

**Notification for Stakeholders about the
General Arrangement of Court Business
(position as at 1 December 2020)**

(I) Overall Arrangement

The Judiciary has made a public announcement on 1 December that in view of the latest public health situation and related developments, social distancing measures will be enhanced to ensure that the courts can carry on business as safely as circumstances permit.

2. Court business is an essential public service. It enables the effective and efficient administration of justice. The enhanced social distancing measures seek primarily to further reduce crowd gathering and people flow in court premises. This will inevitably reduce the number of court hearings and the volume of business handled by the registries and accounts offices of courts/tribunals.

(II) Court Proceedings

Court Hearings

3. From 7 December until further notice, parties to proceedings should work on the basis that court hearings will proceed as scheduled unless directed otherwise by the court. While it is hoped that court hearings will generally proceed as scheduled, there may have to be more spacing out of hearings and some may even have to be adjourned.

4. For civil proceedings, there will be greater use of alternative modes where appropriate, including remote hearings (using video-conferencing facilities or phones) and/or paper disposals. The court will give directions for individual cases in this regard.

5. To maximize the use of courtrooms, the sitting hours of court hearings may be changed. For example, subject to the court's directions, half-day sittings may be adopted, with the sitting hours adjusted to 9:00 am to 1:00 pm for the morning sittings and 2:30 to 5:30pm for the afternoon sittings.

6. For new jury trials and new death inquests involving juries scheduled to commence from 7 December to end of December, parties will be contacted by the court in due course as to whether re-listing will be required.

7. **All court users should go onto the Judiciary's website to check whether their proceedings will proceed as originally scheduled before they come to court.**

Handing down of Judgments

8. From 7 December onwards until further notice, parties of High Court proceedings need not come to the court to collect judgments. The judgments will, as far as practicable, be uploaded onto the Judiciary's website within the same day when they are handed down. For cases of great media or public interest, the judgments will continue to be uploaded onto the website immediately after handing down. Hard copies of the judgments will be sent by ordinary post to the parties who have not come to the court to collect the judgments.

9. The Judiciary may consider extending the above arrangements to the other levels of court as appropriate, in which case notice will be given to the parties.

(III) Registries and Accounts Offices

10. From 7 December onwards, the registries and accounts offices of all levels of courts will **reduce their operating hours to 8:45am to 12:30pm and from 2:00 to 5:00pm** (Monday to Friday, except public holidays). As a result, the capacity of the registry and accounts services will be reduced. Delays are expected.

11. While no ticketing system will be implemented, the Judiciary will be more vigilant in crowd management to regulate the flow of people. There will be crowd control at the registries and accounts offices with social distancing requirements throughout the opening hours. Special queuing arrangements at designated areas or other crowd management measures will be put in place where necessary.

12. The area of the Probate Registry will be expanded to LG4 of the High Court Building so that registry business can be conducted in a more spacious area. Court users will be given specific instructions to go to the appropriate area. The Judiciary may adopt similar measures to expand the registry areas in respect of the other registries as necessary.

13. The Judiciary continues to appeal to all court users to avoid coming to the registries/accounts offices at peak hours, e.g. late mornings and late afternoons.

(IV) Supportive Offices of the Judiciary

14. From 7 December onwards, the offices that provide support services to courts users and the public will reduce their operating hours as set out at Annex. Starting from the same date, the counter service of the Complaints Office will also be suspended until further notice.

(V) Preventive and Crowd Management Measures

15. The Judiciary will continue to strictly enforce appropriate preventive and crowd management measures, with enhancements as appropriate. These measures include enhanced cleansing and disinfection of public and staff areas, mandatory body temperature checks upon entry into Judiciary premises, requiring all people to wear surgical masks at all times unless otherwise directed by Judges or Judicial Officers, providing hand sanitisers at different locations, and installing protective shields and partitions in courtrooms as appropriate.

16. Parties, legal representatives and court users who have fever or high body temperature; who are subject to any quarantine requirement, medical surveillance or compulsory testing while waiting for test results; and/or who are preliminarily tested positive or tested positive for COVID-19; are not allowed to enter Judiciary premises. They should apply to the court as soon as practicable for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

17. To enhance social distancing, the seating capacity of the public gallery of courtrooms, court lobbies, registries and accounts offices has been reduced to half. Broadcasting of proceedings will be arranged if necessary and practicable. In addition, the Judiciary will be more vigilant in enforcing the capacity limits and admission control in major areas such as courtrooms, court lobbies, registries and accounts offices. Where appropriate, queuing or other crowd management arrangements will be put in place to regulate the flow of people. Court users should follow the instructions of the Judiciary staff and security personnel.

(VI) Contacts

18. If stakeholders have any questions about the above arrangements, please contact the following officers for the respective courts :

(a) Court of Final Appeal

- Ms Jo Chow, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Court of Final Appeal) at 2123 0054
- Hotline : 2123 0123

(b) High Court

High Court Registry

- Mr Kenneth Tsang, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Resource Centre) at 2825 0571
- Mr Larry Ngan, Senior Judicial Clerk II (High Court Registry) at 2825 0401
- Hotline : 2523 2212

Appeals Registry & Criminal and Civil Registry

- Ms Twinky Lo, Clerk of Court at 2825 4383
- Miss Cynthia Leung, Judicial Clerk (Civil) at 2825 4672
- Hotline : 2523 2212

Probate Registry

- Ms Memory Wong, Chief Probate Officer at 2825 0619
- Mr William Chong, Senior Probate Officer at 2825 0620
- Hotline : 2840 1683

(c) Competition Tribunal

- Ms Priscilla Wong, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Competition Tribunal) at 2825 0347
- Hotline : 2825 0426

(d) District Court

- Ms Clare Tsang, Chief Judicial Clerk (Courts) at 2582 4000
- Ms Anny Tam, Chief Judicial Clerk (Registry) at 2582 4200

- Mr Wing Lau, Senior Judicial Clerk II (Registry)1 at 2582 5368
- Miss Jenny Kwok, Senior Judicial Clerk II (Registry)2 at 2504 0766
- Hotline : 2845 5696

(e) Family Court

- Ms Jolly Lam, Chief Judicial Clerk (Family Court) at 2582 5370
- Ms Sharon Wong, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Family Court) at 2582 5373
- Hotline : 2840 1218

(f) Lands Tribunal

- Miss Amy Leung, Chief Judicial Clerk (Lands Tribunal) at 2170 3815
- Ms Emily Ho, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Lands Tribunal) at 2170 3818
- Mr Mike Chan, Senior Judicial Clerk II (Lands Tribunal) at 2170 3825
- Hotline : 2771 3034

(g) Labour Tribunal

- Ms Elizabeth Lee, Registrar/Labour Tribunal at 2625 3200
- Ms Heidi Ma, Deputy Registrar/Labour Tribunal at 2625 3226
- Hotline : 2625 0020

(h) Small Claims Tribunal

- Ms Wendy Chui, Chief Judicial Clerk (Small Claims Tribunal) at 3916 6401
- Ms Ada Law, Senior Judicial Clerk I (Small Claims Tribunal) at 3916 6459
- Hotline : 2877 4068

(i) Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Ivy Wu, Judiciary Executive (Magistracies) at 3916 6390
- Hotline : 2677 8373

Eastern Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Jack Suen, First Clerk at 2886 6756
- Mr Danny Tse, Second Clerk at 2886 6496

Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts

- Miss Alice Yip, First Clerk at 2767 3281
- Ms Debby Ho, Second Clerk at 2767 3283

Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Eva Kong, First Clerk at 2772 9230
- Ms Veronica Lee, Second Clerk at 2772 9232

West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts

- Miss Phoebe Hung, First Clerk at 3916 6152
- Mr C M Au, Second Clerk at 3916 6154

Fanling Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Rebecca Wong, First Clerk at 2682 7710
- Ms Rita Chan, Second Clerk at 2682 7711

Shatin Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Buddy Chan, First Clerk at 2694 2309
- Mr H C Leung, Second Clerk at 2694 2310

Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Sunny Chung, First Clerk at 2452 8222
- Miss Eva Leung, Second Clerk at 2452 8134

(j) *Obscene Articles Tribunal*

- Miss Rachel Wan, Officer-in-charge of Registry at 3916 6302

(k) *Coroner's Court*

- Ms Connie Lee, Clerk to Coroners at 3916 6201
- Mr K L Lee, Deputy Clerk to Coroners at 3916 6202

(l) *Crowd Management Arrangements*

- Mr Jonathan Man, Chief Judiciary Executive (Accommodation) at 2867 2140
- Mr Gary Lau, Chief Judiciary Executive (Court Security) at 2867 2172

(VII) Further Updates

19. Given the recent rapid changes in public health situation, the Judiciary will continue to closely monitor the situation with a view to making necessary adjustments if circumstances change. When further changes are made, information will be provided as soon as practicable.

**Judiciary Administration
1 December 2020**

Annex

**Adjusted Operating Hours of Judiciary Offices
providing Support Services**

Offices/Public Counters	Adjusted Operating Hours
➤ Court Language Section’s Certification Counter in Wanchai Law Courts Building (“WLCB”)	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Bailiff Offices’ Public Counters at various court premises	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Integrated Mediation Office in WLCB	9:00 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ High Court Library	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Resource Centre for Unrepresented Litigants at High Court Building (“HCB”)	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Building Management Mediation Co-ordinator’s Office in Lands Tribunal	9:00 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Small Claims Tribunal Information Centre	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
➤ Complaints Office at HCB	8:45 am to 12:30 pm 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

Remarks: The above offices are open from Mondays to Fridays (closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays).