

GUIDELINES & PROTOCOL FOR IN-PERSON HEARINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Note: References to “hearing(s)” in this document include all matters to be heard by a panel of Commission members, including pre-hearing conferences, motions, and enforcement hearings.

This protocol applies to anyone (including employees, Commissioners, parties, legal counsel, and members of the public) who will be attending a Nova Scotia Securities Commission (the Commission) hearing scheduled to be held in-person.

In-Person Commission Hearings

The safety of Commission employees, Commissioners, participants in a hearing and the public is of paramount importance when determining if a Commission hearing will be held in-person (either in the Commission’s Hearing Room at Suite 400, 5251 Duke Street in Halifax or at another venue in Halifax), or by videoconference. For in-person hearings, the Province’s guidelines and best practices for cleaning and disinfecting will be followed.

A decision about how and where a Commission hearing will be held will be made on a case-by-case basis. As early as possible in advance of a hearing, a Notice of Hearing or an Amended Notice of Hearing will be posted on the Commission’s website advising of the format and location of the hearing.

COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure

You must NOT personally attend an in-person hearing (a Hearing) if you:

- (a) have any symptoms of COVID-19 as detailed by the Nova Scotia Provincial Government on its website at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/> for which it is recommended you be assessed for testing for COVID-19, until you obtain instructions through an on-line self-assessment questionnaire, 811 telephone consultation, or otherwise, that you do not require testing and /or are not required to self-isolate;
- (b) have received instructions to obtain a COVID-19 test, are awaiting results of a COVID-19 test, or have tested positive for COVID-19, until you have received confirmation from Public Health that you are no longer required to self-isolate; or
- (c) have been instructed by Public Health to self-isolate. Personal attendance at the Hearing is permitted once you have instructions from Public Health that you are not required to self-isolate.

If you are a participant in a Hearing and develop symptoms of COVID-19 described above prior to or during the Hearing, and are unable to attend or must leave the Hearing due to the above guidelines, you must immediately notify the Secretary to the Commission – contact doug.harris@novascotia.ca or (902) 424-4106 – so that arrangements may be made for attendance by alternative means.

For Participants Attending the Hearing In-Person

- Parties should notify the Secretary to the Commission at least one week in advance of a Hearing of the names of the persons who will be appearing with them as well as how many, as the rooms used for a Hearing will have capacity limits.
- Participants must wear a mask in all public spaces, including in hallways, on elevators, in lobbies, in washrooms, etc. Participants in a Hearing may remove their masks while seated in the Hearing room if they are able to maintain a two-metre separation from others or with consent from the Hearing panel. Participants may wear a mask during the Hearing even if they are able to maintain two-metre separation from others.
- Participants must follow all instructions (directions) at the Hearing venue, including upon entry and exit of the hearing room.
- Participants should arrive at the Hearing venue no more than fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start time of the Hearing. Participants arriving earlier will not be allowed in the Hearing room and will not be permitted to wait in the lobby of the venue as it may not be large enough to allow for adequate physical distancing.
- Participants should bring, and remove at the end of each day, any stationery, personal effects or any beverages (with lids) that they may require during the Hearing. Water may not be provided.

For the Public Attending Hearings In-Person

- Due to physical distancing requirements, the attendance by members of the public in person at a Hearing may be restricted or limited.
- If a member of the public wants to attend a Hearing, they must:
 - contact the Commission's Communications Coordinator at NSSCinquiries@novascotia.ca to request access to a Hearing in advance, which may be approved or denied based on health and safety considerations at the Hearing venue;
 - provide the Commission's Communications Coordinator with their name and contact information;

- arrive at the Hearing venue no more than fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start time of the Hearing. Note: Persons arriving earlier will not be allowed in the Hearing room and will not be permitted to wait in the lobby of the venue.
 - wear a mask during the Hearing and in all public spaces, including in hallways, on elevators, in lobbies, in washrooms, etc.; and
 - follow all instructions (directions) at the Hearing venue, including upon entry and exit of the hearing room.
- Recording of the Hearing (audio, visual or otherwise) or the taking of photos by anyone is strictly prohibited.

Physical distancing at Hearing Venues

All attendees at a Hearing venue are required to maintain physical distancing by:

- maintaining two-metres physical distancing in all spaces, wherever possible;
- following the directional signs for walkways;
- following the instructions posted for each shared space (reception, hearing rooms, meeting rooms) regarding the maximum capacity, entry, and use; and
- following safety protocols when entering or exiting the Hearing venue, such as elevator capacity limits, use of stairwells, etc.

Practice good hygiene at Hearing Venues

All attendees at a Hearing venue are required to:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water for a minimum of twenty (20) seconds;
- use the hand sanitizers located throughout the building when unable to wash your hands;
- cough and sneeze into an arm or sleeve;
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; and
- avoid any personal contact, such as handshakes and hugs.