



COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

WEEKLY UPDATE

Fola.ca

COVID-19 - WEEKLY CHECK IN LOG #13

June 10, 2020

Summary

Invited participants: Sector calls

OBA, FOLA, LSO, LAO, the Advocates' Society, & OTLA

Superior Court of Justices in Ontario, Court of Appeal for Ontario, & Ontario Court of Justice

MAG - Political and Department staff

Issues discussed:

1. Courts

- ❖ The Court of Appeal is piloting Zoom on some appeals and are comparing the technology with CourtCall (which they have been using).
- ❖ The SCJ continues to meet with the Working Groups (Family, Criminal, Civil, Bankruptcy, and Small Claims) with a specific focus currently on health and safety measures within the Courthouses as we look towards reopening.
- ❖ Reopening discussions are also well underway with the Recovery Secretariat and Public Health Officials. The Chief Justices have also retained their own Public Health Officials to ensure the utmost safety of all those who enter the Courthouses upon reopening.
- ❖ The Criminal and Civil Working Groups have, in conjunction with Court staff, been working on a proposal for a portal that contains case information available online that would be accessible after the creation of a one key account. Accounts would be free of charge and would log the user in to a searchable terminal. Fields to include appearance type, appearance name, and file number. Other fields would be added incrementally based on user feedback. The proposal will be presented to the Chief Justices for review in the next week or two. Because information within the portal is all publicly available information, there are few concerns with this at present and is likely to be up and running by the end of the month.
- ❖ The OCJ is also continuing planning for the reopening of the Courts (set for July 6th) and are looking at a three-phased approach. A mix of both in-person and remote hearings to be a part of the foreseeable future.
- ❖ The Courts are expected to issue Directives related to reopening by the end of next week.

2. FOLA

- ❖ **REMINDER #1: CALL FOR SUBMISSION - CIVIL JURIES:** Late Friday evening, FOLA was asked to provide input on an amendment to the Courts of Justice Act to eliminate some or all civil jury trials. On Monday, June 8th, we emailed the Presidents and law librarians asking that they circulate that request to members and have been collecting feedback. FOLA's response is due on June 15th, so if you have any comments you wish to provide FOLA as we draft our submission, please do send them to katie at katie.robinette@fola.ca by **Thursday, June 11th at 5pm.**

- ❖ **REMINDER: UPCOMING FREE LIVE WEBINARS!** FOLA has partnered with Korbitec to offer you two free live webinars this month. One is on Korbitec's xchangedocs (June 17), which is a portal for exchanging documents with opposing parties, process servers, clients, experts, and others through a secure Canadian environment. And you can send or retrieve documents directly from within ACL5. The other webinar will be held on June 18th and will cover Automated Civil Litigation (ACL). ACL assembles court forms and other documents over ten times faster – error free and properly formatted – using your own precedent templates and thousands of up-to-date court forms. You can find links to both of those [here](#).
- ❖ And don't forget! The e-Hearings Task Force (of which FOLA is a member) has drafted some documents that have been designed to help you prepare for Remote Hearings (which you can find those [here](#)). If you have participated in a remote hearing and have some additional suggestions, we'd love to hear them! Please email Katie Robinette at katie.robinette@folo.ca and put "REMOTE HEARINGS" in the subject line.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS?

Law Association members are welcome to send any issues/concerns related to the practice of law caused by the COVID-19 epidemic to FOLA (katie.robinette@folo.ca) and we will continue to address them in as timely a manner as is humanly possible. Please note that prior to submitting a question, you are requested to visit the [Ontario government's website](#), the [Courts' websites](#), and the [Law Society's FAQ](#) page. These links can all be accessed on FOLA's [COVID-19](#) page. Please also note that FOLA cannot assist in issues related to a specific case and the Courts will NOT provide clarification on any Notice to the Profession.

Do you have health/safety concerns related to the reopening of the Courts? Please also forward those to Katie at katie.robinette@folo.ca. Be sure to include the name and location of the Courthouse in question and note any actions taken so far to address the matter and the dates on which those actions were taken.