



COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

WEEKLY UPDATE

Fola.ca

COVID-19 - WEEKLY CHECK IN LOG #52

April 7, 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

- ❖ On April 1, the SCJ issued a Consolidated Notice to the Profession, Litigants, Accused Persons, Public and the Media. You can view that [here](#)
- ❖ 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](#).
- ❖ **FINAL REMINDER:** 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 and apply [here](#). The deadline is April 9th.
- ❖ **CaseLines Webinar Recordings from February 2021 are now on Vimeo:**
 - Civil Demonstration (East & Northwest regions): <https://vimeo.com/528339815/c03b912d81>
 - Family Demonstration (East and Northwest regions): <https://vimeo.com/528336065/1c69c516a3>
 - Criminal Demonstration (East and Northwest regions): <https://vimeo.com/528344696/090cd8beab>
 - Criminal Q&A (Toronto): <https://vimeo.com/528344696/090cd8beab>
- ❖ [CaseLines Hearings - Tips for the Bar](#) (Feb 19)

2. MAG

- ❖ On April 6, 2021, a regulation was filed to amend court rules and forms for civil proceedings in the Superior Court of Justice: [O. Reg. 248/21](#), amending the Rules of Civil Procedure. The administrative amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure achieve consistency with recent civil rule and form amendments establishing electronic processes in civil court proceedings (O. Reg. 689/20), as well as amendments establishing a simplified probate process for small estates (O. Reg. 111/21). The amending regulation also makes administrative amendments to introduce consistent French-language terminology and correct discrepancies between the English and French versions of various rules and forms. The regulation amends 23 rules and 43 forms. A summary of the regulation is available on Ontario's Regulatory Registry at: [21-MAG010](#). The amendments are effective April 6, 2021.
- ❖ MAG is seeking input and perspective on a new regulation to be made pursuant to the [Provincial Offences Act \(POA\)](#), specifying additional ways to serve POA summonses. The proposed regulation would allow service by way of registered mail, courier, or email. It would also permit service on a recipient's licensed lawyer or paralegal, where applicable. The full text of the proposed regulation is available on the Regulatory Registry [here](#). You can submit your comments directly through the [Regulatory Registry](#) on or before **April 12, 2021**.
- ❖ **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. Your comments will be shared with the group.

3. RECOVERY SECRETARIAT

- ❖ **VACCINE INFORMATION:** The Recovery Secretariat issued a Notice titled “[March Vaccination Sector Information - courts and justice system workers \(including probation and parole\)](#)” to provide information to support an understanding of occupations that may be considered essential within the “courts and justice system workers (including probation and parole)” category. You are encouraged to continue to monitor the [Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario webpage](#) and to connect with your local public health unit for details about when and how you, or your staff, could get a vaccine and review the Ministry of Health’s document called [COVID-19: Guidance for Prioritization of Phase 2 Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) which provides additional clarity. If you have any questions, please email: MAGRecoverySecretariat@ontario.ca.
- ❖ **REMINDER!** 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.

4. FOLA

- ❖ **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!](#)
- ❖ **MORE ON LIBRARY FUNDING:** Earlier this week, FOLA and the TLA sent joint letters to LSO’s Audit & Finance Committee and the LSO’s Competence Task Force urging them to provide an opportunity to us as Shareholders of LiRN to appear before their respective Committees. Those letters are available on the [Action Centre page](#).
- ❖ **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:** As Ryerson’s Law Practice Program plans for the upcoming cohort, we are recruiting eligible Ontario Lawyers for various roles (Mentor, Assessor, Trial Advocacy Advisor or Guest Speaker). Please note that participation is entirely virtual, from anywhere in Ontario. Learn more and apply [here](#).
- ❖ **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. And just for you, they are offering FOLA members a special code to receive \$30.00 off of your first month. Use code [FOLATRIAL](#).
- ❖ **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

5. LAWPRO

- ❖ LawPRO has some newly published information around the government of Ontario’s optional simplified process for probating small estates which comes into effect on April 1, 2021 and applies to estates with assets of less than \$150,000. You can access that [here](#).

6. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- ❖ **DIVORCE ACT TRAINING:** Due to popular demand, two final training sessions in English have been added
Monday, April 19, 2021 – 2pm to 5pm EST: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/148956762687>
Tuesday, April 20, 2021 – 12:30pm to 3:30pm EST: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/148981651129>
If you have any questions, please contact: Public Inquiries (Family, Children, & Youth Section) at:
infofam@justice.gc.ca
- ❖ As you know, 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 experiencing issues in the Federal Courts (like e-filing, e-hearings), we'd like to know. Please email Katie at 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 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.