

THE HONOURABLE SUZANNE M. STEVENSON
SENIOR JUDGE FAMILY COURT
SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE



L'HONORABLE SUZANNE M. STEVENSON
JUGE PRINCIPALE DE LA COUR DE LA FAMILLE
COUR SUPÉRIEURE DE JUSTICE

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October 25, 2021

Family lawyers,

It has been a pleasure meeting with many of you on my virtual visits with the family bar across the province over the past 6 months. These discussions have given me an ongoing appreciation of what is working well as well as the ongoing pressures in different centres. I continue to welcome your input on these issues either directly through Senior Family Counsel, Tami Moscoe, or through your local bar representatives on the SCJ Family Law Working Group. I attach a list of these lawyers so that you know who to reach out to discuss these issues.

I am writing today to advise you that unfortunately we are having ongoing challenges getting CaseLines fully operational in many centres outside of Toronto. While we continue to work on the filing-related challenges, recent audits have confirmed that lawyers have not always been using CaseLines even when they have received an e-mail invitation in advance.

By way of a reminder, I point to the following section of the Province-wide SCJ Notice to the Profession regarding CaseLines and e-filing:

After materials are accepted for filing by the court, parties **shall** upload electronic copies of their documents into CaseLines for review by all participants before and during a court hearing. Parties will receive an email from CaseLines containing a link to the case.

I also draw your attention to the following excerpt from the Province-wide SCJ Notice regarding Family Cases:

Once litigants have been invited to a CaseLines file, all material that has been accepted for filing by the Court **must** also be uploaded to CaseLines immediately after receipt of confirmation that the filing has been accepted.

If the material has not been uploaded to CaseLines in accordance with the timelines for filing, it may not be reviewed by the judge in advance. If a self-represented litigant is not able to use CaseLines because of lack of access to technology, they can

obtain help at the filing office. Assistance with CaseLines is available through Justice Services Online by contacting 1-800-980-4962 or by email at info.CaseLines@ontario.ca

Litigants are asked to use CaseLines to facilitate the Court's access to the entire court file, including relevant documents from the Continuing Record. In addition to uploading event specific documents after they have been filed, this means uploading the pleadings and Form 35.1 affidavits into the CaseLines pleadings bundle and the relevant orders and endorsements into the CaseLines orders/endorsements bundle. Litigants should also upload into the CaseLines bundle for the event any additional documents that have been previously filed and will be relied upon at the event (e.g. financial statements that have been updated by affidavit).

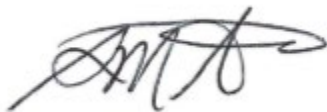
It is absolutely essential for counsel to use CaseLines to ensure the efficient operation of the Court. Where materials are not uploaded into CaseLines in time for the judge to prepare, court staff and judges are spending an excessive amount of time obtaining the materials through other means. This is time that would otherwise be spent hearing other matters, preparing for attendances, reviewing 14B motions and divorces, and writing decisions.

Please ensure that you are using CaseLines whenever you receive an invitation to do so. This will allow us to start expanding its use more broadly to all family events. This will also enable us to focus our resources on addressing backlogs and providing more timely access to justice.

Finally, for those who are not yet comfortable with the program, I am advised that in addition to the training videos and resources, assistance is available directly from CaseLines. That help can be accessed by contacting Thomson Reuters by phone at 1-800-290-9378 or by email at westlaw.softwaresupport@tr.com.

Thank you again for your ongoing cooperation over the last 19 months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.M.S.', written in a cursive style.

Madam Justice Suzanne M. Stevenson
Senior Family Judge