

Welcome to the **Lam Family Law Newsletter**, featuring timely and relevant updates on Ontario family law and practice. We send our newsletter out every two months.

March 2026 Issue

Case Law Commentary

- **Who paid for that “third-party” gift? (and why does it matter?):** The ONCA weighs in on what happens when the source of funds for a third-party gift may actually have been the spouse. Learn more in our blog post: [Treat Yourself! But Remember, It’s Not a “Third-Party Gift” if You Paid for It.](#)
- **Authority to travel with a child:** What does a parent need before travelling internationally with their child? Learn more in our blog post about when the other parent’s consent or an order dispensing with their consent may be needed: [Cleared for Takeoff: Travel-Related Orders in Family Law.](#)

In Case You Missed It – SCJ Toronto: Short Family Law Motions Presumptively In-Person

- Starting [April 2, 2026](#), short family law motions will be heard **in person**, unless the court orders otherwise: see the announcement [here](#).
- A request to change the presumptive mode of appearance should be made during conferences or in court to the judge scheduling the next attendance.
- If the matter is already scheduled, parties may request a virtual hearing by filing this [form](#) through the Ontario Courts Public Portal [and](#) attaching it to an email to FamilyTrialOffice-SCJ-Toronto@ontario.ca, with all parties copied on the email, and with the subject line: “Request for Virtual Hearing” [Court File Number] [OCPP Reference Number].

- Requests to change the presumptive mode must be made prior to the event being scheduled, or at the earliest opportunity upon the event being scheduled.
- Requests made within two weeks of the scheduled event date will not be considered.
- Requests will only be granted if the request is timely and there are clear and compelling reasons.
- If a change in the presumptive mode is granted, the scheduled hearing date may have to be adjourned to a new date where there is hybrid court availability.

In Case You Missed It – SCJ Central South: Short Family Law Motions Presumptively In-Person in Brantford and St. Catharines

- Starting March 30, 2026, short civil and family law motions will be heard **in person**, unless the court orders otherwise, in Brantford and St. Catharines. The same applies, but only for short civil motions, in Hamilton: see the Notice to the Public and Profession here.
- Motion dates will remain as listed in the Consolidated Practice Direction for the Central South Region – Ontario Superior Court of Justice. There will no longer be a “hold” date for motions in the impacted locations.
- Requests to change the presumptive mode should be made by completing this form and submitting it to the Trial Office as soon as possible. Requests based solely on travel and inconvenience will not likely be granted.

In Case You Missed It – Revised SCJ Provincial Practice Directions

- On March 17, 2026, the SCJ’s consolidated provincial practice directions for family, civil, and Divisional Court proceedings were revised. These revisions were “designed to improve the organization of the practice directions, promote consistency and improve readability”: see the announcement here.
- In the Consolidated Provincial Practice Direction for Family Proceedings, Part N: General Provisions was added and now addresses a variety of issues which were previously included in other parts of the practice direction.
- “Attire Modification” was added as a subheading under Part N(4.). This section allows

counsel to modify the traditional court attire to accommodate personal circumstances (including pregnancy, a medical condition, or disability), including dispensing with a waistcoat and tabs. Modified attire must be dark in colour and consistent with court decorum. Counsel should advise the court registrar before the opening of court that they are dressed in accordance with the practice direction, so that they do not need to discuss their personal circumstances or modified attire in open court.

In Case You Missed It – ONCA Notice to the Profession and Public and Updated Practice Direction Re: Single Judge Motions

- The ONCA recently issued a [Notice to the Profession and Public](#) setting out expectations for single judge motions:
 - Materials must be filed on time in accordance with the applicable *Rules* and *Practice Directions*. Late materials will only be accepted in extraordinary circumstances.
 - Motion records should only contain materials that are relevant for the determination of the motion. Cost sanctions may apply where materials are reproduced unnecessarily in the motion records.
 - Materials not prescribed by the applicable *Rules* and *Practice Directions* will not be accepted for filing. This includes reply factums and supplementary factums.
 - Factums are not required on oral motions and may be unnecessary in straightforward motions. A factum shall not be more than 15 pages in length.
 - The default time for oral argument is 15 minutes for the moving party and 10 minutes for the responding party. Counsel and parties should be prepared to argue their motions within the default time, subject to the court's discretion.
 - A motion to extend time to meet a filing deadline is not required where all parties consent to the request. Counsel and parties are encouraged to consent to reasonable requests for extensions of time to avoid the need for a motion.
- The ONCA's [Practice Direction Concerning Civil Appeals at the Court of Appeal for Ontario](#) was also revised to incorporate this guidance on single judge motions: see sections [7.1.2\(4\)](#), [7.1.4\(4\)](#), [7.1.5\(2\)](#), [7.1.6\(1\)](#), & [7.1.6\(3\)](#). The Practice Direction was also amended to clarify that if a party seeking leave to appeal has missed the deadline, they do not need to bring a single judge motion seeking an extension of time. The motion for an extension will be heard in writing, together with the motion for leave to appeal. The notice of motion for leave to appeal should indicate that an extension of time is sought, and this issue should be addressed in the motion record and factum for the motion for leave to appeal: see section [7.2.7\(7\)](#).

In Case You Missed It – ONCA Notice to the Profession and Public Re: Upcoming Launch of OCAPP

- On April 9, 2026, the ONCA, in partnership with the Ministry of the Attorney General, will launch the Ontario Court of Appeal Public Portal (OCAPP). See the announcement here: [Notice to the Profession and Public](#).
- The OCAPP is an online public portal where parties and legal representatives can file documents electronically, pay filing fees or request fee waivers, and obtain hearing information about their cases.
- Once the OCAPP is launched, the ONCA will no longer accept court filings by email. Instead, parties will be required to file electronic materials through the OCAPP, unless otherwise directed.
- The OCAPP can also be used by any member of the public to view information about most civil cases. Members of the public will be able to see which motion and appeal documents have been filed in a case and find scheduled hearing dates. For the time being, however, this information will not be available for criminal or family law cases.
- If you want to be notified of upcoming training sessions and further announcements, join the [portal mailing list](#).

In Case You Missed It – IDVC at OCJ-T

- Effective April 2, 2026, the Integrated Domestic Violence Court (IDVC) is moving from 311 Jarvis to OCJ-T (10 Armoury St., Toronto). The IDVC will operate every Thursday in Courtroom 703. All summary conviction intimate partner violence charges that are scheduled at 10 Armoury St. where the accused is not in custody and is a litigant in a related *Children's Law Reform Act* or *Family Law Act* case at the Ontario Court of Justice family courts at 47 Sheppard Avenue or 311 Jarvis Street may be considered for the IDVC. Look out for an updated IDVC Practice Direction on the Ontario Court of Justice website.

In Case You Missed It – Feedback on Ontario Courts Public Portal (OCPP)

- The Courts Digital Transformation (CDT) team, who is responsible for the OCPP, is seeking feedback to help improve the OCPP – which launched in October 2025 for civil, family, bankruptcy, Small Claims Court, Divisional Court, and enforcement matters, in the

Toronto region. If you have any suggestions, please consider filling out their feedback [form](#).

Don't Miss It – LSO Reminder

- There is still time to meet the March 31, 2026, deadline to: (1) pay your Law Society of Ontario 2026 annual fee, (2) complete your 2025 Annual Report, and (3) report your 2025 CPD hours. This is also the deadline, if applicable, to pay your Law Society Referral Service annual membership fee, and if you are a Certified Specialist, to complete your 2025 Certification Annual Report and pay your 2026 Certified Specialist annual fee. All of this should be done on the [LSO Connects](#) website.

Upcoming Speaking Events

- The [2026 ILCO \(Institute of Law Clerks of Ontario\) Conference](#) will take place from May 11-13, 2026, in Toronto. Vanessa Lam and Sierra Larmand will be presenting on “Top Ontario Family Law Cases of 2025 and 2026 (So Far)”. [Registration](#) is open. Please bring your questions and come say hello!
- The [Osgoode Certificate in Family Law Practice Skills](#) is back for 2026! This intensive, practice-based program is sold out. Vanessa Lam will be speaking on May 12, 2026, about written motion advocacy. She looks forward to chatting with the students and engaging with the other faculty on this program.
- The [Federation of Law Societies of Canada’s National Family Law Program](#) (NFLP) will take place from July 13-16, 2026, in Kelowna, British Columbia. Vanessa Lam and Maria Golarz will be presenting their paper “Mischief Managed: Dealing with Vexatious Litigation in Family Law”. The full [program agenda](#) has been released, and [registration](#) is open. Please say hello if you see us in Kelowna!

Free Resource

- [CanLII](#) recently launched a new feature called CanLII Search+. Powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), CanLII Search+ turns a user’s plain-language research question into a boolean query. CanLII Search+ can also provide a contextual analysis for the top 25 search results, including a short summary, key excerpts, and a relevance score out of 5.

Sharing Our Newsletter

- If this newsletter has been shared with you by a colleague, and you would like to subscribe, simply click [here](#) or contact [Sierra Larmand](#).

Interested in Working With Lam Family Law?

- If you are interested in working with Lam Family Law, please complete our [intake form](#). Once we receive your form, we will respond to you with next steps within one (1) business day.
- If you have general questions about working with us, please contact us via email at hello@lamfamilylaw.ca. A team member will respond to you within one (1) business day.

Our Services

Lam Family Law provides family law lawyers with valuable and strategic advice and research-related services, including:

- ✓ Consulting services to help lawyers navigate file-related challenges, including providing lawyers with guidance and/or a second opinion
- ✓ Assisting with litigation and dispute resolution strategies, brainstorming potential resolutions, and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a case
- ✓ Drafting factums, statements of law, annotated case books, submissions, affidavits, and other court documents
- ✓ Drafting appeal materials (e.g., seeking or opposing leave to appeal, stay pending appeal materials, further evidence on appeal materials, and substantive appeal materials including the notice of appeal and factum)
- ✓ Lengthier legal opinions / research memos
- ✓ Shorter emails / informal memos highlighting legislation / cases / secondary sources

Yours Truly,

The Lam Family Law Team

([Vanessa Lam](#), [Maria Golarz](#), [Rebecca Winner](#),
[Kayleigh Pink](#), and [Sierra Larmand](#))