

## **Courthouse Checklist**

### **Going to the courthouse to file papers**

#### ***Before you go***

- Properly complete all your documents and ensure that they're ready for filing

Where you need a document to be commissioned by the court staff (such as your Affidavit or Financial Statement), don't sign this document in advance. It must be signed in the presence of the commissioner. You may be charged a fee to have your documents commissioned by court staff.

- Make enough copies of each document

You may be able to make copies at the courthouse, but there may be a charge.

- Bring cash or your debit/credit card to pay for any filing or other fees
- Be prepared for a possible security search at the courthouse

Don't carry any items that may prevent you from entering.

#### ***After clearing security***

- Locate the Office of the Registrar

Look for a sign or directory in the lobby of the courthouse to help you locate the Office of the Registrar, or ask court staff for assistance.

#### ***Once at the Office of the Registrar***

- Sign in or take a number for service

Many Offices of the Registrar use these methods to help people on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you're not sure what to do, ask the court staff. Due to the high volume of cases, you may have to wait in some courthouses for up to two hours to be served.

#### ***While you're being served***

- Don't ask court staff to tell you how to fill out your paper work
- Don't ask court staff for legal advice
- Refrain from talking on your cell phone or text messaging while the court staff are serving you

- Be courteous to everyone at all times: court staff, other members of the public and lawyers
- If experiencing difficulty in issuing or filing your documents, see if there's a Family Law Information Centre at the courthouse where you can get some help

## **Going to the court to appear before a judge**

### ***Before you go***

- Dress appropriately

For example, don't wear clothing bearing inappropriate language or images.

- Bring all the documents and supporting material that you'll need for the conference, motion or trial
- Plan to be at the courtroom door at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time for your conference, motion or trial

You'll need enough time to clear security and find the courtroom where your case is going to be dealt with.

- Be prepared for a possible security search at the courthouse

Don't carry any items that may prevent you from entering.

### ***After clearing security***

- Look for the courthouse lobby directory to locate the courtroom in which your case will be heard, or ask court staff for assistance

Lists posted outside each courtroom identify the cases that will be dealt with in that particular courtroom.

- Confirm that your case is on the courtroom list for that day

If your case is not listed or you're not sure, ask court staff for assistance.

### ***Once you're at the right courtroom***

- When appearing for a conference, wait outside the courtroom or conference room until your case is called

The court clerk will instruct you as to where to be seated.

- When appearing at a motion or trial, take a seat in the body of the courtroom until your case is called

Proceed to the front of the courtroom when your case is called.

- Don't bring any food or drink in the courtroom
- Don't chew gum in court
- Turn off cell phones or other electronic devices

You aren't permitted to tape or record the court proceedings. If you want to, you must ask the judge for permission.

- Always be courteous to court staff
- Stand whenever the judge enters or leaves the courtroom

All persons in the courtroom will be instructed to "all rise" whenever the judge enters or leaves the courtroom.

- Follow all instructions that may given to you by the judge or court staff
- Speak only when you're asked to speak
- Don't interrupt any other party when they're speaking
- Address the judge as "Your Honour"

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