

**Notification for Stakeholders about
General Adjournment of Court Proceedings
from 14 April 2020 to 3 May 2020
(position as at 8 April 2020)**

(I) General Arrangements

The Judiciary has made a public announcement today (April 8) that in view of the latest public health considerations, the General Adjourned Period (“GAP”), during which all hearings of the courts/tribunals will generally be adjourned, will continue from April 14 to May 3. It is important to underline the fact that the public’s health and safety, including that of court users and court staff, remain paramount considerations in the handling of court operations by the Judiciary.

2. During the period from April 14 to May 3, the courts will continue to handle urgent and essential hearings and/or matters. However, given the recent rapid changes in public health situation and having regard to the Government’s prevailing preventive measures, the Judiciary will continue to monitor the situation very closely to see if any refinement to the list of urgent and essential hearing and/or matters during the period may be needed.

3. Similarly, the duration of GAP will be subject to review having regard to the prevailing public health situation.

(II) Remote Hearings

4. The Judiciary issued a guidance note on April 2 for remote hearings for civil business in the High Court (phase 1 : video-conferencing facilities) (“VCF”), providing details on the use of VCF for suitable civil cases. Two hearings were held in the week of April 6 and the processes were so far smooth. Further remote hearings using VCF may be held for suitable cases in the near future.

5. The Judiciary will continue to work closely with the legal profession and other stakeholders to further promote and expand the use of remote hearings as appropriate.

(III) Electronic Lodgement of Documents

6. As we have previously indicated, besides the special email accounts to facilitate remote lodgement of documents to the court, the Judiciary has extended an electronic submission platform in the District Court to the High Court and the Family Court from April 1. The platform will be further extended to the Lands Tribunal from April 15. The platform provides a more secure and structured electronic means for parties to lodge documents to the court.

(IV) Detailed Arrangements

(A) Court Proceedings

7. For court hearings, only the urgent and essential ones will be held. Details are set out at **Annex A**. Parties have been or will be notified if their hearings will be held during this period.

8. Three Magistrates' Courts ("MCs") will continue to operate each day during the weekdays, while the usual Holiday sittings will be adopted for public holiday. Details of the arrangements from April 14 to May 3 are as follows :

- (a) 14 Apr (Tuesday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (b) 15 Apr (Wednesday) : Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open;
- (c) 16 Apr (Thursday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Shatin MCs will open;

- (d) 17 Apr (Friday) : Eastern MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open;
- (e) 18 Apr (Saturday) : Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (f) 19 Apr (Sunday) : No MCs will open;
- (g) 20 Apr (Monday) : Kwun Tong MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Shatin MCs will open;
- (h) 21 Apr (Tuesday) : Eastern MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (i) 22 Apr (Wednesday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open;
- (j) 23 Apr (Thursday) : Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Shatin MCs will open;
- (k) 24 Apr (Friday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (l) 25 Apr (Saturday) : Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (m) 26 Apr (Sunday) : No MCs will open;
- (n) 27 Apr (Monday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs, and Tuen Mun MCs will open;
- (o) 28 Apr (Tuesday) : Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Shatin MCs will open;

- (p) 29 Apr (Wednesday) : Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open;
- (q) 30 Apr (Thursday) : Holiday sitting will be adopted and Kwun Tong MCs will open;
- (r) 1 May (Friday) : No MCs will open;
- (s) 2 May (Saturday) : Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open; and
- (t) 3 May (Sunday) : No MCs will open.

(B) Registries

9. All registries and accounts offices at various levels of courts and tribunals will remain closed during this period, but enhanced measures will be suitably introduced to support the revised scope of urgent and essential business. Details are also set out at **Annex A**.

10. During the closure of the accounts offices of the courts, parties may pay any outstanding court fine by cheque (payable to “The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” or “The Government of the HKSAR”) to be mailed to the relevant court.

(V) **Contacts**

11. If stakeholders have any questions about the detailed arrangements for the above matters, particularly those relating to the urgent and essential court business, please contact the following officers for the respective courts during the office hours :

(a) High Court*For urgent and essential apostilles and bankruptcy (objections to discharge applications) related matters*

- 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

For urgent civil business for the Court of Appeal, urgent and essential criminal matters including bail-related hearings, and bankruptcy (non-commencement orders) related matters

- Ms Terri Tang, Clerk of Court at 2825 4383
- Miss Cynthia Leung, Judicial Clerk (Civil) at 2825 4672

For urgent grant of probate

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

(b) 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

(c) 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

(d) Lands Tribunal

- Miss Amy Leung, Chief Judiciary Clerk (Lands Tribunal) at 2170 3815
- Ms Elizabeth Lee, Senior Judicial Clerk I at 2170 3818
- Mr Mike Chan, Senior Judicial Clerk II at 2170 3825

(e) Labour Tribunal

- Mr Jackson Chan, Registrar/Labour Tribunal at 2625 3200
- Ms Heidi Ma, Deputy Registrar/Labour Tribunal at 2625 3226

(f) Small Claims Tribunal

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

(g) Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Pauline Kwok, Senior Judiciary Executive (Magistracies) at 3916 6389

Eastern Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Jack Suen, First Clerk at 2886 6756

Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts

- Miss Alice Yip, First Clerk at 2767 3281

Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Eva Kong, First Clerk at 2772 9230

West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts

- Miss Phoebe Hung, First Clerk at 3916 6152

Fanling Magistrates' Courts

- Ms Helen Lai, First Clerk at 2682 7710

Shatin Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Buddy Chan, First Clerk at 2694 2309

Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts

- Mr Sunny Chung, First Clerk of at 2452 8222

(h) Crowd Management Arrangements

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

(VI) Preventive and Crowd Management Measures

12. The Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate preventive and crowd management measures for the health protection of all people who are required to enter and remain in the court premises, including queuing. Having regard to the

latest public health situation, in addition to those measures implemented earlier, we have refined the seating arrangement in the public gallery of the courtrooms and lobbies such that while the 50% seating capacity remains in force, court users are required to sit on alternate seats to further enhance social distancing.

13. Besides, institutional users located in the court premises are required to notify staff of the Judiciary (e.g. Venue Manager, Section Head etc.) who is their usual contact in the Judiciary if any of their staff/members working in the court premises is suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19. For this purpose, a suspected case refers to a person who is waiting to be tested for COVID-19; whose test result is being awaited; or whose initial test result is preliminary positive and is subject to further test(s).

14. The Judiciary will keep reviewing the situation and introduce new measures as appropriate. Court users are strongly advised to check the updated information from the Judiciary's website, and follow the advice of the Judiciary staff and security personnel when they attend for court business.

(VII) Further Updates

15. The Judiciary will keep in view developments. If the Judiciary decides to introduce any further changes, we will continue to keep the stakeholders posted as soon as practicable.

16. Besides, the Judiciary will continue to post updated information, including Daily Cause Lists, messages related to the Judiciary's arrangements arising from public health considerations and advice to court users visiting the courts during this period, on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk). Stakeholders are advised to check the website for updated information as necessary.

17. In particular, for the Bar Association and the Law Society, we should be grateful if you would continue to advise your members to check the website for updated information.

Judiciary Administration

8 April 2020

Annex A

Urgent and Essential Hearings/Matters to be Handled by the Courts for the Weeks of April 14 to May 3

(position as at 8 April 2020)

The urgent and essential hearings and/or matters which may be handled from April 14 to May 3 include the following :

(a) For the Registries of the High Court (“HC”), District Court (“DC”), Family Court (“FC”)

(i) Though the registries remain closed, special arrangements will be made to enable parties to file the following urgent documents to the relevant registries :

(1) originating document where the limitation period for a cause of action under the Limitation Ordinance (Cap. 347) may expire during General Adjourned Period (“GAP”);

(2) document(s) filed pursuant to an unless order imposing a time limit that may expire during GAP;

(3) ex-parte and consent applications; and

(4) for the HC registries

(A) application for leave to apply for judicial reviews (including but not limited to non-refoulement claim) where the time limit for making the application provided by Order 53, rule 4(1) of the Rules of the High Court (Cap. 4A) may expire during GAP;

- (B) application and collection of apostilles;
 - (C) urgent grant and amendment of probate, urgent filing of Caveat and urgent computer search of related information;
 - (D) documents relating to the urgent winding up and bankruptcy-related proceedings set out in sub-paragraph (c)(i) below;
 - (E) registration of enduring power of attorney and the lodging of related documents;
 - (F) lodging of request for service of documents outside Hong Kong (including Mainland China); and
 - (G) indictments for cases committed to the Court of First Instance (“CFI”); and
- (ii) the registries will process ex parte applications filed with the court, and may issue sealed orders for these ex-parte applications upon the request of the parties;

(b) For Civil Cases in the Court of Appeal (“CA”), CFI, DC and FC :

Duty Judge System

- (i) urgent matters or hearings before the HC, DC and FC, including those relating to the specialist lists,

will be dealt with by the respective Duty Judges (“Duty Judge system”);

- (ii) if a party or his/her legal representative considers that any matter has become urgent because of the court’s continued general adjournment, they may consider using the Duty Judge system to bring such matters to the attention of the court. The party concerned should provide a certificate explaining the urgency of the matter. They should also provide the essential and key documents to enable the court to decide whether the matter is really urgent and essential which should be handled during GAP on an exceptional basis;
- (iii) parties or legal representatives may submit documents to the Duty Judges through the following one-way “no-reply” email accounts, which will be open until the end of GAP or further notice :
 - (1) For HC : hcdutyjudge@judiciary.hk
 - (2) For DC : dcdutyjudge@judiciary.hk
 - (3) For FC : fcdutyjudge@judiciary.hk

They may also submit documents through the e-Lodgement Platform mentioned below.

Parties and legal representatives are reminded to :

- (1) contact the Duty Judges concerned by telephone before sending their documents to the court electronically; and
- (2) refrain from telephoning the Duty Judges after office hours (i.e. from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. from Mondays to Fridays), unless it is really necessary;

Urgent Applications to the CA

- (iv) urgent applications to the CA may be made through the Clerk of Court;
- (v) documents may be submitted through the one-way “no-reply” email account : hcdutyjudge@judiciary.hk, or the e-Lodgement Platform mentioned below. Parties and legal representatives are reminded to contact the Clerk of Court by telephone before sending their documents to the court electronically;

Other Arrangements

- (vi) Judges and Judicial Officers (“JJOs”) will continue to deal with urgent and essential court business, including processing them on paper. JJOs may also deal with appeals or applications listed to be heard during GAP if they are of the view that the proceedings come within the scope of urgent and essential business. For these appeals and applications, specific directions will be given to the parties in good time to enable the parties to prepare for the hearings;
- (vii) though no hearings will generally be held during GAP, individual JJOs will, as far as possible, review their cases originally listed to be heard during GAP and the following two weeks, whether represented ones or not, to see if they can be suitably disposed of on paper. These cases are primarily interlocutory applications and substantive applications not involving any

witnesses. If paper disposal is possible, the JJO concerned will give case management directions on paper. If not, the case will be re-fixed;

- (viii) as generally no hearing will be held during GAP, if any party insists on having an oral hearing, the hearing will have to be re-fixed with listing appointments to be given by the court;
- (ix) where parties have reached agreement on matters that can be properly dealt with by consent, the court will also make orders by consent;
- (x) for decisions or judgments made on paper during GAP, or where it is justified on grounds of urgency, the court may issue sealed orders. Requests for sealed orders may be made to the JJO who makes the order in question. Parties may attach a draft order to their written submission; and

e-Lodgement Platform

- (xi) as from April 1, in addition to the one-way “no-reply” email accounts, an additional electronic means for lodging documents with the court, called the “e-Lodgement Platform”, will be available for parties and legal representatives to lodge with the HC, DC and FC their submissions, authorities, hearing bundles and other documents as directed by the court. The platform will be further extended to the Lands Tribunal (“LandsT”) on April 15. Details of the platform are at **Annex B**;

(c) **For Civil Cases in the CFI**

- (i) The following winding up and bankruptcy-related proceedings :
 - (1) urgent applications under section 30A of the Bankruptcy Ordinance (Cap. 6) by the trustee in bankruptcy or creditor of the bankrupt for the suspension of the bankrupt's discharge from bankruptcy;
 - (2) urgent objections to discharge applications not yet filed but with imminent dates of discharge of bankruptcy, and urgent applications for non-commencement orders under section 30AB of Cap. 6 not yet filed but with imminent deadlines for filing;
 - (3) urgent applications under section 42 of Cap. 6 by the debtors for validation orders; and
 - (4) hearings for winding up and bankruptcy petitions adjourned from GAP and directed to be heard before a Judge or a Master between April 14 and April 29; and
- (ii) summons relating to injunctions returnable before a Judge on Fridays;

(d) **For Civil Cases in the DC**

- (i) Employees' Compensation ("EC") List on April 17 and 24 will proceed as scheduled;

- (ii) EC cases set down for hearing before the EC Judge on April 16 and 23 will proceed as scheduled;
- (iii) documents relating to the above hearings may be sent to the dedicated email account with address: dcrec@judiciary.hk;
- (iv) summons relating to injunctions returnable before a Judge on Fridays; and
- (v) documents relating to (iv) may be submitted through the e-Lodgement Platform;

(e) **For Cases in the FC**

Pronouncement of decree nisi of divorce or decree of judicial separation by a Judge in open court under rule 47A(2) of the Matrimonial Causes Rules (Cap. 179A);

(f) **For Cases in the LandsT**

- (i) the arrangements mentioned in sub-paragraphs (b)(vi) to (x) above apply; and
- (ii) documents to facilitate paper disposal or related to the above matters may be submitted through the special one-way "no-reply" email account: ltr@judiciary.hk or, from April 15, the e-Lodgement Platform;

(g) **For Criminal Cases in the CA**

- (i) single Judge leave applications against conviction or sentence as directed by the CA;

- (ii) appeals against conviction where leave to appeal has been given and the defendant is remanded in custody;
- (iii) other appeals against conviction and appeals against sentence as directed by the CA;
- (iv) applications for review of sentence;
- (v) applications for bail pending appeal; and
- (vi) parties or legal representatives directed by the court to lodge documents or submissions with the court may do so through the special one-way “no-reply” email account with address: carcriminal@judiciary.hk or the new e-Lodgement Platform;

(h) For Criminal Cases in the CFI

- (i) bail applications and bail reviews;
- (ii) all cases/matters, excluding new jury trials, which have been scheduled to take place between April 14 and 29 and the hearings of which have been re-confirmed with the parties; and
- (iii) parties or legal representatives directed by the court to lodge documents or submissions may do so through the special one-way “no-reply” email account with address: cficriminalr@judiciary.hk or the new e-Lodgement Platform;

(i) For Criminal Cases in the DC

- (i) Plea Day on April 14, 16, 21, 23 and 28 will proceed as scheduled;

- (ii) cases set down on a Plea Day during GAP (except those that have already been dealt with on the papers) and have been re-listed for hearing between April 14 and 29 will proceed as scheduled;
- (iii) documents relating to the above hearings may be sent to the dedicated email account with address: dcrplea@judiciary.hk;
- (iv) all cases/matters, excluding new trials, which have been scheduled to take place between April 14 and 29 and the hearings of which have been re-confirmed with the parties; and
- (v) parties or legal representatives directed by the court to lodge documents or submissions with the court may do so through the special one-way “no-reply” email account with address: dcr@judiciary.hk or the new e-Lodgement Platform;

(j) **For Cases in the Magistrates’ Courts (“MCs”)**

- (i) fresh remand cases;
- (ii) person remanded in custody who has the legal rights to appear before a Magistrate to review his/her remand situation and either of the following conditions is met (referred to as “eight-day cases” hereafter) :
 - (1) the return date falls between April 14 and April 29; or

- (2) the case was originally adjourned to a date falling within the period of January 29 to April 9;
- (iii) urgent cases relating to sentencing in which the defendants are remanded in custody and the hearing of which comes within either of the following categories :
 - (1) the hearing date falls between April 14 and April 29; or
 - (2) the case was originally adjourned to a date falling within the period between January 29 and April 9;
- (iv) urgent and essential trials as directed by the presiding Magistrate;
- (v) cases in which the defendants are remanded in custody and the hearing of which comes within either of the following categories :
 - (1) the hearing date falls between January 29 and April 9; or
 - (2) the case is originally scheduled to be heard on the special court sitting day of the respective MCs; and
- (vi) committal proceedings and the hearing of which falls within the period between January 29 and April 9; and
- (vii) cases/matters, excluding trials, which were originally scheduled to be heard between January

29 and April 9 as directed by the presiding Magistrate;

(k) For the Juvenile Court

(i) urgent cases concerning care and protection orders with either of the following conditions being met :

(1) the return date falls within the period between April 14 and April 29; or

(2) the case was originally adjourned to a date that falls within the period between January 29 and April 9; and

(ii) urgent and essential trials as directed by the presiding Magistrate;

(l) For the Coroner's Court

(i) paper applications for waivers for autopsy;

(ii) issuing urgent certificates of order authorizing burial/cremation of body;

(iii) handling urgent cases with pathologist's recommendation for autopsy;

(iv) issuing urgent certificate of the fact of death and documents for the removal of bodies outside jurisdiction; and

(v) urgent and essential proceedings as directed by the presiding Coroner;

(m) **For the Small Claims Tribunal**

From the week of April 20 onwards, call-over hearings which were originally scheduled to be heard between January 29 and March 20 and which have been re-fixed to take place between March 23 and April 2; and

(n) **For the Labour Tribunal**

From the week of April 20 onwards, call-over, mention and application for review hearings which were originally scheduled to be heard between January 29 and March 20.

2. The courts will also hand down decisions and judgments in both civil and criminal cases that are ready. As usual, the courts will give sufficient notice to the relevant parties of the cases. The judgments will be uploaded onto the Judiciary's website immediately after handing down. Parties need not come to the court to collect the judgments. If a party does not come to the court to collect the judgment, a hard copy will be sent to him/her.

3. Applications for admission as a barrister or solicitor listed on April 18 onwards will proceed as scheduled. They will be subject to the procedures and special arrangements adopted for the admission hearings adjourned during the period from January 29 and March 28. Applicants will be separately informed by the court of the specific time allotted for their applications.

4. For the DC and MCs, the relevant Judges and Magistrates will continue to perform, as appropriate, their statutory duties relating to urgent applications for search warrants and applications under the Mental Health Ordinance (Cap. 136).

**E-Lodgement Platform for
Electronic Lodging of Documents with the Court**

1. Purposes

- 1.1 The e-Lodgement Platform (“Platform”) has been extended from the District Court to the High Court and Family Court, with enhancements, from April 1 to facilitate parties and legal representatives to lodge to the court submissions, authorities, hearing bundles and any other documents as directed by the court during the General Adjourned Period (“GAP”) or until further notice. The Platform will further be extended to the Lands Tribunal from April 15.
- 1.2 In comparison with the special email accounts created during GAP, the Platform provides a more secure and structured platform for submission of documents to the court. Moreover, unless the presiding Judge or Judicial Officer (“JJO”) directs otherwise, submitting parties may normally choose whether they wish to submit their documents to the court by the Platform or the email accounts.
- 1.3 At this stage, the Platform is exclusively for remote submission of documents as directed by the presiding JJO. Submissions of documents in the absence of directions from the court through the Platform will not be read.

2. General Arrangements

- 2.1 No pre-registration is required for using the Platform. When entering the Platform, there are introductory notes for reference by the submitting parties. On-line guidance will also be provided to assist submitting parties in lodging documents to the court.
- 2.2 Submission of the documents and bundles via this Platform should not be construed as having satisfied the requirement(s) for lodging the same under applicable legislative provision(s) and/or relevant Practice Direction(s) save and except with specific order/direction of the court either on its own motion or upon application.
- 2.3 Submitting parties should observe the time for submission as directed by the presiding JJO where appropriate. Documents received by the courts after 5 pm will normally be processed on the next day.

3. Technical requirements

- 3.1 Documents submitted should be prepared by using common word processing software (e.g. Microsoft Word 2007 or above, Pages 6.0 or above, etc). The file format (or the “save as type”) of the documents should be “doc”, “docx” or “pdf”.
- 3.2 The maximum size of an electronic submission, with all the attachments, is 50MB per submission. For submission at a size larger than 50MB, submitters will have to split the submission into batches. Resolution of PDF image file shall be 300 dpi and in black and white

or in 8-bit colour depth at a minimum to optimize image quality and file size.

3.3 The documents should not contain any computer instructions such as those as follows:

- (a) computer viruses/malware; and
- (b) macros, scripts, links and fields that depend on the execution environment and the execution of which will cause changes to the document itself.

4. Submission Procedures and Requirements

4.1 With the direction of the presiding JJO, parties may lodge the relevant documents to the courts for specified purposes through the Platform. Hyperlink for the Platform will be provided when the presiding JJO makes such direction for submission of documents.

4.2 When submitting documents, parties are required to accept the terms of use and fill up a form to provide basic information to facilitate the court's matching of the relevant case:

- a. Case number and name of parties;
- b. Name of presiding JJO and hearing date;
- c. Full name of contact person, contact number and name of solicitors' firm (if applicable); and
- d. Relevant documents as directed by JJO.

5. Disclaimer

5.1 Similar disclaimers as those for the use of the special email accounts will also be provided for the Platform.

Such details will be set out at the outset when one uses the Platform.

Judiciary Administration
April 2020