



# Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## Guidance for Courthouse Users During COVID-19 and Other Communicable Disease Incidents

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

December 15, 2023

### Legal disclaimer:

The purpose of this guidance is to provide practical public health advice to reduce the risk 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 information about infection prevention and control measures implemented in courthouses for COVID-19 and other communicable diseases<sup>1</sup>.

## British Columbia's Approach to COVID-19 and Communicable Disease Incidents

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Part of the provincial approach to COVID-19 in 2021 included a shift from COVID-19 infection prevention and exposure control measures to ongoing communicable disease prevention measures.

## 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 (and its variants), please see:

- [Court of Appeal](#)
- [Supreme Court](#)
- [Provincial Court](#)
- [Ministry of the Attorney General](#)

Measures aimed at reducing the transmission of communicable diseases including COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases are in place in all courthouses across the province. These measures include encouraging everyone to have their vaccinations up to date, do a daily health check and stay home when sick, wear masks as appropriate, follow proper respiratory virus etiquette such as covering coughs with an elbow or sleeve and clean hands regularly.

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



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

[Public Health Incident and Communication Response Protocol: Notification of Potential Communicable Disease Incidents at, or Related to, Courthouses](#)

[Provincial Health Officer Orders](#)

[WorkSafeBC COVID-19 and Communicable Disease Webpage](#)

