



COVID-19 & THE PRACTICE OF LAW

WEEKLY UPDATE

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COVID-19 - WEEKLY CALL CHECK IN LOG #6

April 22, 2020

Summary

Invited participants on calls

OBA, FOLA, LSO, LAO, the Advocates' Society, & OTLA

Superior Court of Justices in Ontario, Court of Appeal for Ontario, & Ontario Court of Justice

MAG - Political and Department staff

Issues discussed:

1. Law Society

- ❖ The LSO is working on a notice to licensing candidates regarding the recruitment process for articling - including messaging to Deans and to other stakeholders. Revised processes expected to be out mid-May.
- ❖ We were reminded that, while the LSO will hold Convocation tomorrow (April 23rd), there will not be an option for the public to watch it live. However, they will be posting the transcripts following the meeting
- ❖ The Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid (ASLA) has drafted a letter to the AG requesting additional funding due to the current and future impacts on the demand for Legal Aid as a result of COVID-19. A second letter is being drafted this week that will go to the Federal Minister of Justice regarding Legal Aid funding for refugee matters. Both letters will be signed by FOLA as we are a member of ASLA
- ❖ The LSO is in the process of revamping their COVID-19 page to help "tidy it up"
- ❖ A reminder that the LSO's FAQ page is updated frequently and is available [here](#)

2. Courts

- ❖ Callers were reminded of the [notice](#) sent to the profession dated April 20th that the Superior Court of Justice will not recommence criminal or civil jury selection or jury trials until September, 2020, at the earliest
- ❖ The Courts are continuing to work with MAG to further expand services. They are creating Criminal, Family, and Civil working groups from each region to convene and offer suggestions to "Fast Action Teams" at MAG who will then work out how to best implement agreed-upon suggestions. MAG is in the process of getting the teams up and running. Suggestions selected for execution to be discussed on future Sector Calls
- ❖ The Chief Justices' Working Groups are studying the process of system changes with an eye towards what will be sustainable in the long run (post COVID-19) - including exploring various options for video conferencing platforms that would be used court-wide. Their current goal is to have a radically changed/improved justice system post COVID-19
- ❖ The Court of Appeal is in the process of working out a plan to notify the public of hearing dates and ways to facilitate access

3. LAO

- ❖ Legal Aid Ontario is discussing how to best leverage the current momentum of technological advances in their processes and procedures with an eye to moving to a paperless system and would like the Courts' and MAG's cooperation on this
- ❖ Reminder that all LAO updates can be found [here](#)

4. LAW PRO

- ❖ Law Pro raised a question around construction liens deadlines as the regulations do not typically list what is specifically covered, leading to some confusion about which time periods are included and which are not or whether they can file trial records virtually. MAG indicated they were working on this

5. OTHER

RE: Wills: Is MAG working on an Order in Council (OIC) to make it clear that these are permissible under the current Act? There is some uncertainty as to whether they could be held up to a challenge

Response: LSO and MAG are working on this and will advise shortly

NOTE: Law Association members are welcome to send any issues/concerns related to the practice of law caused by the COVID-19 epidemic to FOLA and we will continue to address them in as timely a manner as is humanly possible. Please note that prior to submitting a question, you are requested to visit the [Ontario government's website](#), the [Courts' websites](#), and the [Law Society's FAQ](#) page. These websites are all updated daily. You may find your question/issue/concern has already been addressed. Links to all above sites can also be found on FOLA's [COVID-19](#) page.

If you have any questions/concerns related to court and ministry issue as a result of COVID-19, please send them to Katie Robinette at katie.robinette@fola.ca. No phone calls please. And please also note that FOLA cannot assist in issues related to a specific case.