

Court of King's Bench of Alberta

Alberta Court of Justice

Media Accreditation Policy

Effective March 16, 2023

Purpose

Only Accredited Media may participate in the Courts' media programs. This policy sets out the definition of Accredited Media, the application process, the responsibilities of Accredited Media and the process for the suspension or revocation of Accredited Media status.

Judicial Discretion

Nothing in this policy affects the authority of either Court to implement its own policy or create different procedure that supersede this policy.

Accredited Media

To be considered as "Accredited Media," by the Court of King's Bench and the Alberta Court of Justice ("the Courts"), a person or organization must

- (i) satisfy the definition of "professional media"
- (ii) meet the standards of professional conduct, and
- (iii) provide a written undertaking to comply with the law, Court orders, and Court policies.

The Courts' acceptance of the written undertaking gives the person or organization the status of Accredited Media.

"Professional media" is defined as including persons or organizations who in the practice of journalism regularly gather, assess, and accurately present news and information using print, broadcast or electronic means. Personal or non-commercial blogs or websites do not qualify as professional media.

When assessing whether an applicant meets the standards of professional conduct as defined by the Courts, it will be considered whether the applicant has a prior history of misconduct including failing to comply with Court orders or Court rules, disrupting Court proceedings, misrepresenting Court proceedings, or being held in contempt of Court.

Application Process

A person or organization applying for Accredited Media status must provide:

- The name of the media organization for which they work
- The URL of that media organization's online presence
- A work email address and a work phone number
- An email from the assignment editor indicating that the applicant is applying as part of their employment

and

- Disclose if they have ever been held in contempt of Court or ordered to leave a Courtroom or Courthouse due to their conduct.

to the Courts at communicationsofficer.qb@albertacourts.ca or mediaPC@albertacourts.ca.

Applicants who work as independent journalists and are unable to provide an email of assignment, may be required to provide recent relevant publications under the applicant's byline that can be readily found in the public realm.

The onus is on the applicant to supply all required information and supporting documentation at the time of the application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

A designate from either Court will approve or deny the application and the decision is final. Unless the applicant can show a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in employment, an applicant may not reapply for a period of 1 (one) year.

If approved, the applicant must provide the signed undertaking to communicationsofficer.qb@albertacourts.ca or mediaPC@albertacourts.ca.

Upon the Courts' approval of the application and acceptance of the written undertaking, the person or organization has the status of Accredited Media and will be placed on the Court of King's Bench of Alberta and the Alberta Court of Justice Media Undertaking List.

Accredited Media status will be in effect for three (3) years. Upon expiry, the person or organization must reapply for Accredited Media status.

Accredited Media Responsibilities

Accredited Media must provide proof of their name via photographic identification and the organization they represent when requested to do so by Court security or Court staff.

When attending court proceedings virtually, Accredited Media must identify themselves by name and the organization they represent in their screen name.

A change in an accredited person's employment, such as no longer being an employee of the media organization for which they received accreditation, must be reported to the Courts and the person must apply for a new accreditation.

Accredited Media are responsible for keeping themselves informed of and abiding by all Court policies, protocols, and directives, including the restrictions set out in the Court Information Access Guide for Alberta, the Use of Electronic Devices policy and other similar policies, protocols, and directives that may be announced from time to time.

Accredited Media must comply with all Court orders, including but not limited to, publication bans and when in a courthouse Accredited Media must comply with all Alberta public health orders.

Revocation or Suspension of Accreditation

The Courts, at their discretion, may suspend Accredited Media status temporarily or revoke Accredited Media status permanently. This may occur when the criteria for Accredited Media status is no longer met, or if there has been a violation or suspected violation of any of the terms of the undertaking.

In the event of a violation or a suspected violation of any of the terms of the undertaking, the Executive Directors may decide that an individual's or media organization's Accredited Media status is immediately suspended pending a review. The Executive Directors will then decide whether the individual's or media organization's Accredited Media status will be suspended, and the terms thereof, or revoked. Except for source information, Accredited Media have an obligation to respond to a request by the Courts for information relating to a review regarding a breach of this policy or the undertaking. The Executive Directors' decision is final.

After one (1) year following the revocation of Accredited Media status, a person or organization may apply to be reinstated by completing the application process set out above.

A suspension or revocation of Accredited Media status will be communicated to the person or media organization by email and the Courts' Media Undertaking List will be updated accordingly.