



May 21, 2024

Ref: 7653

Micah Weintraub  
President of the BC Government Lawyers Association  
Email: bcgla.ca

Dear Micah Weintraub:

Thank you for your letter of February 8, 2024, in reference to concerns that your members have shared regarding the safety of British Columbia's courts. We sincerely appreciate you writing and sharing the concerns of your members with us. Everyone deserves to work in a safe environment.

Further to the Honourable Attorney General's letters to various legal associations and societies, we would like to firmly reiterate that violence and threats have absolutely no place in the justice system. Ensuring safety and security in our courts is of paramount importance to the Ministry of Attorney General and the Government of British Columbia as a whole. Members of the BC Sheriff Service (BCSS), as highly trained armed peace officers, work to maintain this safety for all court users. They are situated throughout courthouse property, and use varied strategies to assess and mitigate risks to court staff and users.

Sheriffs are trained to protect all court participants and do so through both visible safety methods as well as other, proactive means. While four courthouses in British Columbia have full-time controlled access points with a search gate, we note that additional controlled access points may, and have been, established in court facilities when it is determined that additional security risks exist. The BCSS strives to ensure that courthouses remain open and accessible to all, while maintaining the safety of all court participants and employees.

If members of the BC GLA receive threats or inappropriate communications outside of the courthouse, we recommend reporting the incident to the police in your jurisdiction. We recommend that members then discuss their concerns with the BCSS when attending court, who will create a personalized safety plan and work with other law enforcement agencies if required. Any threats, violence, or inappropriate conduct noted while your members are attending court or on courthouse property should be brought to the attention of the nearest sheriff as soon as possible. We recognize that members of the BC GLA may have further questions regarding courthouse safety guidelines and best practices. Your members can speak with BCSS staff at any of the court facilities to answer their questions. For BC GLA workplaces, health and safety concerns should be reported to local management who are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of staff.

We would again like to emphasize that violence, and threats of violence, are never acceptable. Everyone working within, and engaging with, the justice system in British Columbia is entitled to safety. We are committed to maintaining this safety at all times.

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We look forward to sharing further updates and continuing this dialogue with you in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barbara Carmichael', written in a cursive style.

Barbara Carmichael, KC  
Deputy Attorney General

And,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Salter', written in a cursive style.

Shannon Salter  
Deputy Minister to the Premier,  
Cabinet Secretary, and  
Head of the BC Public Service

cc: Adam Dalrymple  
President of the BC Crown Counsel Association