



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 41 - 2020

**TO : ALL LITIGANTS, JUSTICES, JUDGES AND COURT PERSONNEL
OF THE JUDICIARY, AND MEMBERS OF THE BAR**

RE : COURT OPERATIONS BEGINNING 1 JUNE 2020

Considering that many parts of the country have been placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) beginning 1 June 2020, ALL COURTS nationwide shall operate, as follows:

1. ALL COURTS and offices of the courts nationwide beginning 1 June 2020 shall be in FULL OPERATION from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the National Capital Judicial Region, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Regions 1 to 12, Monday to Friday, as provided in OCA Circular No. 250-2015. The Night courts and Saturday courts however shall remain suspended.
2. Considering that mass transportation is not yet in full operation, the courts and offices of the courts may continue to function at work with a skeleton-staff, if necessary, to be determined by the Chief Justice, Associate Justices; Presiding Justices, Executive Judges, Presiding Judges, and Chiefs of Offices, as the case may be. It must however be ensured that those staying at home will have work to do at home.
3. All inquiries on cases and transactions, including requests for documents and services, shall initially be coursed and acted upon only through the hotline numbers, email addresses and/or Facebook accounts of the courts, as posted on the website of the Supreme Court.¹ No walk-in requests shall be entertained by any of the branches or offices of the courts.
4. All the courts shall receive all the petitions and pleadings filed by any party. The initiatory pleadings, in both civil and criminal cases, including criminal complaints, informations, and applications for

¹ Annex "A," A.C. 32 - 2020 dated 20 March 2020.

bail,² together with all the required documents in relation thereto, may either be filed manually or electronically, and shall be received by the courts through their respective email addresses, as posted on the website of the Supreme Court,³ if electronically filed. Pleadings and other court submissions on pending cases may likewise be electronically filed directly with the branch where the case is pending if the said branch has an official email address. Otherwise, the pleadings and other court submissions on pending cases may be filed electronically with the Office of the Clerk of Court, which shall forward the said transmissions to the branches where the cases are pending.

5. The raffle of cases in all the court stations shall proceed regularly, either electronically in eCourt stations, or in accordance with the procedure laid down in A.M. No. 03-8-02-SC⁴ in non-eCourt stations, provided that only the members of the Raffle Committee will attend the raffle, excluding the private lawyers and the general public during this period of public health emergency. Raffle through videoconferencing shall no longer be conducted.
6. All the courts shall resolve and decide all the cases pending before them. The hearings of cases, regardless of the stage of the trial, shall all be in-court, except in cases involving Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) who shall continue to appear remotely from the detention facility, and in cases with extraordinary circumstances as may be determined by the justices and judges, which shall be heard through videoconferencing.
7. The courts shall adopt a system of hearings to enable them to implement continuous trial in criminal cases and comply with other existing guidelines and rules. Pre-trials shall already be set. An accused who has been granted bail need not appear in-court, unless the court has special reasons to require his or her in-court presence.
8. In all the in-court hearings, the health hygiene protocols and other public medical standards, *e.g.*, wearing of face masks and face shields, subjecting everyone to a no-contact thermal scanning, and observance of social distancing, shall be strictly observed.
9. In all the videoconferencing hearings, the justices or judges shall preside from the courtrooms or chambers at all times, unless in

² Pursuant to A.C. 33 - 2020, dated 31 March 2020, supplemented by OCA Circular No. 89 - 2020, dated 3 April 2020.

³ Annex "A," A.C. 32 - 2020, dated 20 March 2020.

⁴ Approved on 27 January 2004.


exceptional circumstances where the justice or judge may preside from home, with prior permission from the Office of the Court Administrator in the case of first and second level court judges.

10. There shall no longer be extensions in the filing of petitions, appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions that will fall due beginning 1 June 2020. In the same manner, the periods for court actions with prescribed periods beginning 1 June 2020 shall no longer be extended.
11. Flag raising and retreat ceremonies shall remain suspended. The flag however shall be raised every Monday morning, and retreated every Friday afternoon.
12. All official meetings, seminars, trainings and other functions in the Judiciary, unless conducted through videoconferencing, shall be deferred, except those allowed by this Circular, and those that may be called or authorized by the Chief Justice or by the Judiciary Task Force on COVID-19.

All previously issued circulars and their respective provisions which are not inconsistent herewith shall remain valid and in effect.

FOR THE GUIDANCE OF ALL CONCERNED.

City of Manila, 29 May 2020.


DIOSDADO M. PERALTA
Chief Justice