



# Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## Guidance for Courthouse Users During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This guidance is for Courthouses in British Columbia and is based on known evidence as of

March 24, 2022

### Legal disclaimer:

The purpose of this guidance is to provide practical public health advice to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases in British Columbia. This guidance does not have legal authority; however, not following the guidance in this document may leave individuals or organizations open to legal action. This guidance does not supersede orders or direction under the *Public Health Act*, by the courts or any other provincial or federal legislation. This guidance is subject to updates.



Ministry of  
Health



BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



## Introduction

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Courts and court services that support court proceedings are critical and essential services for British Columbians. Courthouses are settings where people access justice relating to a myriad of public and private legal matters that often engage public safety and individual liberty rights. People rely on the right to access courts to resolve their legal disputes in a fair and just hearing, where the rule of law applies. Many people who attend at courthouses, do not choose to be there, rather they are compelled by subpoena or other process to attend. People must have confidence that the courts are safe and accessible.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns about individual and public health and safety, as well as potential exposure risks have been highlighted by those who use the court system. This guidance document provides links to infection prevention and control measures implemented in courthouses<sup>1</sup>.

## British Columbia's Approach to COVID-19

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Part of the Provincial approach to COVID-19 early in the summer of 2021 included a shift from COVID-19 infection prevention and exposure control measures to ongoing communicable disease prevention measures. At that time the Provincial Health Officer "[Statement for Employers on Transitioning from COVID-19 Safety Plans to Communicable Disease Plans June 17, 2021](#)" recognized that **some workplaces may maintain current COVID-19 Safety Plan protocols for a longer period to allow for a transitional period and progression from COVID-19 Safety Plans to communicable disease plans**. With the arrival and spread of the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant of concern the Provincial Health Officer, in collaboration with WorkSafeBC, is requiring that employers reactivate their COVID-19 Safety Plans.

## BC Courts' Current Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

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For current health and safety measures for the courts regarding COVID-19, including the Omicron variant, please see:

- [Court of Appeal](#)
- [Supreme Court](#)
- [Provincial Court](#)
- [Ministry of Attorney General, COVID-19 court operations](#)

Variants of COVID-19, including the Omicron variant, spread the same way as the original COVID-19. That means the prevention measures already in place in courts continue to be effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading.

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<sup>1</sup> "Courthouses" is used in this document to refer to all court locations, including circuit court locations.



These include everyone eligible getting fully vaccinated, doing a daily health check and staying home when sick, wearing masks as appropriate, and cleaning hands regularly.

## Ordering COVID-19 Tests for Individuals Scheduled to be in Courthouses

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Testing for COVID-19 follows the BC Centre for Disease Control advice available at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test>.

## Related Links

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[BCCDC Webpage on Courthouse Exposure Events and Incidents](#)

[BCCDC COVID-19 Information Webpage](#) and [hand washing poster](#)

[Communication and Incident Response Protocol: Notification of Potential COVID-19 Incidents and/or Testing at or Related to Courthouse](#)

[Provincial Health Officer Orders](#)

[WorkSafeBC COVID page](#)

