Alberta Court of Justice

Practice Directive

Edmonton Region
St. Paul Virtual Bail Hearings Pilot

Effective: December 3, 2026

Purpose

St. Paul is a high-volume base court with historically lengthy criminal dockets. Criminal docket court sits every Thursday in St. Paul. The criminal docket regularly includes matters scheduled for judicial interim release hearing, trial date selection, guilty pleas, and other applications. Due to the length of the docket, contested judicial interim release hearings are often unable to proceed as scheduled and must be adjourned.

To promote timely access to judicial interim release hearings, reduce unnecessary adjournments, and make more efficient use of available Court resources, beginning December 3, 2026, a virtual judicial interim release hearing stream will operate concurrently with the Thursday criminal docket on a pilot basis.

In accordance with the procedure below, all contested judicial interim release hearings for accused persons represented by counsel or duty counsel will proceed before a Justice of the Peace on Thursdays through the virtual hearing stream.

Procedure

This procedure applies to all individuals who are represented by counsel or duty counsel and whose matters appear on the St. Paul criminal docket with judicial interim release outstanding.

Scheduling the Hearing

When counsel is prepared to book a contested Judicial Interim Release Hearing, they can do so by filling in the Virtual Bail Hearing Scheduling Form. Once the form is complete, click 'Submit' at the bottom of the form or email the completed form to COJStPaul.Bail@just.gov.ab.ca

Counsel will receive confirmation of the scheduled hearing date and time at the email provided on the scheduling form.

Judicial interim release hearings will be scheduled in one-hour time slots between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. every Thursday. Hearings must be booked by no later than 4:30 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to the Thursday docket court.

Counsel is able to book the time slot(s) that best suit their availability. Counsel is strongly encouraged to ensure sufficient time is booked for the hearing to be completed.

A finalized hearing list will be distributed by Court Administration in advance to the relevant correctional institutions, the presiding Justice of the Peace, Crown Prosecutors, and defence counsel.

Hearing Participation

The following Webex link is to be utilized by all parties participating in the scheduled bail hearing: https://albertacourts.webex.com/meet/stppbail01.virtual

Counsel must attend punctually, confer with opposing counsel in advance, and be prepared to complete the matter within the scheduled time to avoid delaying later scheduled matters or being required to book a continuation.

Any documentary evidence that either party wishes to refer to or exhibit (i.e., criminal record or proof of employment) should be emailed to the clerk of the court at COJStPaul.Bail@just.gov.ab.ca by 4:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled hearing. If either counsel chooses to share documentary evidence during the course of the hearing, they can do so by using the share screen feature on the Webex platform.

Should defence counsel plan to call evidence from a proposed surety during the hearing, they are responsible for ensuring that the surety is available and for providing the Webex link to that individual.

All counsel appearing remotely must conduct themselves in accordance with the Conduct Guide for Remote Appearances.

The accused will appear from the custodial institution and will not be transported to court for the hearing.

Observers and the public will be permitted to observe the hearing but must identify themselves as observers or media to the clerk of the court pursuant to the Conduct Guide.

At the conclusion of the judicial interim release hearing, the Justice of the Peace will adjourn the matter back to a St. Paul docket day for any required next steps.

Assistant Chief Justice Gordon Putnam
Edmonton Region