



# COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

## WEEKLY UPDATE

Fola.ca

### COVID-19 - WEEKLY CHECK IN LOG #14

June 17, 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 SCJ continues to work with the Recovery Secretariat towards the reopening of "select Courtrooms in select Courthouses" on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Following those reopening, Courthouse/Courtroom reopening expansion will continue in "waves".
- ❖ The SCJ continues to meet with the Civil Working Group on establishing guidelines for e-Filing and with the Small Claims Working Group to expand operations beyond Prior Consent Remote Settlements.
- ❖ FOLA was told to expect a Notice from the OCJ today regarding expansion of services plans around trials and pre-trials. Those Notices are now available. I have attached both to the email accompanying this update, but the OCJ Notice re: Resumption of Criminal Trials and Preliminary Hearings as of July 6, 2020 can be found [here](#) and the OCJ Notice re: COVID-19 Scheduling of Family Matters can be found [here](#).

##### 2. MAG

- ❖ FOLA asked that MAG push the Recovery Secretariat to extend invitations to Law Association Presidents to attend onsite health and safety tours of local Courthouses. FOLA reminded MAG that our members make up the vast majority of the practicing bar in cities and towns across Ontario and that our Associations are the ones with responsibilities for all law libraries within the Courthouses. MAG reassured FOLA that they will revisit this issue with the Executive Lead of the Ministry's Recovery Secretariat, Samantha Poisson, this afternoon.

##### 3. FOLA

- ❖ **NOTICE: COURT REOPENINGS:** The Ministry is hosting an information session with Dr. Michelle Murti, from Public Health Ontario, and Ron Kelusky, Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer, on **Friday June 19, 2020 at 10am**. FOLA representatives are welcome to join this session using the following link: [Friday, June 19th from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. \(EST\)](#).
- ❖ Do you have health/safety concerns related to the reopening of the Courts? Please also forward those to Katie at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.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.
- ❖ **IN CASE YOU MISSED THIS -FOLA IN THE NEWS:** Canadian Lawyer Magazine carried an article today titled "Ontario Attorney General Doug Downey should not be rushing to axe civil juries, FOLA warns". You

can read that [here](#). We were also featured in an article today in QP Briefing (an online division of the Toronto Star that focuses on Queen's Park). Unfortunately, it is behind a paywall. But [here's the link](#) in case you want to subscribe or start a (free) 2 week trial.

- ❖ **REMINDER:** 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 [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@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca) and put "REMOTE HEARINGS" in the subject line.
- ❖ **EVENT NOTICE:** The CD Howe Institute is hosting a webinar titled "Can COVID-19 Propel Ontario's Justice System into the Digital Age?" on July 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12:30pm-1:30pm (EST). If you are a CD Howe member, the cost is \$35. If not, guests are welcome to register at a cost of \$75. [Click here for the link](#).
- ❖ **FAVOUR:** FOLA is looking for content for our now-regular "Association Shout-out" section in our July newsletter. If your Law Association is doing something that you consider unique that is either giving back to the community or helping to engage your members, please do share this with Katie at [katie.robinette@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.ca). The goal of this section is to get other Associations to either copy your idea or adapt it into something that they, too, might be able to offer their members. Thanks!

### 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@fola.ca](mailto:katie.robinette@fola.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.