



MEDIA RELEASE

SUPREME COURT, STATE COURTS AND FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS TO HEAR ONLY ESSENTIAL AND URGENT MATTERS FROM 7 APRIL TO 4 MAY 2020

On 3 April 2020, the Prime Minister and the Multi-Ministry Taskforce announced the implementation of a set of elevated safe distancing measures to preempt the trend of increasing local transmission of COVID-19. These measures are intended to significantly reduce physical movements and interactions in public and private places, and will remain in place unless otherwise specified in the Registrar's Circulars to be issued by each court for four weeks from 7 April 2020 to 4 May 2020 (both dates included) ("**the Relevant Period**").

2. In light of these measures, the Honourable the Chief Justice has directed that the Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice Courts will hear only essential and urgent matters in the Relevant Period. This direction applies (but is not limited to) appeals, trials, applications (interlocutory or otherwise), case management conferences and pre-trial conferences in all three Courts.

3. Registrars' Circulars have been issued by each of the three Courts to identify the matters that may be considered to be essential and urgent. The Circulars are available on the website of each Court and are also annexed to this media release (see **Annex A**). These matters will be heard, as far as possible, by electronic means of communication without requiring physical attendance before the Court.

4. All matters that had been scheduled for hearing during the Relevant Period which the Court has *not* assessed to be essential and urgent will be adjourned to such date as may be notified to the parties. However, a party may make a request to the relevant Court for such a matter to be heard within the Relevant Period. Such a request should be made in accordance with the directions set out in the applicable Registrar's Circular. In particular, in making such a request, parties should be



mindful that a hearing is not essential or urgent merely because it is convenient for the parties to have the matter heard early. Further, such a request should not be made if the preparation for and/or conduct of the hearing will entail any breach of safe distancing measures (for example, due to the need for lawyers to come into physical proximity with their colleagues or opposing counsel, their staff or clients).

5. The Courts' Registries and other court services will continue to remain operational during the Relevant Period to manage these essential and urgent matters. Parties and their representatives should not be visiting the Courts during the Relevant Period to tender any hard copies or CD-ROMs of any documents. Parties may continue to file documents electronically using the respective Courts' online case management systems.

6. To reduce the number of visitors to the Courts, the information counters at the Courts as well as the Supreme Court and State Court Libraries will be closed. For queries, court users may access the Courts' websites and e-services or contact the Courts' Registry officers using the following details:

Supreme Court:

Email: SUPCOURT_Registry@supcourt.gov.sg

Telephone: 6557 7495

Family Justice Courts:

Email: FJCOURTS_Family_Registry@fjcourts.gov.sg

Telephone: 6435 5398

State Courts

Email: contact@statecourts.gov.sg

Telephone: 6587 8423

7. For further information, please refer to the Registrars' Circulars on the respective Courts' websites.



ISSUED BY SUPREME COURT, STATE COURTS AND FAMILY JUSTICE COURTS

5 APRIL 2020

For media queries, please contact:

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