

NOTICE TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION and PUBLIC

Inclusive Language and Procedures in Courts

Ministry of the Attorney General / Court Services Division – June 1, 2021

Court Services Division (CSD) is committed to ensuring equal access to justice for all Ontarians and to promoting language and procedures that are reflective of diverse court users.

In collaboration with the Court of Appeal for Ontario (COA), Superior Court of Justice (SCJ), and the Ontario Court of Justice (OCJ), CSD recently issued direction to all court staff informing them about the importance of inviting court participants to share pronouns and prefixes. Updates are also being made to incorporate more accessible and inclusive language in court proceedings.

Pronouns:

CSD staff may invite parties, representatives and others to share their prefix (also known as a title or salutation) and pronouns.

Participants, including lawyers, litigants and witnesses, are encouraged to proactively provide their first name, last name, prefix (e.g., Mr./Ms./Mrs./Mx., etc.) and/or pronouns (e.g., he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.) when stating their name or by updating their screen name during a virtual proceeding.

Accessible Language:

The language used in the courtroom is also being updated to remove barriers and ensure all justice participants feel welcomed and can fully participate in proceedings.

For example, announcements, such as “all rise” are being updated to “all rise, if you’re able to”.