



Court of Appeal of British Columbia



Supreme Court of British Columbia



Provincial Court of British Columbia

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 1, 2012

Effective 17 September 2012, the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and the Provincial Court will adopt a new policy concerning the use of electronic transmission devices in courtrooms.

Under the new policy, accredited journalists and lawyers will be able to use electronic devices to send or receive text in the courtrooms of the Supreme Court and the Provincial Court. In the Court of Appeal, where cases proceed on the written record with no witnesses present, a more permissive policy will be in place which also allows members of the public to use electronic devices to send or receive text.

As in the past, in all three Courts, members of accredited media will be permitted to audio record court proceedings. The audio record may be used only for the purpose of confirming the accuracy of notes taken, and may not be broadcast or used in any other way.

An Accreditation Committee comprised of professional journalists will receive and respond to requests from media personnel to be accredited. A person approved for media accreditation by the Accreditation Committee will be required to review the Courts' *Policy on the Use of Electronic Devices in Courtrooms*, and sign an Undertaking to adhere to its terms. Members of accredited media will be issued photo identification cards to be worn in the courtroom. Media accreditation is valid for a three year period and can be renewed.

In developing the policies for the use of electronic devices in courtrooms and media accreditation, the three levels of Court have worked together and have benefited from extensive input of professional journalists. The adoption of these policies reflects an awareness of the increasing importance of social media in dissemination of information and media reporting. It also reflects an appreciation of the important role that media plays in fostering public knowledge of and confidence in the courts as an essential institution in our democratic society.