

July 10, 2025

ANNOUNCEMENT

REDUCING CIVIL TRIAL DELAY

Building upon [NPP#2024-02 *Setting Civil Trial Dates by Order – Pilot Project*](#), the Court is committed to reducing the time, and standardizing the maximum time, it takes to move all non-family civil actions through the court system. To that end, the Court has released [NPP2025-02, *Mandatory Litigation Plans in Civil \(Non-Family\) Cases*](#).

Timely justice in civil matters is embedded in Rule 1.2(1) of the *Alberta Rules of Court (Rules)*. In *Hryniak v Mauldin*, 2014 SCC 7, the Supreme Court of Canada stated that “a culture shift is required in order to create an environment promoting timely and affordable access to the civil justice system”. The Court is adopting, as a general expectation for parties and counsel, a target ceiling (Civil Trial Target) for non-family civil trials of 36 months from the service of the first Statement of Defence. The Civil Trial Target may require parties and counsel to rethink the way they approach civil litigation, as discussed below.

Active Management Toward Trial

It is the Court’s expectation that actions shall no longer move through the system at a self-directed, voluntary pace chosen by one or more of the parties. While parties must continue to “facilitate the quickest means of resolving a claim at the least expense” (rule 1.2), the Civil Trial Target creates an expected backstop that actions are, if necessary, through the system to trial resolution within 36 months.

Fair, Proportionate and Necessary Pre-Trial Procedures

Civil pre-trial processes are to be fair and proportionate but need not be perfect. Litigants are encouraged and expected to make pre-trial decisions consistent with meeting or beating the Civil Trial Target, consistent with rule 1.2(3)(c) (“... parties must ... refrain from filing applications or taking proceedings that do not further the intention of these rules”).

Counsel/Party Accommodation

Counsel and parties are expected to make appropriate arrangements (including employing back-up counsel if necessary) and accommodations in their schedules to ensure the Civil Trial Target can be achieved.

The historical tolerance for delay caused by counsel or party schedules must be curtailed, absent exceptional circumstances.

Meeting Deadlines

Parties and counsel are expected to meet deadlines under the *Rules*, in court orders, or otherwise agreed by them. Parties are reminded that rule 10.49 contemplates penalties against a party, lawyer or other person who fails to comply with the rules, practice note, or direction of the Court without adequate excuse.

Continued and Increased Use of Civil Appearance Court (CIVAC) to Set Early Trial Dates

The Court encourages parties in all actions to consider an application to set a trial date through CIVAC, as described in NPP#2024-02.