

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

**PRACTICE DIRECTION NO. 1 OF 2003**

**CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURE RELATING TO APPLICATIONS FOR  
PRACTISING CERTIFICATES**

Since March 2000, solicitors have been able to apply for their practising certificates electronically via the Practising Certificate Electronic Filing System ("PC E-filing System") on the Supreme Court Internet website (<http://www.supcourt.gov.sg>).

2 Further enhancements have been made to the PC E-filing System. Solicitors employed by the Law Society and statutory boards are now able to apply for practising certificates using the PC E-filing System. Solicitors may now attach their accountant's report electronically in the Portable Document Format (PDF) as opposed to having to submit the original accountant's report to the Registrar.

3 To standardise the mode of payment, solicitors applying for practising certificates using the PC E-filing System must now only use Interbank GIRO for payment.

4 This practice direction will come into effect on 1 March 2003.

5 This practice direction should be included in *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (1997 Ed.)* immediately before the first page of the table of contents. Instructions for effecting the amendments to *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (1997 Ed.)* are contained in the Appendix hereto.

Dated this 7<sup>th</sup> day of February 2003.

  
FOO CHEE HOCK  
DEPUTY REGISTRAR  
SUPREME COURT

## **APPENDIX**

Remove pages 101A to 101G and replace with the pages attached (new pages 101A to 101F).

## PART XII

### GENERAL MATTERS

#### **89A. Electronic applications for practising certificates**

##### **(1) Scope of electronic applications**

- (a) Notwithstanding anything in paragraph 89(1), applications for practising certificates for the practice year ending 31 March 2001 and for subsequent practice years may be made electronically using the Internet-based application system (hereinafter referred to as the “PC E-filing System”) which may be accessed at the Supreme Court website ([www.supcourt.gov.sg](http://www.supcourt.gov.sg)).
- (b) In accordance with rule 3 of the Legal Profession (Practising Certificate) Rules, an application via the PC E-filing System cannot be made earlier than the month preceding the commencement of the practice year in respect of which the application is being made.

##### **(2) Prerequisites for electronic applications**

Before a solicitor (“the applicant”) may apply for his practising certificate using the PC E-filing System, the following prerequisites must be satisfied:

- (a) the applicant must be on the Roll of Advocates and Solicitors and must have a valid Advocate and Solicitor Admission Number (“AAS Number”);
- (b) the applicant must have a valid Personal Identification Number (“PIN”);
- (c) the applicant must have an Internet E-mail account;
- (d) the computer through which the applicant is making his electronic application must be

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- (i) a Pentium personal computer with a minimum of 20 MB hard disk space, 133 MHz, 16 MB RAM or above,
  - (ii) connected to or fitted with a modem of 28.8 kbps or above,
  - (iii) operating on Windows 95 or above,
  - (iv) have access to the Internet,
  - (v) installed with Netscape Navigator 4.0 or Internet Explorer 4.0 and above, with JavaScript enabled,
- (e) payment shall be made through Interbank GIRO. As such, the applicant must possess an approved Law Firm Code as stated in the Supreme Court's Direct Debit Authorisation Form;
- (f) the applicant must not have a pending practising certificate application in respect of the practice year for which his electronic application is being made;
- (g) the Law Society must have confirmed via the PC E-filing System that the applicant
- (i) is not disqualified by section 50(2) of the Act from applying for a practising certificate,
  - (ii) has satisfied section 25(1)(b) of the Act, and
  - (iii) is required to file an accountant's report for the whole or certain specified periods of the practice year preceding that for which the application is being made ("the preceding practice year"), or need not file an accountant's report for the preceding practice year or the most recent practice year for which the applicant held a practising certificate; and
- (h) the Singapore Academy of Law must have confirmed via the PC E-filing System that the applicant has complied with section 25(1)(c) of the Act.

(3) **Personal Identification Numbers (PINs)**

- (a) The PIN referred to in sub-paragraph (2)(b) is to be collected from the Practising Certificate Counter of the Registry (“the PC Counter”) either by the applicant in person, or by a duly authorised agent on his behalf.
- (b) For electronic applications in respect of each practice year, PINs may be collected from the PC Counter with effect from a date which will be notified by the Registry in writing.
- (c) When collecting the PIN in person, the applicant should produce his NRIC to the PC Counter for verification of his identification before collecting the PIN. He must also inform the PC Counter of his AAS Number.
- (d) Where the applicant appoints an agent to collect his PIN on his behalf, he must furnish the agent with a letter of authority signed under his own hand on the letterhead of the law firm in which he is working. The letter of authority must state the applicant’s name, NRIC Number or Foreign Identification Number (“FIN”) and AAS Number as well as his agent’s name and NRIC Number. In addition, the agent must produce his own NRIC to the PC Counter for verification of his identification before collecting the applicant’s PIN.
- (e) The applicant should not use his PIN to apply for a practising certificate electronically earlier than 1 working day after its issuance. The PIN will expire 3 months after the date of its issuance.
- (f) In the event that the applicant’s PIN expires before he has applied for his practising certificate electronically, he should collect a new PIN from the PC Counter. The procedure for collection of the original PIN will apply.

(g) Should the applicant misplace or no longer require his PIN, he should request the PC Counter by way of letter to revoke his PIN. The letter must state the applicant's name, NRIC Number or FIN, and AAS Number. In the case where the applicant has misplaced his PIN, he may include in his letter a request for a new PIN to be generated.

(4) **Application procedures**

(a) To apply for a practising certificate using the PC E-filing System, the applicant must first log-in to the System by entering his AAS Number and PIN in the user log-in screen.

(b) If the applicant has changed his name or sex since the date of his last application for a practising certificate, he must provide a paper copy of the relevant supporting documents to the Registrar, for the attention of the PC Counter, within 7 working days from the date of submission of his electronic application.

(c) If the applicant is required to furnish an accountant's report for part or the whole of the preceding practice year, he must provide particulars of the accountant's report(s) for the relevant period(s) on an electronic template which will be displayed on the computer screen. He may then attach the accountant's report in the Portable Document Format (PDF) or submit the original accountant's report(s) to the Registrar, for the attention of the PC Counter, within 7 working days from the date of submission of his electronic application.

(d) Where sub-paragraphs (4)(b) and/or (c) apply, and in any other case where supporting documents are required to be submitted to the Registrar, the applicant must submit together with the supporting documents a covering letter addressed to the Registrar stating his name, NRIC Number or FIN, and AAS Number. The supporting documents must likewise be marked with these particulars.

- (e) Should any of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(h) and (i), which information is to be entered into the PC E-filing System by the Law Society and the Singapore Academy of Law respectively, be lacking, the applicant will not be able to proceed with his electronic application. In this event, he should request the relevant body to provide the information required.
- (f) Once the applicant has completed the electronic application form, he should submit it via the PC E-filing System before logging out from the System. He may not save the electronic form and submit it on a separate occasion.

(5) **Acknowledgement of receipt of electronic applications**

Once the applicant has submitted his electronic application form via the PC E-filing System, and he has entered his Law Firm Code for payment via Interbank GIRO, the applicant will be notified of the receipt of his application by means of a message to this effect. The message will be displayed on the computer screen as well as sent to the Internet E-mail address provided in the applicant's electronic application form.

(6) **Notification of outcome of electronic applications**

- (a) The applicant will be informed of the outcome of his electronic application for a practising certificate by means of a message sent to the Internet E-mail address referred to in sub-paragraph (5).
- (b) If the applicant's application is approved, his practising certificate will be sent to him together with the notification of approval. The practising certificate will be in the Portable Document Format (PDF), and no manual signature will be required on it. The applicant may, if he so wishes, obtain a signed and sealed copy of his practising certificate from PC Counter upon request. Such request must be made by way of a praecipe stating the applicant's name, NRIC Number or FIN, and AAS Number.

- (c) If the applicant's application is rejected, the rejected electronic application form will likewise be sent to him together with the notification of rejection. The applicant may either
  - (i) print out the rejected electronic form, rectify the defects in his application, and re-submit a paper copy of the form together with any supporting documents which may be needed to the PC Counter. No additional fee is payable; or
  - (ii) submit a new electronic application for a practising certificate, in which case he shall be liable to pay the application fee afresh.
- (7) **Enquiry on status of electronic applications**
  - (a) Pending notification of the outcome of his electronic application for a practising certificate, an applicant may enquire as to the status of his application.
  - (b) To do so, the applicant must first log-in to the PC E-filing System by the procedure described in sub-paragraph (4)(a) and enter the System. The System will then display the status of the applicant's latest electronic application for a practising certificate for that practice year.

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