



Alberta Court of Justice

Practice Direction

Scheduling French/Bilingual Language Matters Pursuant to Section 530 of the Criminal Code

Effective: May 1, 2025

Purpose

Section 530 of the *Criminal Code* provides the right to a person charged with a criminal offence in this country to have their trial conducted in the official language of Canada that is the language of the accused (French or English) or, if the circumstances warrant, both official languages of Canada.

This Practice Direction outlines the procedure to be followed to schedule French and bilingual matters. This approach will optimize the use of available resources, avoid unnecessary delays and ensure that matters are scheduled in a timely and efficient manner.

Application and Effective Date

This Practice Direction will apply to all *Criminal Code* matters as of May 1, 2025.

Procedure

1. Prior to scheduling any criminal matter for trial or disposition, all persons charged with a *Criminal Code* offence in Alberta will be required to have complied with the Practice Direction regarding the [Language Choice of the Accused](#).
2. One week prior to the docket day on which a French/bilingual proceeding is intended to be scheduled, counsel must do the following:
 - a. Attend at the Case Management Office (CMO) to obtain three mutually available dates for all parties and witnesses. In locations where a CMO does not exist, three mutually available dates for all parties and witnesses should be obtained in accordance with the scheduling practices of that location.
 - b. Email servicesenfrancais.acoj@albertacourts.ca and provide the names of all counsel, the name of accused(s), the corresponding docket number(s),

the location of the trial or disposition, the three mutually agreeable dates and any additional requirements.

3. Counsel and the relevant CMO or local scheduling assistant will be contacted and advised of which date is available for the matter to proceed with a French/bilingual Justice assigned. The CMO or local scheduling assistant will then release the other proposed dates.
4. If none of the originally proposed dates is available, counsel will need to reattend at the CMO or to the local scheduling assistant and canvass additional dates.
5. Once a date has been agreed upon, Counsel will confirm the available date on the next scheduled court appearance.
6. If the matter is set for trial, Counsel will be contacted by a Case Coordinator from the Alberta Court of Justice to schedule a trial readiness hearing in advance of the trial no later than six weeks in advance of the trial date.
7. If at any point it is determined that the matter will not be proceeding as scheduled, Counsel will notify servicesenfrancais.acoj@albertacourts.ca immediately.

Issued this 1st day of May, 2025 by direction of



**The Honourable J.A. Hunter
Chief Justice
Alberta Court of Justice**