



NOTIFICATION

The Hon'ble Administrative Committee took into account the past functioning of the High Court during the entire pandemic period, and in view of all other Governmental Institutions as well as other Public Institutions having reopened, subject to the COVID-19 norms as prescribed, has considered the opening up of Courts in physical form in the wake of the effect of the pandemic subsiding, and has decided that the High Court (both Principal Seat and Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai) shall proceed now to function somewhat more than at present, allowing physical hearing with an option of virtual/hybrid mode of hearing to the Lawyers, following the Standard Operating Procedures in Annexure **w.e.f. 08.02.2021**, subject to the following:-

1. To begin with, hearing in physical form will commence on **8th February, 2021**, only in respect of matters at the final hearing stage. To the extent practicable, final hearing matters relating to Writ and Criminal side will be posted in the pre-lunch session and the cases relating to Appellate side and Original side will be posted in the post-lunch session before the relevant Benches and time slots for a set of five to ten matters per hour, or per thirty minutes will be indicated, as directed by the relevant Bench.
2. For the moment, matters other than final hearing cases, including motions and bail applications, will be heard on the Hybrid mode;

i.e., Advocates representing the State or the Union or PSUs or Government Bodies may appear in physical form, but other parties will be represented on the virtual platform. Exceptions may, however, be made with the prior permission of the relevant Bench; but appearance in physical form in non-final hearing matters will be the exception, and not the rule.

3. In order to ensure that there is no overcrowding in the Registry/Sections, not more than five Advocates / Advocate Clerks are permitted to be present inside the concerned Sections at any given point of time.
4. The entry of Advocates / Party-in-Person / Advocate Clerks will be upon strict adherence to the COVID-19 protocols and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), annexed herewith.
5. For each case, which is being heard, not more than two Advocates for each party, are permitted to enter the Court Complexes and also the Court Hall, subject to maximum of 6 to 10 Advocates depending on the size of the Court Hall.
6. Advocates shall remain in the waiting area, (earmarked by the Registry) and as and when their case is called, they can enter the Court Hall and after the arguments are concluded, requested to leave the premises without moving around in the corridors, or in other areas.
7. If the assistance of the Advocate Clerks is required by the Advocates, to assist them in bringing case papers and heavy files, they are permitted to enter into the Court Halls only for such purpose and leave the premises thereafter.
8. Filing and its related works, both in the Principal seat and at Madurai Bench, which were in existence prior to COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, are permitted w.e.f. 08.02.2021. Distancing norms must, however, be strictly followed.

9. Lawyers' Chambers will be opened only for the purpose of cleaning and sanitization, and closed immediately thereafter. A decision will be taken to reopen them in the last week of February, 2021. However, even then, not more than 50% of the seating capacity should be present in any Chamber at any given point of time, and social distancing and other COVID-19 norms have to be strictly followed.

10. The Advocates canteen is permitted to function with limited menu following the COVID-19 protocols, which have been notified by the Government to be followed by hotels, restaurants and other eating places.

HIGH COURT, MADRAS

DATED: 03.02.2021

Sd./-C.KUMARAPPAN
REGISTRAR GENERAL

ANNEXURE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR ADVOCATES FOR THE PHYSICAL HEARING OF HIGH COURT

1. Entry of the Advocates will be through all the gates but will be subjected to usual frisking.
2. Cars/Two wheelers shall be parked at the MBA/MHAA/Family Court parking slots as allotted prior to COVID-19 Pandemic.
3. Advocates/Party-in-person whose cases are listed shall fill up the requisite form, which will be provided at the entry point.
4. Advocates / Party-in-Persons / Advocate Clerks shall wash their hands in the wash basin/sanitize the hands provided at the entry point.
5. Advocates / Party-in-Persons / Advocate Clerks shall undergo thermal scanning / thermal check.
6. Only the Learned Counsel on record for each party / Counsel authorized by him, Senior Counsel engaged by Advocates, registered clerk for carrying heavy case files of the Learned Counsel on record / Senior Counsel and Party- in-Person will be permitted for attending physical hearing.
7. Law clerks, Interns or Law Students associated with the Advocates concerned will not be permitted.

8. Litigants, non-registered clerks, relative of any Party-in-Person will not be permitted entry.
9. Advocates / Party-in-Persons / Advocate Clerks shall wear mask at all times, adhere to the norm of social distancing and shall also adhere to all the directions / guidelines / SOPs / advisories issued by the Government of India in respect of COVID-19 Pandemic.
10. Entry into Court Halls will be permitted to those Advocates / Party-in-Person whose case is called out for hearing and also for the Advocates / Party-in-Person whose case is the immediate next subject to the availability of seat and other Advocates/Party-in-person shall sit in the waiting area till their cases are called.
11. Display Boards will be functional for the Advocates' convenience and information.
12. Advocates shall not go to Law Chambers and Association rooms without prior permission from the Registry as per the Notification issued earlier.
13. The Advocates / Bar Association's Library will remain closed until further orders.
14. Staff Canteen will be kept open on all working days.

15. Ambulance with complete medical infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 Emergencies will be stationed during working hours in the High Court campus. The High Court Dispensary, Siddha and Naturopathy Clinic will function on all working days inside the High Court premises (Ambulance – 9445211399).

16. In all the Sections, a Help Desk arrangement is made to assist the Advocates / Party-in-Persons / Advocate Clerks and they are requested to take their assistance.

17. The Cause-List will contain the details regarding the Courts which shall take up matters through physical hearing mode and also the details regarding the functioning of courts through Video Conferencing.

HIGH COURT, MADRAS
DATED: 03.02.2021

Sd./-C.KUMARAPPAN
REGISTRAR GENERAL