



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.

July 2026 Issue

Case Law Commentary

- **The New Tort of Intimate Partner Violence: Implications for Family Law Practice:** This new tort is raising many questions for family law practitioners. Check out Kayleigh Pink's blog post to learn more, and to link to a practical tip sheet – created and generously shared by Joanna Radbord, LSM, Partner, McCarthy Hansen & Company LLP – to help us navigate the practical implications of the tort of intimate partner violence (“IPV”): [A New Legal Era: How the New Tort of IPV is Already Impacting the Practice of Family Law](#).

- **Vexatious Litigation in Family Law: A Follow-Up on Recent Ontario Cases:** Since Maria Golarz and Vanessa Lam submitted their paper on vexatious litigation at the National Family Law Program, several important Ontario decisions have been released. Check out Vanessa Lam's blog post for key developments: [Bad Behaviour: Ontario Updates on Vexatious Litigants and Litigation Abuse](#).

- **Attendance Counts: How School Absenteeism Can Affect Parenting Decisions:** School is out and report cards are in, including the annual tally of absences and late arrivals. How important is chronic school absenteeism in parenting decisions? Check out Rebecca Winninger's blog post to learn more: [How School Absenteeism Influences Parenting Decisions](#).

Lam Family Law at the National Family Law Program

- Vanessa Lam and Maria Golarz presented their paper “Mischief Managed: Dealing with Vexatious Litigation in Family Law” on July 16, 2026, at the Federation of Law Societies of Canada's National Family Law Program (NFLP).



In Case You Missed It (ICYMI) – Major Amendments to Canada's *Criminal Code*

• [Bill C-16](#) (the *Protecting Victims Act*) and [Bill C-225](#) (An Act to amend the *Criminal Code*, also known as *Bailey's Law*) both received Royal Assent in June. Many amendments came into force on July 15 and 18, 2026, while provisions relating to coercive control will come into force up to two years after Royal Assent, to allow for training. The most relevant changes for family law practitioners faced with intimate partner violence cases include:

- The creation of new offences, including coercive control of an intimate partner (new s. 264.01 in the *Criminal Code*); violent, threatened, or attempted violence against an intimate partner (new ss. 263.1 & 662(5.1) of the *Criminal Code*); and offences related to online exploitation.
- Increasing maximum penalties for certain offences related to intimate partner violence.
- Extension of the reverse onus bail provision for offences against an intimate partner so that it now applies where the accused was subject to a recognizance laid on behalf of an intimate partner under certain provisions of the *Criminal Code* (revised s. 515(6)(b.1) of the *Criminal Code*).
- Treating murder of an intimate partner (known as “femicide” when committed against a female person) as first degree murder in certain situations, regardless of whether the murder was planned and deliberate

(new ss. 231(3.1) and 231(5.1) and revised s. 231(6) of the *Criminal Code*).

ICYMI – Case Center Page Count and File Size Limitations

- Effective July 20, 2026, Case Center will enforce the upload limit of 500 pages per document, 2 GB per file, and 10 GB per multimedia file. If a user attempts to upload a document or file that exceeds these limits, an on-screen message will appear that their upload has been rejected. See this [summary guide](#) for details on what is changing and how to upload documents that exceed the new limitations.

ICYMI – SCJ Notice to the Profession and Litigants Regarding Interim Storage and Filing Solution (ISFS)

- This June 11, 2026 Notice reminds counsel and litigants that:
 - All documents must comply with the standard naming convention.
 - Counsel of record is responsible for inviting other legal professionals on their team to their cases on Case Center, and to each subsequent bundle for new events.
 - Unless otherwise directed by the court, Court Services will release orders and endorsements by uploading them to the “Orders and Endorsements” bundle on Case Center.
 - Where there is a change of counsel, counsel must promptly file a *Notice of Change in Representation*.
 - Newly retained counsel must take carriage of the matter as of the date of retainer, including obtaining all relevant materials from the client and ensuring that any outstanding or missing materials required for an upcoming appearance are uploaded to Case Center.

ICYMI – Amendments to the Consolidated Practice Direction for the Central East Region

- Effective July 7, 2026, in **Newmarket** only (para [225](#)):
 - For family matters, counsel shall upload their documents to Case Center after they have been submitted for filing to the Justice Services Online Portal (JSO). Counsel are no longer required to await confirmation of filing from the JSO before uploading documents to Case Center. However, this does not apply to trial documents. Also, documents must still be served and filed on time unless consent to late file has been obtained.
 - There are specific instructions on how to submit documents if the Case Center bundle is not yet available.

- Documents rejected for filing need not be removed from Case Center. The presiding Judge has the discretion to either accept or reject the filings at the time of the hearing.

ICYMI – Amendments to the Consolidated Practice Direction for the Central West Region

- Effective June 1, 2026, several sections were reorganized, including combining Civil and Family Motions into one part ([Part 2](#)), making [Part 3](#) “Civil Trials and Pre-Trials”, and making [Part 4](#) “Family Proceedings”.
- Several substantive changes were made as well, including:
 - Calendly: All of **Central West** is using Calendly. A list of hearing types that may be booked on Calendly in each court location is at Part 1, [Section D](#).
 - Motions to Change:
 - Instead of the DRO scheduling a motion or settlement conference for any unresolved issues, in **Brampton and Milton**, the parties may schedule a motion on Calendly after a DRO conference (para [133](#)).
 - In **Milton**, a settlement conference can also be scheduled on Calendly (para [134](#)).
 - In **Brampton**, the DRO can schedule a settlement conference or direct the parties to obtain a date for one through the trial coordinator’s office (para [134](#)).
 - Conferring Prior to a Case Conference: The practice direction previously said that failure to confer prior to a case conference could result in the conference being adjourned. Now, the practice direction says that failure to confer “may result in the Case Conference being adjourned or an award of costs.” [underlining added] (para [158](#)).
 - Scheduling Settlement Conferences: The practice direction was updated to say settlement conferences can be scheduled through Calendly, **except in Brampton** where they will still be scheduled at the case conference (para [160](#)).
 - Adjourning Conferences: The updated practice direction says that once a case or settlement conference is scheduled, no adjournments will be permitted except once on consent of the parties, 3 days before the conference date (para [161](#)) (it previously said 10 days).
 - Format of Draft Orders: Draft orders for settlement conferences (para [164\(h\)](#)) and trial management conferences (para [170](#)) must be in Word format.

- Scheduling a TMC and a trial date in **Brampton**: The updated practice direction says that, at Family Assignment Court, if the presiding judge is satisfied that there are no outstanding issues and at least one party is ready for trial, the judge shall schedule a TMC and a trial date (para [167](#)) (it previously said if the parties were ready).
- Trial Record: The updated practice direction says that the Applicant (or the Respondent if they are advancing a claim) must file a trial record prior to the first day of the scheduled trial sitting (para [176](#)) (it previously said at least 20 days before the scheduled trial date).
- Binding Judicial Dispute Resolution: Commencing June 1, 2026, in **Milton** only, Binding Judicial Dispute Resolution hearings will be available. They will also be available in Fall 2026 in **Brampton** and **other Central West locations** (para [178](#)).

ICYMI – Amendments to the Consolidated Practice Direction for Divisional Court Proceedings

- Effective June 8, 2026, the Consolidated Practice Direction for Divisional Court Proceedings was amended to add directions on “The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Court Proceedings”, including:
 - Counsel and litigants must exercise careful, informed, and ongoing oversight at all times when they or their staff use AI for court proceedings (para [153](#)).
 - Counsel’s use of AI for court proceedings must comply with their professional duties and ethical obligations set out in Law Society of Ontario’s Rules of Professional Conduct (para [154](#)).
 - All legal information obtained using the assistance of AI must be verified against trusted and authoritative sources (para [155](#)).
 - When preparing factums, counsel and litigants must comply with r. 4.06.1 of the *Rules of Civil Procedure*, which requires pinpoint references and a statement signed by the party’s lawyer that they are satisfied as to the authenticity of every authority cited in the factum (para [156](#)).
 - Counsel and litigants must hyperlink cases to published websites when submitting factums, compendiums, and books of authorities, as required elsewhere in the Practice Direction (para [157](#)).
 - Where counsel or litigants do not comply with their duties to the court, the court’s powers include public reprimand of the counsel or litigant, the imposition of cost orders, adjourning a hearing or dismissing the proceeding, the initiation of contempt proceedings, and in regard to counsel, referral to the LSO (para [158](#)).

ICYMI – Amendments to the General Practice Direction Regarding All Proceedings in the Court of Appeal

- Effective [June 11, 2026](#), the [General Practice Direction](#) was amended to provide further direction about electronic file sizes, hyperlinks, bookmarks, and indices, including:
 - The maximum file size for each file other than a video is 512 MiB and 500 pages. If a file exceeds either limit, it must be filed in multiple volumes (para [10](#)).
 - Hyperlinks between filed materials are not permitted. For example, a party cannot hyperlink from their factum to the appeal book (para [11](#)).
 - Appeal books, compendiums, exhibit books, motion records, and books of authorities should include both: (i) electronic bookmarks with the tab number and name of each document in the file; and (ii) an index with internal hyperlinks to each document in the file (para [27](#)).
- The full list of amendments to the General Practice Direction can be found at [Appendix A](#).

ICYMI – University of Toronto Survey for Family Law Professionals

- U of T's Trauma-Informed Responses Research Group is asking legal and mental health professionals to complete a [survey](#) about working with family violence in the context of family law cases. This research study, run by Drs. Ellen Gutowski and Michael Saini, aims to increase knowledge about the experiences of family law professionals and make suggestions for professionals and organizations.

ICYMI – Updated Lawyer and Paralegal Directory

- In [June 2026](#), the Law Society of Ontario's [Lawyer and Paralegal Directory](#) was [updated](#), and added information about surrendered or revoked licensees, regulatory proceedings, and summaries of regulatory meetings.
- On [September 1, 2026](#), [more information](#) will be added, including: (1) licensee findings of guilt and practice of other regulated professions, and (2) the Law Society's *intention* to seek interlocutory relief based on criminal or other charges in certain situations. In addition, if you work from home and do not want your **home address** displayed, you need to contact the Law Society or update your address to a business address.

Free Resource

- The new tort of intimate partner violence (IPV), created by the SCC in *Ahluwalia v. Ahluwalia* (2026), is already changing the practice of family law. We again encourage you to check out Joanna Radbord's "[A Primer on the Tort of Intimate Partner Violence](#)", which provides comprehensive and practical guidance on this new tort and incorporates Justice Vella's latest tort case *Mitchell v Mitchell*, 2026 ONSC 4259 (not yet reported on CanLII).

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](#).

Our Services

Did you know that Lam Family Law provides [appeal services](#) to family law lawyers and select direct appeal clients? Lam Family Law strongly believes in providing access to justice for families in the context of appeals, and provides the following services with that goal in mind:

- ✓ Consulting services and/or formal written opinions to help clients assess the potential merits of an appeal, and/or to explain the steps, procedure, and likely costs of an appeal.
- ✓ Strategic advising on key appeal decision points, on an “unbundled/limited scope” services basis.
- ✓ 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), on an “unbundled/limited scope” services basis.
- ✓ Appearing in court as our client's agent, on an “unbundled/limited scope” services basis.
- ✓ Full representation on an appeal, including appearing in court on our client's behalf and corresponding with the other parties/lawyers and the court, as needed.

Yours Truly,
The Lam Family Law Team
([Vanessa Lam](#), [Maria Golarz](#), [Rebecca Winner](#),
[Kayleigh Pink](#), and [Sierra Larmand](#))