

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR RESUMPTION OF
PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI W.E.F. 01.09.2020**

(A) Regulations relating to entry in the court blocks for attending physical hearings and VC Court Rooms for VC Hearings

- 1) Entry into the court block, for the purposes of attending physical hearings and VC hearings shall stand restricted to:-
 - Only one Advocate per party whose vakalatnama is on record or who has been duly authorized by such Advocate to appear and whose case is listed for hearing that day.
 - Senior Counsel engaged by any such Advocate.
 - Registered Clerk only for the limited purpose of delivering heavy and bulky case files of such Advocates at the designated point. Such Clerk shall leave the court block and shall enter again only to recollect the same.
 - Standing/Nominated counsel for any of the party/entity whose cases are listed for physical hearing that day.
 - Party-in-person where such party is pursuing the case himself/herself without any legal assistance.

- 2) No entry in the court blocks shall be permitted to: -
 - Juniors, Interns or law students associated with the Advocate concerned
 - Relative of any party-in-person/litigant
 - Non-registered clerks

- 3) No litigant, who is represented by any Advocate, would be permitted entry unless there is specific direction by the Hon'ble Court.

- 4) The Advocates, Party-in-person and registered clerks above the age of 65 years and those suffering from co-morbidities may refrain from appearing in courts.

- 5) Persons displaying symptoms of flu, fever, cough etc. shall not be permitted entry inside the court complex.

- 6) Following mandatory norms are to be followed by all concerned who are permitted to enter the court building/court room: -
 - Wearing of mask all times.
 - Undergoing thermal scanning at the designated entry points and random checking inside the court blocks.

- Sanitizing the hands before/at the time of entry.
- Strict adherence to the norm of social distancing within the court-complex.
- Social/ physical distancing by maintaining a minimum distance of six feet.
- Adherence to all the directions/ guidelines/ SOPs/ advisories issued by the Government of India and the Govt. of NCT of Delhi in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

(B) Court Blocks for Physical Hearing

- 1) Physical courts shall function from all the three blocks i.e. Block-A (Main Block), Block-B (Extension Block) & Block-C (New Block).
- 2) The cause list shall specify in advance the Courts which shall take up matters through physical hearing mode and those which shall function through videoconferencing.
- 3) Entry inside the court blocks shall be permitted from the designated entry points.
- 4) IT Branch is developing e-solution of sending QR code to the concerned Advocate/litigant through SMS/email so that they are permitted physical access on given day through scanning of such QR Code. Till the time such e-solution is developed, copy of the cause list shall be available at the designated counter near the entry point of the particular court block. The designated court-staff shall note the name and mobile number of the concerned Advocate/litigant/Registered Clerk against the relevant item number(s) of the cause list. Once entry is permitted to any Advocate for any such case, no other Advocate, for the same case and for the same party, shall be permitted to enter inside the court block. Strict instructions have been issued to security personnel for compliance thereof. Advocates are requested to co-operate in this regard.
- 5) DHCBA shall render due assistance in this regard by deputing Advocate(s) on rotational basis to facilitate smooth and better management.
- 6) As far as possible, use of lift be avoided for going upto first floor. Lift Operator has been directed to permit entry of maximum three persons at a time.
- 7) Once the matter is over, learned Advocate/party-in-person shall immediately leave from the designated exit point.

(C) Time-slot/Staggered Entry

- 1) Entry time to any court block shall be regulated as per the time slots mentioned in the cause list for different batches of cases. Each batch shall consist of 10 cases. No person shall be permitted entry inside the court blocks before the designated time-slot as per the cause list.
- 2) Entry shall be restricted and regulated in the following manner: -
 - The entry of the first batch to the particular floor in the court blocks where physical hearing is to take place shall begin at 10.00 am.
 - The second batch shall be permitted entry to a designated waiting space inside each Court-block at 11.15am. This batch will be called for entry to the particular floor in the court blocks where physical hearing is to take place at the given time slot of 11.30 am or later if the cases of the first batch are still in progress.
 - The third batch shall be permitted entry to a designated waiting space inside each court block at 12.15pm. This batch will be called for entry to the particular floor in the court blocks where physical hearing is to take place at the given time slot of 12.30pm or later if the cases of the earlier batch are still in progress.
 - There would be a break between hearing of each batch of cases in order to facilitate the sanitization of the courtrooms and other areas.

(D) Arrangements Inside the Courtroom

- 1) In order to ensure strict adherence to the norm of social distancing, seats in each courtroom have been limited to bare minimum.
- 2) Entry in the court-room shall be permitted to those Advocates/ party-in-person whose matter is called out for hearing and also for the Advocates whose item is the immediate next, subject to availability of space.
- 3) Rest of the Advocates shall wait outside the courtroom in the designated area for their turn, while maintaining social distancing norm.
- 4) The display boards shall be functional for their convenience and information.
- 5) Ordinarily, no request for pass over shall be entertained to ensure adherence to time slots, effectively regulating the entry and orderly conduct of cases.

(E) Other Facilities

- 1) Dry snacks, coffee, tea, water bottle etc. shall be available for sale from the kiosk and canteen. No sitting or the consumption of the dry snacks and beverages etc. shall be permitted inside the canteen.
- 2) Lawyers Chambers shall remain open as per the staggered timings proposed by DHCBA and as approved by the High Court.
- 3) The Library, Bar Associations Halls, common rooms, canteens (except for take-away) shall remain closed until further orders.
- 4) Oath Commissioner and typists shall be permitted to sit at the designated places on rotational basis.
- 5) Court-fee Counter and Scanning facility shall be available and manned by requisite number of officials on a rotational basis.
- 6) Visit to the Branches for making enquiries shall not be permitted.
- 7) All enquiries shall be made at the Facilitation Centre.

(F) System of Mentioning

- 1) The existing system of mentioning of urgent matters through the designated link shall be continued till further orders.
- 2) All the urgent matters be filed through online e-filing module only. Reasons for urgency be very clearly specified.
- 3) All filing shall be accompanied with the proof of payment of requisite court fee as well as the affidavit duly attested by the Oath Commissioner. In e-filing module, scanned copy of the receipt of court fee/attested affidavit shall be uploaded.
- 4) Registry shall ensure that the court fee, obtained online by the concerned Advocate/party, is duly cancelled/locked after verification.
- 5) At the time of e-filing, the concerned Advocate shall clearly mention in the prescribed slot whether such Advocate desires the matter to be heard through videoconferencing or through physical mode. However, the matter shall be listed as per the earliest available slot of roster Bench concerned, depending on the option so provided.

- 6) Urgent cases shall be listed before the Hon'ble Court as per Rules and after removal of objections. However, the listing before the Court shall be subject to administrative exigency.
- 7) Non-urgent matters shall be permitted to be filed in physical mode / hard copy also. However, such cases shall be taken up for scrutiny / processing after 72 hours of filing.

(G)Matters to be taken up by the Hon'ble Courts

- 1) All the Hon'ble Courts, whether conducting proceedings through physical mode or through videoconferencing, shall take up following matters as per the roster: -
 - a. Urgent matters
 - b. Non-urgent matters filed during the lock-down. The number of such cases shall be, however, restricted from 3 to 5 before each Hon'ble Bench.
 - c. Regular matters where the consent for final hearing has been received from both the sides.
- 2) The cause-list for the Hon'ble courts conducting proceedings through physical mode shall not ordinarily exceed 25 cases. In case, the number of the matters exceeds, the preference shall be given to urgent cases and the remaining matters shall be adjourned as per the directions of the Hon'ble court.
- 3) The building shall be handed over to the House Keeping staff for deep cleaning and complete sanitization by 3 pm on every working day.
- 4) On the basis of *advance joint- information* received from the Advocates of any particular case, the matter fixed for physical hearing for a particular date may be taken through videoconferencing on any subsequent day as per the directions of the Hon'ble Court. Similarly, on the basis of *advance joint- information* received from the Advocates of any particular case, the matter fixed for Virtual hearing may be taken up through physical mode on any subsequent day as per the directions of the Hon'ble Court. Such *advance joint-information* be entered on the prescribed proforma, scanned and emailed five working days prior to the date of listing to designated email IDs or physical copy thereof be filed at the filing counter.

(H) General Regulations

- 1) Vehicular entry and pedestrian entry would be permitted only from Gate No. 7. The exit of the vehicles would be permitted from Gate No.5 only.
- 2) Advocate/Registered Clerk/Party-in-person shall be permitted access to the Filing Counter for filing of cases and for removal of objections.
- 3) Advocates shall be permitted entry for using videoconferencing facility created at the ground floor of the Main Building (A Block).
- 4) The litigants, wherever necessary, shall be permitted entry to meet their respective lawyers in the Lawyers' Chamber Blocks as per the timings fixed by DHCBA. Such visit shall be strictly as per the approved timings.
- 5) Oath commissioners/ typists / stamp vendors/ etc. shall be permitted entry in the Court complex as per roster.
- 6) Medical Facilities in the form of an additional Ambulance with complete infrastructure to tackle Covid-19 emergencies shall be stationed during working hours in the High Court. There shall be an earmarked room in the High Court dispensary designated as Covid-19 *Isolation Room*, to be used, as and when an infected person or a person reflecting Covid-19 symptoms is found. The infected/symptomatic person shall be immediately shifted to the *Isolation Room* till he/she is taken to the hospital, after which the *Isolation Room* shall be sanitized. The High Court dispensary shall depute extra medical and para-medical staff and enhance infrastructure as required.

BY ORDERS

Sd/-

(MANOJ JAIN)

Registrar General