

IN THE STATE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 5 OF 2020

**INFORMATION ON MEASURES AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING TO COVID-19
(CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019) FOR COURT USERS AND VISITORS TO THE STATE
COURTS**

To reduce the local transmission of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), comprehensive measures, such as safe distancing measures, have been put in place in the State Courts. Information on these measures and other applicable restrictions is available on the State Courts website at <https://www.statecourts.gov.sg>. The information will be updated from time to time. All court users and visitors to the State Courts are advised to refer to the State Courts website for the latest information.

2 The Honourable the Chief Justice has directed that the use of electronic means of communication to conduct hearings be enhanced. This is to ensure that court services and hearings remain available and uninterrupted as far as possible while reducing the level of person-to-person contact.

3 With immediate effect until further notice, selected hearings in the State Courts will be conducted by video conferencing or where appropriate, telephone conferencing. Litigants in person are strongly encouraged to use video conferencing or telephone conferencing, where available. Details on the use of video conferencing and telephone conferencing for the different types of hearings in the State Courts are set out in the **Schedule**.

4 A guide on the use of video conferencing and telephone conferencing to attend hearings can be found on the State Courts website. Unauthorised audio or visual recording of hearings is strictly prohibited and in appropriate cases, the Court may require an undertaking that no such recording will be made. Attention is drawn to section 5 of the Administration of Justice (Protection) Act 2016 (Act No. 19 of 2016) regarding contempt of court by unauthorised recordings. Where hearings are conducted by video conferencing, all court rules and practices on dress and etiquette will continue to apply. However, it will not be necessary to stand and/or bow to the Court at the start or end of the hearing or to stand when addressing the Court, when otherwise required to do so for physical attendance.

5 With effect from 1 April 2020 until further notice, where the Court determines that physical attendance before the Court is appropriate, no more than two lawyers/litigants per party may appear at the hearing. Practice trainees, interns, legal executives and other assistants should not be in attendance. If a party requires additional attendees, it should write in to the Court on its request for an exemption for the named additional attendees, no later than one working day before the hearing date. The Court may, in its discretion, grant an exemption to allow the named additional attendees to attend physically and/or by video conferencing.

6 The cooperation of all court users and visitors to the State Courts is essential for the successful implementation of these measures to safeguard the well-being of all court users and visitors.

Dated this 27th day of March 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jm', is positioned above the printed name.

JENNIFER MARIE
REGISTRAR
STATE COURTS

SCHEDULE

1. This Schedule sets out the types of hearings which may be conducted by video conferencing ("V-C") or telephone conferencing ("TC"). All references in this Schedule to V-C will include TC, which may be used in appropriate circumstances.
2. Notwithstanding what is provided for below, the Court retains full discretion to decide:
 - (a) whether to conduct any hearing by V-C; and
 - (b) whether to conduct any hearing with one or more parties attending by V-C and any other party attending physically in Court.
3. Notwithstanding what is provided for below, all hearings for cases which are to be in camera or which are subject to a sealing order will not be conducted by V-C.

For all hearings which may be conducted using V-C, litigants-in-person (non-criminal matters) are strongly encouraged to use V-C but may inform the Court if they do not wish to do so.

A. Hearings before the Criminal Justice Division

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Pre-Trial Conference	<p>V-C to be the default option for prosecutors and remanded accused persons unless otherwise directed</p> <p>Legally-represented accused persons need not attend if their counsel is already in attendance</p> <p>Online application in the Integrated Case Management System ("ICMS") to be used for adjournments</p>
Mention hearing (other than Plead Guilty mention)	<p>V-C to be the default option for remanded accused persons unless otherwise directed</p> <p>Legally-represented accused persons need not attend if their counsel is already in attendance</p> <p>Online application in ICMS to be used for adjournments</p>
Plead Guilty mention	<p>V-C to be the default option for remanded accused persons unless otherwise directed</p> <p>Online application in ICMS to be used for adjournments</p>
Application for extension / variation of instalment plan for fines	<p>Online application in ICMS or electronic FormSG to be used as the default option</p>
Chamber Magistrate hearing	<p>V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed</p>
Reporting of seizure of property to the Magistrate under s 370 of the CPC	<p>Contested: V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed</p> <p>Uncontested: Online application in ICMS to be used</p>
Coroner's Court hearing	<p>Email to be used as the default option for In-Person Pre-Inquiry Reviews unless otherwise directed</p> <p>V-C to be the default option for daily body viewings and for hearings not involving witnesses unless otherwise directed</p>

B. Hearings before the State Courts' Centre for Dispute Resolution

(Where either or both parties are litigants-in-person, their consent will be obtained before V-C is used)

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Pre-trial Conference	Email to be the default option unless otherwise directed
Status Conference for mediation	
Mediation	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed
Drivers-to-Attend "mini trial" for motor accident cases	
Complex Early Neutral Evaluation	

C. Hearings before the Civil Justice Division

(Where either or both parties are litigants-in-person, their consent will be obtained before V-C is used)

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
<i>Ex-parte</i> Urgent Injunction	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed
<i>Ex-parte</i> Summons other than those currently heard asynchronously on eLitigation	
Taxation	
Pre-Trial Conference	
Case Management Conference	
<i>Inter-partes</i> Summons	
Originating Summons	
Registrar's Appeal	
Civil Trial and other hearings involving examination of witnesses (including assessment of damages)	V-C available where all parties consent

D. Hearings before the Small Claims Tribunal and the Employment Claims Tribunal

(Where either or both parties are litigants-in-person, their consent will be obtained before V-C is used)

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Consultation (Mediation)	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed
Consultation (Direction)	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed TC and/or e-Correspondence to be used where appropriate
Hearing	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed

E. Hearings before the Community Disputes Resolution Tribunals

(Where either or both parties are litigants-in-person, their consent will be obtained before V-C is used)

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Pre-Trial Conference (Mediation)	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed
Pre-Trial Conference (Direction)	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed TC and/or e-Correspondence to be used where appropriate
Hearing	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed

F. Hearings before Duty Judicial Officer, Duty Registrar and Duty Chamber Magistrate

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Attendance before Duty Judicial Officer under Practice Direction 110(1)	<p>To be heard <i>via</i> eLitigation, V-C or TC, unless otherwise directed by the Court</p> <p>Attention is drawn to Practice Directions 110(2) and (3)</p> <p>Please refer to the State Courts website for the applicable workflow</p>
Attendance before Duty Registrar under Practice Direction 111(1)	<p>To be heard <i>via</i> eLitigation, V-C or TC, unless otherwise directed by the Court</p> <p>Attention is drawn to Practice Directions 111(5) and (8)</p> <p>Please refer to the State Courts website for the applicable workflow</p>
Attendance before Duty Chamber Magistrate	<p>All complaints filed by individuals before the Duty Chamber Magistrate in the Community Justice & Tribunals Division are to be filed online, and attendance in person for examination before the Duty Chamber Magistrate will be by appointment, unless otherwise directed by the Court</p> <p>Attention is drawn to Practice Direction 111(2)</p> <p>Please refer to the State Courts website for the applicable workflow</p>

G. Hearings before the District Court for matters under the Protection from Harassment Act

(Where either or both parties are litigants-in-person, their consent will be obtained before V-C is used)

Type of Hearing	Mode of Hearing
Expedited Protection Order	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed
Pre-Trial Conference (Directions)	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed TC and/or e-Correspondence to be used where appropriate
Hearing	V-C to be the default option unless otherwise directed