

RESOLVING LAWSUITS FASTER AND MORE AFFORDABLY*McGuinty Government Reforming Civil Justice For Ontarians***NEWS**

December 11, 2008

Ontario's new civil justice reforms will make it less expensive to access justice and easier to use the courts to quickly resolve disputes.

The province is increasing the monetary limit of the Small Claims Court from \$10,000 to \$25,000 effective January 1, 2010. This will provide a faster and more affordable option to Ontarians and businesses who are unable to resolve their own disputes.

Additional civil justice reforms arising from 25 significant changes to the rules of Ontario's civil courts will simplify, speed up, and lower the costs of resolving disputes, including:

- Making it easier and more affordable to resolve civil cases by raising the monetary limit for Simplified Procedure from \$50,000 to \$100,000, effective January 1, 2010.
- Reducing pre-trial costs and delays by requiring advance timelines for sharing information between parties to a dispute and limiting pre-trial Examinations for Discovery to one day, unless the parties or the court decide that more time is needed.
- Lowering litigation costs and reducing the need for lengthy trials by making it easier to resolve cases earlier.

The civil courts will now also be subject to the general principle of proportionality. This means the time and expense devoted to any case must reflect what is at stake in the proceedings.

The civil justice reforms were made on the basis of former Associate Chief Justice Coulter Osborne's report on the civil justice system, and following advice received by Attorney General Chris Bentley from Ontarians on a civil justice tour throughout the province.

QUOTES

"Civil justice needs to be accessible and affordable if it is to work for all Ontarians," said Attorney General Chris Bentley. "Each of these changes – and particularly the Small Claims or 'people's court' reform – will help everyday Ontarians to fairly resolve disputes that they can't resolve on their own."

"By acting on my recommendations, the Attorney General is reducing cost and delay for individuals and businesses who use our civil courts," said Mr. Osborne. "The reforms reflect the need for proportionality in our civil justice, which means that straightforward, lower value cases should not take as long or cost as much as large, complex cases."

QUICK FACTS

- As an early response to the Osborne report, Ontario launched the [Justice Ontario](#) website and multilingual hotline in August 2008 to improve access to justice by helping people find easy-to-use information on specific areas of law and legal resources such as lawyer referral and family law services.

- Civil justice reform is the third initiative in a series to reform justice for Ontarians. On November 24, 2008, Ontario strengthened [family justice](#) to better protect women and children and reduce the cost and stress of family court proceedings. Later that week, Ontario announced [criminal justice](#) reforms to move criminal cases through the justice system faster and more effectively.

LEARN MORE

Read about the [Civil Justice Reform Project](#).

Learn more about [Small Claims Court](#).

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