



There are specialized domestic or intimate partner violence courts in Duncan, Nanaimo and Surrey.

## Approach

Intimate partner violence courts use varying approaches, but all of them are problem-solving courts that try to help people with the underlying problems contributing to their criminal behaviour, while still holding them accountable.

### Duncan and Nanaimo

BC's first domestic or intimate partner violence court was a judge-led initiative in Duncan in 2009. A similar court was opened in Nanaimo in 2013 through the collaborative efforts of a local committee and judges. The courts there use a collaborative, therapeutic approach. Service providers attend court weekly to share information and coordinate services for victims and offenders. At both of these courts, coordinated services are provided to affected families and corresponding information is offered to the judge to make sentencing more effective.

### Surrey

Starting in 2016 in Surrey, all matters related to intimate partner violence charges other than trials are heard in one "front-end domestic violence courtroom". The matters heard there include bail, applications to change bail, guilty pleas, and sentencing hearings taking not more than 30 minutes. Crown counsel are assigned to this courtroom for extended periods. Although service providers do not attend court in person, judges and lawyers use a collaborative, therapeutic approach.

### Other court locations

In other court locations, cases involving intimate partner violence are given scheduling priority, victims' assistance workers may support victims, and sentences may include therapeutic programs and counselling.

[Notice 18 Hearing Location of Domestic Violence Files Within Catchment of Downtown Community Court](#)

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