



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 45 - 2020

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

RE : COURT OPERATIONS DURING GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE FROM 19 AUGUST 2020 ONWARDS

Considering that the National Capital Region and other provinces and cities in the different regions have been placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) beginning 19 August 2020, court operations in areas under GCQ shall be as follows beginning 19 August 2020 onwards:

1. ALL courts in areas under GCQ shall be **PHYSICALLY OPENED TO COURT USERS**. However, the courts may still be reached through their respective hotline numbers, email addresses and/or Facebook accounts as posted on the website of the Supreme Court. All inquiries on cases or transactions, including requests for documents and services, may be coursed and acted upon through the said numbers, addresses, and accounts of the concerned court, or through the Judiciary Public Assistance Section of the Supreme Court in accordance with A.C. 28 - 2020.
2. The raffle of cases in all courts shall proceed in-court, or electronically in eCourt stations.

SUPREME COURT

3. The Court *en banc* and the Court's three (3) Divisions shall hold their sessions in-court, except under exceptional circumstances where sessions may be conducted through videoconferencing with prior approval from the Chief Justice, after consultations with the respective Division Chairpersons and First Division Working Chairperson.
4. The Offices of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices shall operate in accordance with the respective discretions of the Chief Justice and Associate Justices. All other offices and services of the Court shall be physically opened and may operate with a skeleton-staff of not less than

fifty percent (50%). The Chiefs of the different Offices and Services, who shall be in-court, shall ensure that every court personnel is assigned certain tasks to effectively and efficiently implement their respective offices' mandates even if they are working from home.

**COURT OF APPEALS, SANDIGANBAYAN,
COURT OF TAX APPEALS**

5. The Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals may continue to receive petitions and pleadings electronically, and in accordance with Paragraph 1 herein, and process the same pursuant to their respective internal rules.
6. The Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals shall continue to resolve and decide cases pending before them. All hearings shall be fully in-court, except under exceptional circumstances where at least one Justice may join remotely through videoconferencing with prior approval from the Presiding Justice, and subsequent submission of a weekly report to the Office of the Chief Justice. In partially-remote videoconferencing hearings where all the Justices will be in-court, prior approval from the Presiding Justice and subsequent report to the Office of the Chief Justice are not necessary.
7. All offices and services in the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals shall be physically opened and may operate with a skeleton-staff of not less than fifty percent (50%) as may be directed by the respective Presiding Justices. The Chiefs of the different Offices and Services, who shall be in-court, shall ensure that every court personnel is assigned certain tasks to effectively and efficiently implement their respective offices' mandates even if they are working from home.

**REGIONAL TRIAL COURTS, FAMILY COURTS,
AND FIRST LEVEL COURTS**

8. ALL pleadings, in both civil and criminal cases, may still be filed electronically and received by the courts through their respective official email addresses, as posted on the website of the Supreme Court.
9. ALL hearings in both criminal and civil cases shall be fully in-court, except when a person deprived of liberty is involved, or under exceptional circumstances where fully-remote videoconferencing hearings may be conducted with prior approval from the Office of the Court Administrator. In partially-remote videoconferencing hearings where the Judge will be presiding in-court, prior approval from the Office of the Court Administrator is not necessary.

10. The courts may operate with a skeleton-staff of not less than fifty percent (50%), to be determined by the respective Presiding Judges, and by the Executive Judges with respect to the Offices of the Clerk of Court.

11. Night courts and Saturday courts shall remain suspended until further notice.

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

City of Manila, 18 August 2020.

(original signed)
DIOSDADO M. PERALTA
Chief Justice