

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

**PRACTICE DIRECTION NO. 4 OF 2008**

**PRACTISING CERTIFICATE ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM**

*Applications for practising certificates*

1 Subject to section 26 of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed), section 25 of the Act requires all practising solicitors, before any act is done in the capacity of an advocate and solicitor, to have in force a valid Practising Certificate issued by the Registrar. With effect from 23 October 2006, unless directed otherwise, all applications for practising certificates shall be made only through the practising certificate electronic filing system (“PC E-filing System”).

*Notification of changes in particulars*

2 Section 27(3) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) requires solicitors to notify the Registrar and the Council of the Law Society of any changes in particulars submitted in the course of applying for a practising certificate or with respect to the status of his practising certificate. With effect from 15 October 2008, this notification shall be made only through the PC E-filing System.

3 The Registrar may exercise his discretion to issue another practising certificate to a solicitor after receiving notification of any changes in particulars. If the Registrar subsequently issues another practising certificate, section 26(9)(c) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) provides that the previous practising certificate shall cease to be in force.

*Application for practising certificates by registered solicitors*

4 Paragraph 134(2) of *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (2007 Ed)* sets out the prerequisites that must be satisfied before a solicitor may apply for his practising certificate using the PC E-filing System. This practice direction amends paragraph 134(2) to allow solicitors registered under section 130N of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) to apply for practising certificates. Essentially, the amendments are:

- (a) The Attorney-General must have confirmed via the PC E-filing System that the solicitor has been issued a certificate of registration under rule 28 of the Legal Profession (International Services) Rules 2008 and has delivered to the Attorney-General such accountant's report as may be required under section 73 of the Act as modified by the Legal Profession (Modified Application of Act for International Services) Rules 2008; and
- (b) The requirement in paragraph 134(2)(g)(iii) pertaining to an accountant's report shall not apply where the applicant has, in the previous calendar year, practised exclusively in a Joint Law Venture or its constituent foreign law practice, a Qualifying Foreign Law Practice or a licensed foreign law practice.

5 Paragraph 134(3) of *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (2007 Ed)* sets out the application procedures for using the PC E-filing System. This practice direction amends paragraph 134(3) to reflect that:

- (a) If the applicant is required to furnish an accountant's report to the Registrar for part or the whole of the preceding year, he may either attach an electronic copy of the accountant's report in the portable document format (PDF) on the electronic template of the PC E-filing System, or submit the original accountant's report to the Registrar within 7 working days from the date of submission of his electronic application, with a cover letter stating his name and AAS Number.

- (b) All applicants who are required to furnish accountant's report(s) (whether to the Attorney-General, the Registrar or the Council of the Law Society) shall provide particulars of the accountant's report(s) for the relevant period(s) on the electronic template of the PC E-filing System.

6 This practice direction will take effect on 15 October 2008.

7 This practice direction should be included in *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (2007 Ed)* immediately before the first page of the table of contents. Instructions for effecting the amendments to *The Supreme Court Practice Directions (2007 Ed)* are contained in the Appendix hereto.

Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October 2008



FOO CHEE HOCK  
ACTING REGISTRAR  
SUPREME COURT

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**132. “Part-call” applications pursuant to section 32(2) of the Legal Profession Act**

Section 32(3) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) allows “part-call” applications to be brought in respect of pupils who have completed not less than 4 months of pupillage. A “part-call” application must be brought by way of a summons, supported by an affidavit, to be served on the Attorney-General, the Law Society and the Board of Legal Education. The attendance of representatives of the Attorney-General, the Law Society and the Board of Legal Education at the hearing of a “part-call” application is not required, unless there are any objections to the application or if the Court directs otherwise.

**133. Practising Certificate Electronic Filing System**

- (1) Subject to section 26 of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed), section 25 of the Act requires all practising solicitors, before any act is done in the capacity of an advocate and solicitor, to have in force a valid Practising Certificate issued by the Registrar. With effect from 23 October 2006, unless directed otherwise, all applications for practising certificates shall be made only through the practising certificate electronic filing system according to the directions in paragraph 134.
- (2) Section 27(3) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) requires solicitors to notify the Registrar and the Council of the Law Society of any changes in particulars submitted in the course of applying for a practising certificate or with respect to the status of his practising certificate. With effect from 15 October 2008, this notification shall be made only through the practising certificate electronic filing system.
- (3) The Registrar may exercise his discretion to issue another practising certificate to a solicitor after receiving notification of any changes in particulars. If the Registrar subsequently issues another practising

certificate, section 26(9)(c) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) provides that the previous practising certificate shall cease to be in force.

**134. Electronic applications for practising certificates**

*When to apply for practising certificate through PC E-filing System*

- (1) In accordance with Rule 3 of the Legal Profession (Practising Certificate) Rules (Cap. 161, Rule 6), an application via the practising certificate electronic filing system (hereinafter referred to as 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. The PC E-filing System may be accessed through the Internet at the Supreme Court website (<http://www.supremecourt.gov.sg>). Solicitors who do not have access to the Internet may use the computers located at the Legal Registry of the Supreme Court (second level) during the opening hours of the Legal Registry.

*Prerequisites for electronic applications*

- (2) 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 NRIC number or FIN number;
  - (c) the applicant must have an Internet E-mail account;
  - (d) the computer through which the applicant is making his electronic application must be:
    - (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 or BillCollect. In respect of payment by Interbank GIRO, the applicant must possess, in the case of a Singapore law practice, an approved Law Firm Code, or in the case of a foreign law practice, a licence number issued by the Attorney-General's Chambers, which must be stated in the Supreme Court's Debit Authorisation Form;
- (f) the applicant must not have a pending 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 Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed) from applying for a practising certificate;
  - (ii) has satisfied section 25(1)(b) of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev Ed); and
  - (iii) either is not required to file an accountant's report or has specified the period(s) for which an accountant's report has been furnished. This requirement shall not apply where the applicant has, in the previous calendar year, practised exclusively in a Joint Law Venture or its constituent foreign law practice, a Qualifying Foreign Law Practice or a licensed foreign law practice;
- (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 Legal Profession Act; and
- (i) in the case of a solicitor registered by the Attorney-General under section 130N of the Legal Profession Act (Cap. 161, 2001 Rev

Ed), the Attorney-General must have confirmed via the PC E-filing System that the applicant has been issued a certificate of registration under rule 28 of the Legal Profession (International Services) Rules 2008 and has delivered to the Attorney-General such accountant's report as may be required under section 73 of the Act as modified by the Legal Profession (Modified Application of Act for International Services) Rules 2008.

*Application procedures*

- (3) This sub-paragraph sets out the 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, NRIC or FIN number and date of birth in the user log-in screen.
  - (b) If the applicant has changed his name or gender 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 Legal Registry of the Supreme Court, 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 to the Registrar, he may either attach an electronic copy of the accountant's report in the portable document format (PDF) on the electronic template of the PC E-filing System, or submit the original accountant's report to the Registrar within 7 working days from the date of submission of his electronic application, with a cover letter stating his name and AAS Number.
  - (ca) All applicants who are required to furnish accountant's report(s) (whether to the Attorney-General, the Registrar or the Council of the Law Society) shall provide particulars of the accountant's report(s) for the relevant period(s) on the electronic template of the PC E-filing System.

- (d) Where sub-paragraphs (3)(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 or FIN number, and AAS Number. Any supporting documents must likewise be marked with these particulars.
- (e) Should any of the confirmations required by the Law Society, the Singapore Academy of Law and the Attorney-General respectively under paragraphs (2)(g), (h) and (i) 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.

*Acknowledgement of receipt of electronic applications*

- (4) 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 submitted in the applicant's electronic application form.

*Notification of outcome of electronic applications*

- (5) This sub-paragraph sets out the manner of 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 (4).
- (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 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 the Legal Registry upon request. Such a request must be made by way of a request stating the applicant's name, NRIC or FIN number, 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 submit a new electronic application.

*Enquiry on status of electronic applications*

- (6) Pending notification of the outcome of his electronic application for a practising certificate, an applicant may enquire as to the status of his application. To do so, the applicant must first log-in to the PC E-filing System by the procedure described in sub-paragraph (3) above 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.