



COVID-19: INCREASED HEALTH SCREENING AT COURTHOUSES

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020

As per the [COVID-19 Court Recovery Plan](#), public access to courthouses across Nova Scotia continues to be limited to those people who work in the building, who are involved in a court proceeding or those who have an appointment, and have passed the mandatory health screening.

Following the announcement of additional public health restrictions for Halifax and Hants counties, and with the rising number of positive COVID-19 cases in the province's Central Zone, all courthouses have expanded the list of screening questions to identify whether an individual is aware of the public health exposure alerts and if so, whether they are affected by them.

To be clear, no individual will be prevented from entering a courthouse based on where they reside in Nova Scotia. If an individual attending court indicates during the screening process that they may have been subject to exposure, sheriffs will gather further details and refer the matter to the court administrator and the presiding judge for direction. To help reduce any risk of exposure to others, these individuals will be kept outside the courthouse until a course of action is determined.

Counsel and self-represented individuals travelling for an in-person court appearance in another area of the province are encouraged to contact the court ahead of time if they are unsure whether their matter is proceeding as planned. The presiding judge has the discretion to decide who can attend court in person and whether virtual appearances should be considered.

Counsel involved with in-person court proceedings are also encouraged to speak with their clients and any witnesses ahead of a court appearance to determine whether they are aware of the public health exposure alerts and if so, whether they are affected by them. If it is determined they may have been subject to exposure, counsel should advise the court and the presiding judge immediately to determine next steps.

For more information on the preventative measures the Nova Scotia Courts have taken to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, while continuing to hear matters, please visit https://www.courts.ns.ca/News_of_Courts/COVID19_Preventative_Measures.htm.

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