



**MANITOBA COURT OF APPEAL  
MANITOBA COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH  
MANITOBA PROVINCIAL COURT**

**NOTICE TO THE PROFESSION**

**September 7, 2020**

**Re: Use of Masks**

We have today been advised, that a staff person located in the Winnipeg Law Courts complex tested positive for COVID-19. The employee and their small number of close contacts are in isolation. They have not had interaction with the public. The employee has not been at the Winnipeg Law Courts Complex since Wednesday.

The Law Courts Complex has undergone additional enhanced cleaning, including all high touch points areas like elevator buttons, courtrooms etc. All previous announced restrictions and preventative measures remain in place.

As the Court has indicated in earlier Notices to the Profession, we continue to address issues relating to COVID-19 on an ongoing basis. We do so to protect all court participants and the general public. Given this development we are now issuing this Notice to the Profession, effective **September 8, 2020** regarding the use of masks for the Winnipeg Law Courts Complex including St. Boniface and all Winnipeg circuit points.

In so far as the policy contains exceptions, they are consistent with previously issued Public Health Orders.

While a courthouse is an indoor public place, a courtroom is not. Members of the public including counsel and the press must at all times while in the Courthouse wear a mask, except, when in a courtroom, the presiding judge stipulates otherwise.

In the context of the pandemic, significant limitations have been placed upon who will have access to a courthouse and be permitted to remain in a courtroom. Moreover, the control and the choreography of the courtroom is always subject to the discretion of the presiding judge.

Courthouse space and the applicable mask wearing policy, can be broken down into the following five (5) categories:

- 1) Courthouse Hallways and Public Area: Everyone must wear masks;
- 2) Courthouse Office Areas: While it will be left to the individual employees to decide, staff are encouraged to wear a mask, subject to any further direction from the Chief Justices, Chief Judge and courts administration management;
- 3) Chambers Area: It will be left to the individual judges and employees whether they choose to wear a mask;
- 4) Courtrooms: It will be left to the presiding judge to determine if and when a person should be masked;
- 5) Public Counters: Individual employees must wear a mask unless behind a plexiglass.

Richard Chartier  
Chief Justice of Manitoba

Glenn D. Joyal  
Chief Justice  
Court of Queen's Bench

Margaret Wiebe  
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Provincial Court

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