



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Bar Associations and Legal Organizations

FROM: Chief Justice Geoffrey B. Morawetz

DATE: March 27, 2024

RE: Virtual Trial Sitting for Civil, Non-Jury Cases

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Last year, the Superior Court of Justice commenced an initiative to address the backlog of civil trials that developed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Regional Senior Judges' Council resolved to schedule two, four-week long virtual trial sittings for civil, non-jury cases. The first sitting took place from November 14, 2023 to December 8, 2023, and was successful in reducing the backlog of civil trials in the Southwest Region. Judicial resources from across the province were pooled to provide pre-trial and trial dates.

The next virtual trial sitting will take place from November 12, 2024 to December 6, 2024, and will target civil, non-jury trials in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The court has begun its review of matters set down for trial which qualify for consideration. Parties on those matters will be notified to attend a special assignment court for the sitting. If you do not receive a notice to attend assignment court and wish to have your case heard during the sitting, please contact the Trial Coordination Office.

No later than five (5) days before the assignment court appearance, parties will be required to file with the court a completed trial management form. This form will be provided to parties together with the notice to attend the special assignment court.

**Participation in the virtual sitting will be determined by the court and will not be at the option of a party or both parties. In cases assigned to the sitting, counsel and witnesses must make themselves available all day, every weekday during the sitting to ensure the efficient use of the Court's time.**

### Key points:

- Virtual trial sitting targeting civil, non-jury cases in the Northwest and Southwest Regions will take place from November 12, 2024 to December 6, 2024.

- Pre-trial conferences and trials will be held virtually and the use of CaseLines is mandatory.
- Counsel and self-represented parties will be directed to attend assignment court for scheduling.
- A completed trial management form must be filed with the court at least five (5) days before the assignment court appearance.
- Participation in the virtual sitting will be determined by the court and will not be at the option of a party or both parties.
- In cases assigned to the sitting, counsel and witnesses must make themselves available all day, every weekday during the sitting to ensure the efficient use of the Court's time.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring the success of this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GBM', is written above the typed name.

GBM