



PROPERTY ASSESSMENT APPEAL BOARD

PRACTICE NOTICE

IN-PERSON PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Updated August 17, 2021

The Property Assessment Appeal Board (the Board) will hold in-person proceedings (“hearings”) when necessary in the circumstances of an appeal, and if an appeal can not be adjudicated by remote hearing or written submissions hearing or a combination of both.

The B.C. Government’s [Restart Plan](#) includes a shift from COVID-19 infection prevention and exposure control measures to ongoing communicable disease prevention measures. The Board has put in place health and safety measures to protect participants, the public, staff, and Board members.

The Board will comply with the Ministry of Attorney General’s information about [COVID-19 Court Restart Operations](#), health and safety protocols.

These measures are subject to change without notice as the Board receives further guidance and direction from public health authorities.

Parties to an in-person hearing are expected to confirm the hearing proceeding can proceed in accordance with the precautions and restrictions set out below and to advise the Board of any problems these measures may present. Any such problems should be addressed in advance of the proceeding. Parties will also need to address any additional concerns that may apply in the specific circumstances.

If parties are unprepared to comply with these measures, the Board may adjourn the proceeding and award costs against the unprepared party.

NOTE: By attending the hearing, you do so entirely at your own risk and waive any claim you may have against the Board for contracting COVID-19 or similar virus.

Hearing Participants and Observers:

The maximum occupancy of the hearing rooms at the Board's offices is restricted to 50% normal occupancy. In order to limit the number of attendees on a daily basis, unless otherwise agreed to prior the commencement of the hearing:

- Only attendees required and planned to actively participate in the specific day's session may attend in-person.
- In advance of the commencement of the hearing, each party is required to submit a list of required attendees for each day of the hearing.
- With advance notice, the Board can arrange for video/audio conferencing for non-required attendees or interested members of the public to observe all or part of the hearing.

Addressing instances of symptomatic participants and travel outside Canada:

Parties must be in a position to confirm at the opening of the hearing, and at the start of each day of the hearing, that no one involved on their side (including counsel, the party, or witnesses) has any COVID-19 symptoms. Please see the [BC Centre for Disease Control website for symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Parties must also be in a position to confirm no one involved on their side traveled outside Canada within 14 days of their anticipated in person appearance in a courtroom.

If an individual who is or was in the hearing starts experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, they should complete the BC Centre for Disease Control's self-assessment tool, call 811, and/or contact their primary care provider for personal medical advice and follow any directions provided. If the medical advice or public health directions that individual receives could impact an ongoing or upcoming appearance, the party should contact the Board Administration office.

Face Masks and Face Coverings:

Public Health recommends wearing masks in public indoor settings. Individuals entering or present in the hearing room will be required to wear a mask or face covering, unless exempted from doing so by the Panel Chair or the Board. The Panel Chair may also direct other health and safety measures depending on the circumstances of a particular proceeding. Any concerns on the part of the parties regarding the use of face masks or face coverings should be raised for discussion prior to the hearing at the earliest opportunity.

In the Hearing:

The physical layout of the hearing rooms, including the position of panel members, parties and the witness, may not be altered as it has been set to maintain a safe physical distance between all participants. The ability to move within a particular hearing room, such as by approaching a witness, may be restricted for physical distancing purposes. Plexiglas barriers may be installed in the hearing room as required.

Hearing rooms are sanitized before your hearing starts and again after you leave.

Please sanitize your hands when entering and leaving the hearing room. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be available at the entrances and on the table.

Audio devices in hearing rooms have been reconfigured to allow for better recording. Speak clearly and loudly so the decision-maker is able to hear you through the screens and barriers.

At the discretion of the presiding panel member, individuals participating in a hearing may be asked to remove a mask temporarily, for example, to clarify an audio issue; in order to ensure a full and proper hearing.

Oaths or Affirmations: If a witness wishes to give evidence under oath rather than by affirmation, they must bring a Bible or other religious book or sacred object to the hearing. There will be no Bibles or other religious books available.

Exhibits, Documents, and Authorities: Parties should deliver copies of documents that they intend to enter as exhibits or rely on in cross-examination to other counsel/parties in advance, rather than simply passing them out in the hearing room. The same applies to common books of documents, written submissions, and briefs of authorities.

Where the passing of copies of documents or physical exhibits to others is unavoidable, parties must use the hand sanitizer available in the hearing room to sanitize their hands before and after handling the documents. In addition to hand sanitizer, there will be a supply of gloves for anyone who wishes to use them, as well as instructions for the safe use, removal, and disposal of gloves.

Water will not be provided by the Board. Bring your own water bottle which you must take with you when you leave. Do not leave bottles, glasses, or cups in the hearing room or Board's offices.

THE FOREGOING IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ANY UPDATED DIRECTIONS WILL BE POSTED ON THE BOARD'S WEBSITE.