

# Informal Trial Process – Kamloops Registry Pilot

The judge at an informal trial has control over the trial process. They may adapt the process depending on the case to better meet your needs. You should follow the trial judge's direction, but your informal trial experience may look like this:

## During your pre-trial appearance...

The judge explains that you have the option of an informal trial. They explain the process and refer you to more info.

You can review the resources and talk to a lawyer before you decide which process is best for you. The informal trial process is voluntary, and you must file a consent form if you agree to it.

After the parties file consents and the judge agrees to an informal trial process, your case is scheduled for an informal trial. Use the How to prepare for an Informal Trial Guided Checklist to help prepare for the informal trial.

## At the informal trial...

The judge explains the informal trial process and the expectations for everyone. The judge makes sure everyone understands.

The parties and the judge have agreed to the informal trial process. Each party is invited to give an opening statement.

A judge at an informal trial may...

- Ask you to explain the issues in your own words.
- Identify the issues to be resolved at the informal trial.
- Ask questions to help understand your story and make sure you have covered information about each issue.
- Allow a witness other than a party to give evidence.

Each party gives their evidence, without the other party interrupting.

The judge helps facilitate the cross-examination.

If the judge agrees that other witnesses would be helpful, the parties have their witnesses give evidence.

You can have an expert witness, such as a doctor or counsellor, or a report writer, testify if the judge agrees before the trial that they would be helpful. They must come to the trial and be ready to testify. They may be questioned by the judge or the parties.

## Closing statements

Each party is invited to make a short closing statement about the issues and how the judge should decide the issues.

The judge will consider what each party says and the evidence which has been provided to determine if it is important to the case.

## Final order

The judge can sometimes make a decision before you leave the courtroom, but sometimes the judge needs more time and asks the parties to return to hear the decision or gives it in writing.

## For more information

For more resources about informal trials, including an explainer, frequently asked questions and trial preparation help, visit [www.gov.bc.ca/FamilyInformalTrial](http://www.gov.bc.ca/FamilyInformalTrial).