



COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

WEEKLY UPDATE

Fola.ca

COVID-19 - WEEKLY CALL CHECK IN LOG #4

April 8, 2020

Summary

Invited participants on 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. Law Society

- ❖ The LSO is working on a few updates to their FAQ page - namely regarding articling students, updates for candidates, and information on yesterday's MAG announcement regarding wills and virtual witnessing;
- ❖ The LSO noted that LawPro is currently reviewing the implications of the aforementioned announcement around wills and virtual witnessing;
- ❖ A reminder that the LSO's FAQ page is updated frequently and is available [here](#).

2. Courts

- ❖ The SCJ stressed that they are trying to provide as much flexibility as is possible and are expanding services on an incremental basis;
- ❖ Regional differences are due to capacity issues;
- ❖ Training is being provided to judges and staff and they are working to allow for increased remote access to databases and Court documents by Court staff;
- ❖ The SCJ is continuing to adapt services to the media and are operating on a request-only basis but requests are being granted and communications with members of the media are ongoing;
- ❖ The SCJ reminded those on the call that, as per the [April Notice](#) regarding criminal matters during the suspension, Sureties Defence counsel are responsible for arranging to confirm sureties' identification and to assist them to sign bail by signing an electronic bail release and scanning it back to the court registrar to be forwarded to the institution, or as otherwise directed by the Court;
- ❖ E-Signatures are being recognized;
- ❖ The Courts were urged to speed up the postings of decisions as matters affecting upcoming cases are being heard and, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, lawyers need to access these as soon as possible. NOTE: SCJ is working with CanLII on this and judges have been asked to flag pivotal cases so that they get immediate attention;
- ❖ Lawyers who feel that they are experiencing problems getting types of urgent matters recognized as urgent are to let FOLA know and these will be brought to their attention. Email Katie.Robinette@folo.ca. Same goes with matters not yet being accepted.

3. LAO

- ❖ LAO will be releasing updates to a few things in the next day or so – namely: changes to billing rules to better allow for billing of remote services; further changes to block fees; and changes for billing for early release deals;
- ❖ LAO is working on practice management guidelines for working with a client who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- ❖ Reminder that all LAO updates can be found [here](#).

NOTE: Law Association members are welcome to send any issues/concerns related to the practice of law caused by the COVID-19 epidemic to FOLA 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 government's website, the Courts' websites ([Superior Court of Justice](#), [Ontario Court of Justice](#), [Court of Appeal](#)), and the [Law Society's FAQ](#) page. These websites are all updated daily. You may find your question/issue/concern has already been addressed. Links to all above sites can also be found on FOLA's [COVID-19](#) page.

Questions can be sent to Katie Robinette at katie.robinette@fol.ca. No phone calls please.