

FAQs – Forensic Liaison Program – Notice 33 (Northern Virtual Bail) and Notice 34 (Designated Court Locations)

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to explain the difference between the Northern Virtual Bail Court Forensic Liaison Program (**Notice 33**) and the Forensic Liaison Program at Designated Court Locations (**Notice 34**). This document will also provide general details on the scope of each program, with reference to the location where each program operates, the manner of interviews, and the difference with overnight assessments.

For further information regarding the procedure for Notice 33 and Notice 34, including the referral process for an accused to be interviewed by Forensic Psychiatric Services within each, please consult [Notice 33](#) and [Notice 34](#).

Questions

1. What is the difference between the Northern Virtual Bail Court Forensic Liaison Program (**Notice 33**) and the Forensic Liaison Program at Designated Court Locations (**Notice 34**)?
 - a. Notice 33 is a specific program for Court locations in Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace and Smithers.
 - b. Timelines set out in Notice 33 may not be possible in Notice 34. Depending on existing clinical workload, the Forensic Liaison¹ may need additional time/ days to complete the initial interview of the accused. Please note that additional days required would need to be with support of the Court and with impacted partners (see also Notice 34 paragraph #3).
 - c. Notice 33 includes the potential involvement of Forensic Psychiatry, whereas Notice 34 applies to the involvement of Forensic Liaisons only.
 - d. Notice 34 does not include or allow for dedicated access to Forensic Psychiatry.

¹ A Forensic Liaison (Nurse/Social Worker) will provide mental status exams, gather collateral information regarding prior treatment, treatment needs, and potential community resources to support the accused should they be released.

2. Are these assessments the same as overnight assessments in the Lower Mainland?
 - a. Overnight assessments (following remand under s. 516) are unique to the Lower Mainland and utilize Psychiatrists to undertake assessments after business hours. There is a maximum of 3 assessments per evening and the accused must be at the pre-trial centre (ACCW, SPSC or NFPC) by 4:30 pm. More information specifically regarding the Lower Mainland Overnight Assessments is available by contacting the Vancouver Forensic Regional Clinic (telephone: (604)-529-3350).
 - b. While the Surrey Provincial Court is included in this Notice, Lower Mainland overnight assessments may be available for accused at the Surrey Court. A Forensic Liaison could be engaged to conduct an initial assessment as outlined in Notice 34, and potentially offer an opinion on the need for an overnight assessment.
3. What about those Court locations not identified in Notice 33 and Notice 34?
 - a. At this time, availability of Forensic Liaisons to Courts not listed in these Notices is limited and dependent upon staff workload. Defence/ Duty Counsel or Crown Counsel may contact the nearest Forensic Regional Clinic to determine the availability and timeliness of an assessment.
4. Are all interviews conducted under Notice 34 virtual and/ or in-person?
 - a. Under Notice 34, the expectation is that the majority of assessments will be in person, however virtual interviews may take place with the support of key partners (i.e. Sheriff Coordinator, Police, Corrections).
5. Does Forensic Psychiatric Services have dedicated Forensic Liaisons at specific Court locations already?
 - a. Yes, Forensic Liaisons have been embedded in both the Downtown Community Court and the Vancouver Provincial Court at 222 Main Street for several years.
 - b. The reason for Forensic Liaisons dedicated to the two Courts is due to service demand and nature of both Courts in responding to the unique needs of those accused presenting to each Court.

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