

Protocol for in-person hearings

Background

The Alberta Human Rights Tribunal will return to some in-person hearings in September 2020. This protocol will guide the participants who attend those hearings while communities in Alberta are still under a staged return because of COVID-19. Hearings may also be heard, in certain circumstances, by video-conference.

Protecting health

Your health and safety is important to us, and therefore we have taken measures to protect those who attend an in-person hearing:

- There is enhanced cleaning of the hearing room and nearby bathrooms;
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located in convenient spots;
- Sanitizing wipes will be supplied to disinfect areas that you have touched;
- Space has been provided to observe the 6-foot physical distancing rule; and
- Plexiglass barriers have been installed.

Barriers, physical distancing, and masks

Plexiglass barriers have been placed in the hearing rooms at the tables for:

- Each party to a complaint;
- The witness;
- The Tribunal Clerk; and
- The Tribunal Chair.

We have reduced the number of people who will be permitted to be present in a hearing room so that we can ensure physical distancing measures are in place. This means that, for the time being, our hearings will only be accessible to the public with 21-day prior approval of the Tribunal Registrar. If a party would like a support person to attend the hearing, please contact the Tribunal Registrar in advance to see if there is enough space in the hearing room for that person to attend. Legal Counsel will be asked to confirm the number of people who are representing a party. It is unlikely that we will be able to accommodate more than two Legal Counsel per party for an in-person hearing.

The participants in a hearing may be asked to enter or exit the hearing room in a staged manner to ensure that physical distancing is observed. We have also placed plexiglass barriers in certain places to allow people to pass.

Please bring a mask to wear for situations when you are not behind a plexiglass barrier and are unable to observe the 6-foot physical distancing rule. Certain cities have mask bylaws where a mask must be worn in all public spaces. Signs will be posted. In these cities, you will need to wear a mask as you enter the building and walk to the hearing room. Once you are seated behind a barrier you may remove the mask. You are welcome to bring any other personal protective equipment to wear, such as gloves.

We need your help

1. You may be asked at the hearing if you have certain symptoms related to COVID-19 or have been recently exposed to someone who has COVID-19. Please do not come to the hearing if you have any COVID-19 symptoms or you have been in contact with someone who has the virus.
2. Inform the Tribunal Registrar immediately, at the contact information below, if you are unable to attend due to COVID-19. If you are sick but still able to participate in the hearing, we may be able to use video-conferencing technology to continue with the hearing.
3. We ask that you observe the 6-foot physical distancing rule when entering, exiting, or moving around the hearing room.
4. While the hearing is in session, all participants will be asked to stay seated. If you have a document to present to the Tribunal Chair, the Clerk will come to you to get the document and deliver it to the Tribunal Chair and other parties.
5. Sanitize your hands regularly, and especially before entering the room, moving to the witness stand, and handing a document to the Clerk.
6. No food, coffee, tea, or pop are allowed in the hearing room. However, we encourage you to bring your own water.

Contact information

Tribunal Registrar: AHRCTribunal@gov.ab.ca

Phone: 780-638-4635