

# BC COURTS' PRONOUNS PRACTICE DIRECTIVES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## What are the practice directives?

On December 16th, 2020, the BC Supreme Court and BC Provincial Court implemented new pronoun practice directives: BC Supreme Court PD-59, and BC Provincial Court NP 24.

When counsel or parties are introducing themselves, their client, a witness, or any other person, they are asked to include the individual's pronouns to be used as well as their name and title (e.g. "Mr./Ms./Mx./Counsel [Last Name]").

## What are pronouns and titles?

In English, we use pronouns to refer to other people in the third person.  
Examples: **She** is a lawyer. / **He** is a lawyer. / **They** are a lawyer.

We also use titles to show professionalism or respect.

Examples: **Ms.** Lee / **Mr.** Lee / **Mx.** Lee

People's titles or pronouns should not be assumed based on name, appearance or voice. When others make assumptions about someone's gender, and assume which title/pronouns to use, they can unintentionally misgender that person.

Misgendering (addressing someone using the wrong gendered language) is harmful and disproportionately impacts transgender people.



## Why is this important?

- The pronoun practice directive provides an opportunity for all people appearing before the court to be addressed by their correct pronouns, which can make the court experience more inclusive and respectful for transgender and gender diverse people
- Gender identity is deeply personal, and people who are transgender or non-binary often experience harassment, discrimination, and violence because their gender identity or gender expression is different from their sex assigned at birth
- Misgendering is harmful, and can be deeply distressing, as it ignores and dismisses an individual's gender identity
- The directive shifts toward the normalization of asking people how they want to be addressed, rather than making potentially harmful assumptions (based on name, appearance or voice) that the misgendered individual has the burden to correct

**FACL BC applauds the introduction of these practice directives that aim to make courtrooms more inclusive of transgender, non-binary, and other gender diverse people.**

## What has changed?

Old Practice	New Practice
<p data-bbox="196 902 1037 1107">“My name is Jane Lee, spelled L-E-E. I am the lawyer for Joe Carter.”</p> <p data-bbox="243 1511 987 1568">(Name, spelling of last name)</p>	<p data-bbox="1090 902 1985 1185">“My name is Ms. Jane Lee, spelled L-E-E. I use she/her pronouns. I am the lawyer for Mx. Joe Carter who uses they/them pronouns”.</p> <p data-bbox="1106 1511 1970 1646">(Name, spelling of last name, title, pronouns)</p>



## Pronunciations

The gender-neutral title "Mx" sounds like "Mix".

People may choose to use pronouns other than she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs. One example is ze/hir and ze/zir pronouns. How to pronounce these pronouns:

- Ze sounds like Zee
- Zir sounds like Zere
- Hir sounds like Here

Ze/zir pronouns: "Ze is a writer and wrote that book zirsself. Those ideas are zirs. I like both zir and zir ideas."

Ze/hir pronouns: "Ze is a writer and wrote that book hirself. Those ideas are hirs. I like both hir and hir ideas."

(Sources: CBABC Counsel Introduction Scripts and MyPronouns.org)

## Experiences of transgender, non-binary and gender diverse Asian people

- Noah's Journey: Life as an Asian-Canadian trans man by Crystal Tai
- Pursuing Happiness As A Trans Woman Of Color by Kai Cheng Thom
- Nonbinary, Sikh, and fierce as hell: Interviewing Prabhdeep Kehal by Dakota Smith
- In 2021, what does visibility mean to the Asian and Trans+ communities? By Lex Shu Cha

## Sources

- **BC Supreme Court PD-59:**  
[https://www.bccourts.ca/supreme\\_court/practice\\_and\\_procedure/practice\\_directions/civil/PD-59\\_Forms\\_of\\_Address\\_for\\_Parties\\_and\\_Counsel\\_in\\_Proceedings.pdf](https://www.bccourts.ca/supreme_court/practice_and_procedure/practice_directions/civil/PD-59_Forms_of_Address_for_Parties_and_Counsel_in_Proceedings.pdf)
- **BC Provincial Court NP 24:**  
<https://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/downloads/Practice%20Directions/NP%2024%20Form%20of%20Address%20for%20Parties%20and%20Lawyers.pdf>
- **BC Provincial Court ENews Article:**  
<https://www.provincialcourt.bc.ca/enews/enews-16-12-2020>
- **Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Questions and answers about gender identity and pronouns:** <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/questions-and-answers-about-gender-identity-and-pronouns>
- **CBABC Counsel Introduction Scripts:**  
[https://www.cbabc.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba\\_bc/pdf/Resources/Gender\\_Inclusive\\_Pronouns\\_FAQ.pdf](https://www.cbabc.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba_bc/pdf/Resources/Gender_Inclusive_Pronouns_FAQ.pdf)
- **CBABC Gender-Inclusive Pronouns: FAQs:**  
[https://www.cbabc.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba\\_bc/pdf/Resources/Gender\\_Inclusive\\_Pronouns\\_FAQ.pdf](https://www.cbabc.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba_bc/pdf/Resources/Gender_Inclusive_Pronouns_FAQ.pdf)
- **MyPronouns.org Ze/zir and Ze/hir pronouns:**  
<https://www.mypronouns.org/ze-hir>
- **MyPronouns.org What and Why:** <https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>
- **No Need to Guess: Title and pronoun use in BC courts are changing with the times. It's only common sense** by Dustin Klaudt and Lisa Nevens:  
<https://www.nationalmagazine.ca/en-ca/articles/law/opinion/no-need-to-guess>