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Fort McMurray Flooding

Our thoughts are with our colleagues in Fort McMurray who are dealing with a flooding emergency at the time of release of this Special Edition. The Fort McMurray courthouse is currently closed, and parties have been directed to alternative procedures and locations in [Queen’s Bench](#) and [Provincial Court](#).

Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta

Master Order #3

On April 21, 2020 the Court of Queen’s Bench of Alberta released the [third Master Order](#) of the COVID-19 pandemic, which extends the deadline set out in the previous Master Orders to May 31, 2020. As a result, all civil matters scheduled from March 16, 2020 to May 31, 2020 have been adjourned *sine die*.

We note that Master Order #3 was released following the Ministerial Order 27/2020 on Limitations (commented on in our last update [here](#)), and the Court has not amended the Master Order to match the Ministerial Order. According to the Court’s Master Order #3, all filing deadlines (except for filing documents for commencement of proceedings) are suspended until

May 31, 2020. Therefore, it appears that the Court is using its discretion to require all filing due during this period to now be due for filing on June 1, 2020. The Ministerial Order's suspension of "steps" in a "proceeding or intended proceeding" arguably does not apply to filing deadlines in the Court of Queen's Bench.

Email and Fax Filing Fees

The fax and filing fees of \$1 per page, up to a maximum of \$20, will remain in effect past the current court closure, up to June 30, 2020. The Court's announcement on this extension can be found [here](#).

Bar Admissions

The Court of Queen's Bench is [directing](#) articling students to submit a request for a Bar Admission Ceremony through the Emergency/Urgent Hearing Request [form](#).

Provincial Court of Alberta

Closure

The Provincial Court remains partially closed and has yet to extend its closure past May 22, 2020. The Provincial Court continues to accept non-urgent documents for filing at the drop box located at the Sheriff station. Urgent filing, as described [here](#), continues to be accepted at the filing counter. We thank the Provincial Court for meeting with members of the bar [recently](#) and sharing valuable information about continued access to justice at Alberta's Provincial Court. According to this meeting, civil matters will generally be rescheduled in chronological order once full services resume, but matters will also be assessed on an individual basis.

Bar Admissions

Bar Admission Ceremonies in Provincial Court are requested through the same procedure, but we note that the attendees to the Ceremony are limited to only the Applicant and his or her Principal. Previously, the Provincial Court had indicated that this restriction would only be in place until May 31, 2020 but it appears that this is [now](#) an indefinite measure.

The Law Society of Alberta

Articling

Pursuant to the announcement found [here](#), and effective April 6, 2020, the standard articling term minimum has been reduced from 12 months down to eight months by the Law Society of Alberta. Articling Students who were clerking with the Courts now only need to spend a minimum of eight months, to a maximum of ten months, clerking. Following the clerking period, these students now need only three to five months articling with an active member of the Law Society. This reduces a clerking-articling minimum term from 15 months down to 11 months.

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