

August 20, 2020



## **COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH OF ALBERTA**

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

#### **OFF-SITE CRIMINAL JURY SELECTIONS AND TRIALS**

Shortly after the March 15, 2020 suspension of regular operations at the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, the Government of Alberta, in conjunction with the Court, conducted a comprehensive assessment of court facilities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. That assessment revealed that, across the province, courtrooms and jury retiring rooms, with very few exceptions, are too small to accommodate juries and abide by physical distancing directives of Alberta Health Services.

The principles of open and accessible justice, and timely access to justice, make it necessary for the Court to resume criminal jury selections and trials. The requirements of public health – especially physical distancing requirements – mandate that, in the coming months, jury selections and trials must occur at facilities outside of existing courthouses. This is consistent with the recommendations of the Action Committee on Court Operations in Response to COVID-19, available at the Government of Canada Department of Justice website, here: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/ccs-ajc/ac-ca/message.html>.

Therefore, until further notice, jury selections and jury trials in the Judicial Centres of Edmonton and Calgary will be held at the following locations:

	<b>Criminal Jury Selection</b>	<b>Criminal Jury Trial</b>
<b>EDMONTON</b>	Bonaventure Gate Writing Centre 13156 St. Albert Trail NW Edmonton, AB	Bonaventure Gate Writing Centre 13156 St. Albert Trail NW Edmonton, AB
<b>CALGARY</b>	Big Four Building 1801 Big Four Trail SE Calgary, AB	Stampede Grandstand 3 Street SE Calgary, AB

Offsite locations for criminal jury selections and criminal jury trials in all other Judicial Centres will be announced on an *ad hoc*, per-trial basis.

Jury summonses have already issued for the first offsite jury selection at the Bonaventure Gate Writing Centre in Edmonton, for a trial scheduled to commence on September 8, 2020. Offsite jury selections in the Judicial Centre of Calgary, and other Judicial Centres, will follow shortly thereafter. All jury summonses will be accompanied by a “Juror Summons and COVID-19 Information” pamphlet providing additional information about the precautions that are being implemented to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Arrangements have been made for the safety and security of jurors, witnesses, counsel, and all others attending offsite criminal jury trials. The Alberta Sheriffs Branch is finalizing arrangements for public screening on entry to the offsite facilities. Separate entrances for accused persons and/or witnesses in custody will be provided. Private spaces will be made available for counsel to consult with clients. All offsite facilities will have readily available parking and access to public transit where possible.

All health and safety protocols developed by the Government of Alberta, in conjunction with the Courts, relating to screening, physical distancing, mask wear and sanitation at court facilities will apply to the offsite locations. Courtrooms and jury deliberation rooms at the offsite facilities will allow for compliance with the physical distancing and other health and safety recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Arrangements will be made for representatives of the Bar to view the Calgary and Edmonton facilities prior their opening.