

Provincial Court of Alberta (the “Court”)
Edmonton Criminal Division
Pre-Trial Conference (“PTC”) Process
during the implementation of the Court’s COVID-19 Pandemic Plan (the “Plan”)

Stakeholder Notice – Effective March 23, 2020

As a result of the implementation of the Plan, all in-person PTCs are suspended until further notice. Judges will conduct PTCs for in-custody trials/preliminary inquiries via telephone or by email.

An “in-custody trial/preliminary inquiry” is defined as a matter in which an accused is bail denied on the charges going to trial/preliminary inquiry. An accused who has release on the trial/preliminary inquiry matter scheduled, but is in custody on other matters will have his or her matter adjourned for the presumptive 10-week adjournment. If there is more than one accused, the matter will be considered as an in-custody trial/preliminary inquiry — if any of the co-accused are in custody.

If a matter is listed as an “in-custody trial/preliminary inquiry” but the accused has subsequently obtained release, the PTC need not proceed as the matter will be adjourned for the presumptive 10-week adjournment.

PTCs under the Plan will proceed for all in-custody trials/preliminary inquiries, as follows:

1. Judges will contact counsel and arrange a telephone conference call or conduct a PTC by email with all parties.
2. Counsel are expected to accommodate the effort to meet with or respond to the PTC Judge as soon as possible.
3. The PTC Judge will complete a Judge’s Report which will be provided to the assigned trial/preliminary inquiry judge.

The objective of the PTC will include the following:

1. Confirm whether the accused is still an in-custody accused (if released, the matter will be adjourned and PTC will not proceed).
2. Canvas prospect of settlement.
3. Confirm Crown has available witnesses under subpoena and expects to be able to proceed.
4. Confirm defence intends to proceed with the trial if all witnesses available; canvas whether any outstanding issues which might result in an adjournment application.
5. Canvas admissions, if possible to enable Crown to cancel unnecessary witnesses.
6. Canvas scheduling of witnesses to minimize congregation of witnesses in the Law Courts.