



# COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

## WEEKLY UPDATE

Fola.ca

### COVID-19 - WEEKLY CHECK IN LOG #50

March 24, 2021

#### 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, Department staff, and the Recovery Secretariat

#### Issues discussed:

#### 1. COURTS

- ❖ Mohan Sharma, Executive Legal Officer at the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario in Toronto (and a sometime participant in our Sector Meetings), was appointed a Judge of the SCJ earlier today! [Here's the announcement.](#)
- ❖ Naming conventions of electronically filed documents with the Ontario Court of Appeal can be found [here](#) and naming conventions of electronically filed documents with the SCJ can be found [here](#).
- ❖ On March 15<sup>th</sup>, the Court of Appeal for Ontario released a new practice direction that will come into force on March 29, 2021. It will be called the Consolidated Practice Direction Regarding Proceedings in the Court of Appeal During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The English version can be found at [this link](#). The French version of the consolidated practice direction can be found at [this link](#).
- ❖ The SCJ, in collaboration with the Ministry of the Attorney General, is seeking candidates to join new DRO panels for the Kingston, Kitchener and Welland Unified Family Courts. You can read more [here](#). Note that deadline has been extended to April 9<sup>th</sup> (*this new date is not yet on the website*).
- ❖ **CaseLines Webinar Recordings from February 2021 are now on Vimeo:**
  - Civil Demonstration (East & Northwest regions): February 23, 2021: <https://vimeo.com/528339815/c03b912d81>
  - Family Demonstration (East and Northwest regions): February 24, 2021 - <https://vimeo.com/528336065/1c69c516a3>
  - Criminal Demonstration (East and Northwest regions): February 23, 2021 - <https://vimeo.com/528344696/090cd8beab>
  - Criminal Q&A (Toronto): February 24, 2021: <https://vimeo.com/528344696/090cd8beab>
- ❖ [CaseLines Hearings - Tips for the Bar](#) (Feb 19)

#### 2. MAG

- ❖ **TIME SENSITIVE: CONSULTATIONS ON REMOTE NOTARIZATION:** MAG has launched consultations on modernizing the Notaries Act - specifically with regards to remote notarization. If you or someone from your Association would like to participate, please contact Arielle Hercules-Ramcharan at [arielle.hercules-ramcharan@ontario.ca](mailto:arielle.hercules-ramcharan@ontario.ca) by no later than **March 26, 2021**. You can learn more (including accessing MAG's slide deck setting out the questions that will be discussed during the consultations) [here](#).

**\*\*FOLA will be preparing a submission. If you or your Association would like to send comments for consideration in our Submission, please email me ([katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca)) with responses to questions based in the Consultation deck (on our [website](#)), please do so by **NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, MARCH 25<sup>th</sup> AT NOON** so that we have time to review and consider when preparing our Submission in time for MAG's March 26<sup>th</sup> deadline. Alternatively, you can prepare your own submission by March 26<sup>th</sup>.**

- ❖ **CASELINES & JUSTICE SERVICE WORKING GROUP:** MAG has agreed to arrange for CaseLines and Justice Service Ontario working groups to discuss ways to improve the systems and provide input. If you have comments to share, please send those to Katie at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca). Your comments will be shared with the group.
- ❖ There have been a few member questions regarding Small Estates Forms. They are posted on the Ontario Court Forms site here: [Rules of Civil Procedure Forms | Ontario Court Services \(ontariocourtforms.on.ca\)](#). They are in grey shading as they will not come into force until April 1<sup>st</sup>. There is another section on the court forms site that includes pre-formatted and fillable estates forms ([Rules of Civil Procedure Forms / Pre-formatted, Fillable Estates Forms | Ontario Court Services \(ontariocourtforms.on.ca\)](#)).
- ❖ Many forms related to the Divorce Act and the Children's Law Reform Act have been updated (and some continue to be updated). You can find all information (including links to forms, materials, and training) [here](#).
- ❖ MAG has released details of its Phase 2 COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan which will start on March 15, 2021. You can learn more on our MAG webpage under the "REOPENING PLANS - ONTARIO'S COURTS" [here](#).
- ❖ The Ontario government is following the progress of [Bill C-22](#), an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act as it proceeds through the federal government to see if they will need to make any amendments to existing Ontario laws as a result.

### 3. RECOVERY SECRETARIAT

- ❖ **NOW AVAILABLE!** Version 6 of the Recovery Secretariat's Guidebook, "COVID-19: Recommended Precautionary Measures for Resuming Court Operations" is now available on [Ontario.ca](#), in both [English](#) and [French](#). *As a reminder, the Guidebook is a living document and may continue to be updated over time, in response to feedback and/or evolving provincial guidance regarding COVID-19.*
- ❖ **REMINDER:** Questions about Courthouse operations during COVID-19 can be directed to Samantha Poisson at [MAGrecoverysecretariat@ontario.ca](mailto:MAGrecoverysecretariat@ontario.ca).

### 4. FOLA

- ❖ **IMPORTANT REMINDER: LAW LIBRARY FUNDING:** As you know, FOLA has long been advocating for increased funding for our law libraries. This advocacy has ramped up considerably in light of the Law Society's recent budget cuts. **It is critical that the LSO understands the importance and specific use of our libraries by our members so please take a moment to fill out our short survey.** Responses will help us in our efforts to convince all Benchers of the importance of law libraries throughout Ontario. [TAKE THE SURVEY](#)
- ❖ **VISIT OUR LAW LIBRARY ACTION CENTRE:** FOLA has created a [Law Library Action Centre](#) -complete with curated social media posts and some images for you to share. Please take a moment to visit and send a tweet or two. Tag FOLA (@Ont\_Law\_Assoc) and we will share all your Law Library advocacy posts! [Here's the link!](#)
- ❖ **FOLA MEMBER REWARD:** Vaultie has developed a secure, compliance based digital identity-based notary seal built to help lawyers and notaries authenticate documents and verify ID's in an online world. They are offering [a live virtual demo](#) for law association members and you can register [here](#). Plus, they are offering FOLA members a special code to receive \$30.00 off of your first month. Use code [FOLATRIAL](#).
- ❖ **ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER:** Northumberland Law Association's Winter 2021 Newsletter is now available! You can read it [here](#).
- ❖ **SMALL CLAIMS COURT WORKING GROUP - COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS WELCOME:** Jane Robertson is FOLA's representative on the Small Claims Court Working Group, whose mandate is to assist with formulating revisions to forms and process given the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on the operations of the

Small Claims Court. Jane is welcoming feedback and insight from the perspective of both the practicing bar and the per diem Deputy Judges who practice and preside in the Small Claims Court, Superior Court of Justice, Ontario. Feel free to contact her with suggestions and/or queries that you wish to come to the attention of the Small Claims Court Working Group. Please be advised that while she may not be able to answer your questions directly, she will bring your queries and comments to the attention of the working group. Jane can be reached by email at: [jajadiver@bellnet.ca](mailto:jajadiver@bellnet.ca)

#### 5. LAO

- ❖ Legal Aid Ontario announced a new program to enhance legal aid services for immigration detainees on March 16<sup>th</sup>. You can learn more [here](#).

#### 6. LAW SOCIETY OF ONTARIO

- ❖ Application deadline for the 2021 Annual Fee COVID-19 Deferral Option is March 31, 2021. Learn more [here](#).

#### 7. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- ❖ There is an open appointment opportunity for the position of Chairperson, Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Deadline for applications is April 6<sup>th</sup>. You can find out more [here](#).
- ❖ FOLA has been focusing on issues related to the practice of law in Ontario (MAG & the Ontario Courts) since the start of the pandemic. If you are continuing to experience issues in the Federal Courts (like e-filing, e-hearings), we'd like to know. Please email Katie at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca). Briefly describe your issue/concern and highlight any steps you have already taken and we will do our best to assist you.

#### 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 at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca) and we will continue to address them in as timely a manner as possible. 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. If your concerns are related to issues surrounding health and safety measures as the Courts expand in person operations, please indicate the name of the Courthouse and the steps you have already taken to address your concerns to: [MAGrecoverysecretariat@ontario.ca](mailto:MAGrecoverysecretariat@ontario.ca).