



## Provincial Court of British Columbia

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Virtual conferences increase access to justice, particularly for vulnerable people and those in remote communities.

The Court holds virtual pre-trial conferences in family, small claims and criminal cases. Parties and lawyers meet with a judge by video conference to try to resolve issues and see whether they need a trial.

Since they do not have to travel to a courthouse and wait for their case to be called, parties and lawyers save time and money. Many litigants find participating from home less stressful. They avoid being in the same room as the other party, a particular benefit in high conflict family and civil cases and for victims of intimate partner violence. Virtual conferences also allow the judge who is conducting a conference to be located anywhere in BC.

To help with challenges, the Court provides technology training and support to its judicial officers and a guide for parties and lawyers.

The Court recognizes that virtual conferences won't work for everyone. Parties can apply to attend in person when appearing remotely is not possible or not suitable.

## **Criminal**

In criminal cases with trial time estimates longer than two or three days, judges meet with Crown and defence lawyers by video conference to find out whether the trial is needed and to narrow issues. These conferences save court time and help reduce trial delays.

[Criminal Pre-Trial Conferences](#)

## **Family**

When people need to go to court to resolve an issue about parenting, contact, guardianship or support, their first court appearance is a virtual Family Management Conference. The judge can make interim orders to stabilize the family's situation. They can also make orders to manage the case and help parties prepare for trial.

[Family management conferences](#)

## Small Claims

The parties in a small claims case attend these conferences by video conference and submit their documents by email. Although most people find this convenient, parties can still apply to attend in person.

[Small claims settlement conferences](#)

## Participating remotely

Learn about attending court proceedings by telephone or video conference.



### Notice 21

Remote Attendance in the Provincial Court including guidance on conduct when joining a hearing by telephone or video conference.



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