases; and
- *Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act*: refraining motions (s.35).

The Family Law Rules permit conferences and/or motions to be heard by telephone and/or video conferencing. Where necessary and/or appropriate, these matters can be heard using one of these methods.

All non-urgent matters, including trials, will be adjourned for 8-12 weeks. **If you have a non-urgent family matter, you do not need to attend court.** Adjournments requests can be made to the local Trial Co-ordinator's office, preferably by 17F confirmation forms forwarded to a fax number or by telephone. Contact information for all courts in Ontario is available on the Ministry of the Attorney General website: https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses/

PROVINCIAL OFFENCES ACT MATTERS (e.g. TRAFFIC TICKETS)

Provincial Offences Act matters scheduled from Monday, March 16, 2020 through and including and Friday, April 3, 2020 will be adjourned without you being present and rescheduled to a later date. **If you have a matter scheduled during this time, you do not need to attend.**

A notice of your new court date will be sent to you by mail to the address on file with the court. For more information, please contact your local Provincial Offences court. Contact information for all municipal courts is available here:

https://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/courts/Court_Addresses/poa/

List of Adjournment Dates for Criminal Matters

If your matter is scheduled for....

Your matter is adjourned to

Monday March 16

Monday May 25

Tuesday March 17

Tuesday May 26

Wednesday March 18

Wednesday May 27

Thursday March 19

Thursday May 28

Friday March 20

Friday May 29

Monday March 23

Monday June 1

Tuesday March 24

Tuesday June 2

Wednesday March 25

Wednesday June 3

Thursday March 26

Thursday June 4

Friday March 27

Friday June 5

Monday March 30

Monday June 8

Tuesday March 31

Tuesday June 9

Wednesday April 1

Wednesday June 10

Thursday April 2

Thursday June 11

Friday April 3

Friday June 12