

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

**REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 4 OF 2020**

**UPDATES ON MEASURES RELATING TO COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019) FROM 7 APRIL 2020 TO 4 MAY 2020**

In view of the press release issued on 3 April 2020 by the Ministry of Health on “Circuit Breaker to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19”, every matter<sup>1</sup> scheduled for hearing in the Supreme Court from 7 April 2020 to 4 May 2020 (the “Relevant Period”) will be adjourned to a date to be fixed, unless the matter is assessed to be essential and urgent. The matters which may be considered essential and urgent are set out in **Schedule 1**.

2 The Registry will inform parties by 6 April 2020, 12 noon, if their matters will be heard from 7 April 2020 to 14 April 2020 (inclusive). For matters that will be heard on or after 15 April 2020, parties will be notified as soon as possible and in any event, no later than five working days from the scheduled hearing date. For the avoidance of doubt, the Court may continue to deliver judgments during the Relevant Period.

3 Any hearing conducted during the Relevant Period will be conducted through electronic means of communication, unless otherwise directed by the Court. Parties are to comply with all safe distancing and other applicable measures in the preparation, presentation and conduct of hearings during the Relevant Period.

4 Attendance before the Duty Judge or Duty Registrar in relation to matters falling within Schedule 1 will continue to be dealt with during the Relevant Period in accordance with the Supreme Court Practice Directions and Registrar’s Circular No. 3 of 2020<sup>2</sup>. Any request for the urgent hearing of any matter which does not fall within Schedule 1 must be accompanied by reasons explaining why the matter is essential and urgent. In making such a request, parties should note the following:

- (a) In determining whether a matter is essential and urgent, the Court will have regard to, among other things, whether the determination of the outcome of the matter is time

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<sup>1</sup> This includes appeals, trials, applications (interlocutory or otherwise), case management conferences and pre-trial conferences.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://go.gov.sg/rc-3-2020>.

sensitive, and whether there is any legal requirement for the matter to be heard within any timeframe;

- (b) A matter is not essential and urgent merely because it is convenient for the parties to have the matter heard early or as scheduled; and
- (c) Parties should not make the request if the preparation, presentation and conduct of the hearing will entail parties breaching safe distancing measures (e.g. if lawyers will have to come into close physical proximity with one another, their staff or their clients). Parties will be required to satisfy the Court that measures are in place to avoid this.

The Court may, in its discretion, grant a request for urgent hearing if the matter is assessed by the Court to be essential and urgent.

5 Parties may also email the Supreme Court Registry at [Supcourt\\_registry@supcourt.gov.sg](mailto:Supcourt_registry@supcourt.gov.sg) on any urgent query with the email subject stating the relevant details such as, “[Urgent Query][*Case Number*][*Case Name*]”, as may be applicable.

6 With effect from 7 April 2020 until further notice, where a hearing is conducted by means of video conferencing or telephone conferencing using a remote communication technology approved by the Chief Justice or authorised by the Court, all recordings made of the hearing which have been authorised by the Court using such remote communication technology will constitute the official record of hearing for the purposes of Order 38A Rule 1 of the Rules of Court.

7 The Supreme Court Registry and other court services will continue to operate during the Relevant Period to provide court services for essential and urgent matters. Except where it relates to essential and urgent matters during the Relevant Period, any request for service by the Court process server, for inspection of a case file in person, for taking of hard copies of documents or for any enforcement action will not be processed.

8 Parties and their representatives should not visit the Court premises during the Relevant Period to tender documents in hard copy or in any media storage devices, including CD-ROMs. Any requirement to tender to the Court any hard copies of documents pursuant to the Rules of Court, the Supreme Court Practice Directions or the Court’s directions shall, during the Relevant Period, be complied with by electronically filing or submitting the soft copies (by email or otherwise) within the applicable timelines. If the aforesaid soft copies are submitted in any media storage devices, including CD-ROMs, it shall be posted by AR registered post and the applicable timelines shall be deemed to have been complied with if it is posted by the

last day of the timeline. The Court may issue directions for hard copies of the aforesaid to be tendered after the Relevant Period. For the avoidance of doubt, parties may continue to file documents electronically through the eLitigation system and send by AR registered post soft copy documents contained in CD-ROMs (as may be applicable) to the Court during the Relevant Period.

9 In relation to timelines for compliance under the Rules of Court or the Supreme Court Practice Directions or pursuant to the Court's directions, the following shall apply:

- (a) where matters scheduled for hearing during the Relevant Period are adjourned, parties may write in to the Court to request an extension of time; and
- (b) for all other matters, the applicable timelines will continue to apply but parties may write in to the Court to request an extension of time, if necessary.

10 All matters scheduled for hearing after the Relevant Period will continue as scheduled, unless otherwise directed by the Court. We will continue to monitor the situation. All court users and visitors are advised to refer to the Supreme Court website at <https://www.supremecourt.gov.sg> for the latest information and updates.

Dated this 5<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.



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SUPREME COURT

## SCHEDULE 1

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Type of Hearing</b>
	<b>High Court</b>
	<i>Criminal Matters</i>
1	A Magistrate's Appeal involving an appellant whose sentence of imprisonment would be completed within or shortly after the Relevant Period.
2	A Magistrate's Appeal involving a sentence of caning, where the accused person is approaching 50 years of age.
3	An application for an order for review of detention.
4	An application concerning bail or review of bail.
5	An application for stay of judicial execution.
6	A request for any matter to be heard urgently that is assessed to be urgent.
	<i>Civil Matters (including SICC matters where applicable)</i>
7	An application for urgent injunction or search order.
8	An application to set aside an injunction or search order.
9	An application for the arrest or release of a vessel.
10	An application for the discharge of dangerous or perishable cargo.
11	An application for the judicial sale of a vessel, where the safety of the crew is a concern.
12	An appeal to the High Court under the Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act 2019.

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Type of Hearing</b>
13	An application under the Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Act, the Terrorism (Suppression of Financing) Act or the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act, if indicated by the Attorney-General's Chambers to be urgent and assessed to be urgent.
14	An application for urgent judicial review, e.g. in relation to implementation of COVID-19 measures.
15	An application under the Building and Construction Industry Security of Payment Act.
16	An appeal to the High Court under the Protection from Harassment Act, if there are issues of personal safety involved.
17	Certain applications for extension of time or variation of court orders relating to insolvency and restructuring matters.
18	Certain applications for interim payments in personal injury cases.
19	An application for stay of execution of a civil judgment.
20	Committal proceeding in respect of a person who is subject to an outstanding warrant of arrest and who needs to be produced before a Court within 48 hours.
21	A request for any matter to be heard urgently that is assessed to be urgent.
	<b>Court of Appeal</b>
22	An appeal involving a matter falling within the list of urgent High Court matters above.
23	An application for expedited appeal to the Court of Appeal.
24	Matters involving child custody or access issues.

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Type of Hearing</b>
25	A request for any matter to be heard urgently that is assessed to be urgent.