



## Provincial Court of British Columbia

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The Court welcomes the public and media who want to watch a court case.

Public access to court proceedings is an important principle in Canada. Having members of the public attend provides public scrutiny, and ensures that our courts and judges are accountable. The Supreme Court of Canada has said:

The open court principle is of crucial importance in a democratic society. It ensures that citizens have access to the courts and can, as a result, comment on how the courts operate and on proceedings that take place in them. Public access to the courts also guarantees the integrity of judicial processes inasmuch as the transparency that flows from access ensures that justice is rendered in a manner that is not arbitrary, but is in accordance with the rule of law. (*CBC v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2011 SCC 2.)

## Finding scheduled matters

### Daily court lists

You can look at the daily court lists posted outside courtrooms or on digital screens in the courthouse. You can also check online for small claims matters or criminal matters to see some of the matters scheduled for the day you plan to go to court. Family court and traffic, ticket and bylaw court lists are not posted online, but if you attend a court there may be matters in those areas proceeding as well.

If you wish to hear a bail hearing, email the court registry where the file originates. The court registry will provide instructions on how to join.

[Small claims court list \(Government of BC\)](#)

[Criminal court list, including bail list \(Government of BC\)](#)

### Court locations and schedules

Get location details and hours of courtroom operation.

[Court locations and schedules](#)

## Observing hearings in person

Trials and most other hearings in Provincial Court are open to the public and media to attend in person, but conferences that focus on mediation or settlement are usually limited to the parties involved and their lawyers. Occasionally, a judge will order that a hearing is closed to the public, although this does not happen often. Access to a courtroom might be limited, for example, to protect the privacy of children or vulnerable people.

When a courtroom is closed to the public and media, there will be a sign on the door, or a sheriff will advise you. Otherwise, feel free to enter a courtroom even when court is in session. Please sit quietly so you do not disturb the proceedings.

## Observing remote hearings

If you cannot attend in person and wish to attend a proceeding by telephone, email the applicable court registry as far in advance as possible before the hearing. Provide the information listed in the policy *ACC-1 Access to Court Proceedings*. A Regional Administrative Judge, Administrative Judicial Justice, judge or a judicial justice will consider your request. Their decision will apply unless the judge or judicial justice hearing the proceeding orders or directs otherwise.

Anyone listening to a court proceeding undertakes to remain silent (mute their microphone) and, if applicable, hidden (keep camera turned off) for the court proceeding

[ACC-1 Access to Court Proceedings](#)

## Key expectations

Unless a judge directs or orders otherwise:

- Put your cell phone on silent mode
- Do not audio-record, video-record, photograph or take a screenshot of any part of a proceeding; there are penalties for doing so, including prosecution
- Do not publish, broadcast or distribute court proceedings in any way; there are penalties for doing so, including prosecution
- Read and comply with [Notice 21 Remote Attendance in the Provincial Court](#)

## Accredited media

Accredited media may use electronic devices in courtrooms for certain purposes. Accredited media should review the policies for accredited media including *ACC-01, Use of Electronic Devices in Courtrooms, NM 01* and *MED-1*.

### Access policies and policies for accredited media

The court issues policies about watching court, accessing court records and using electronic devices like computers and cell phones in courtrooms.



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