



In the Supreme Court of Bermuda

A/50

23 March 2020

CIRCULAR NO. 6 OF 2020

TO ALL ATTORNEYS

RE: UPDATED COVID-19 PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

This Practice Direction is issued further to Circular 04 of 2020.

In an effort to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the Members of the Public who interface with the Courts of Bermuda, as well as Court staff, on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 the Court implemented a number of precautionary measures, the purpose of which was to **REDUCE** the Court's operations and direct interactions between staff and members of the public.

The health, safety and welfare of the Members of the Public, as well as Court Administrative Staff is our paramount concern.

Given the most recent update provided by the Bermuda Government on Sunday, 22 March 2020 and the confirmation of additional COVID-19 positive cases in Bermuda, it is imperative that the Court implement **ADDITIONAL** precautionary measures. This is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the all members of public as well as the Court staff who are essential in providing Bermuda with access to the Courts on a daily basis.

It should be noted that both the Magistrates' Court and the Supreme Court of Bermuda **are in operation**, but reduced services and limited access is being implemented. As a result of the precautionary measures implemented on Tuesday, 17 March 2020 the Judiciary has successfully reduced the number of matters where persons are required to attend Court thus limiting the interactions between the public and staff. Notwithstanding this, please note the following:

MAGISTRATES' COURT

- (1) With effect from **Tuesday, 24 March 2020** all matters currently scheduled before the Magistrates' Court shall be adjourned administratively to a date to be fixed. The parties **are not** required to attend the Magistrates' Court, and will be contacted in due course concerning the date they are required to attend for the matter to be heard.
- (2) The Magistrates' Court will be closed to all filings until **Monday, 6 April 2020**. The public access windows will also be closed.
- (3) The Cashiers Desk will be closed until **Monday, 6 April 2020**.

- (4) If an application is considered **urgent or time sensitive**, the parties **MUST** contact the Court by email **immediately** using the table below and explain the urgency of the matter so that this may be taken into consideration. The Court will make every effort to list any application that is considered urgent or time sensitive.

MAGISTRATES COURT EMERGENCY CONTACT	
DIVISION	EMAIL
CIVIL	civil@gov.bm
CRIMINAL	records@gov.bm
FAMILY	childsupport@gov.bm
BAILIFF	ctterry@gov.bm

- (5) New applications which have previously been filed that have yet to be provided with first return dates will issued, but will not be provided a date prior to 1 July 2020.

SUPREME COURT

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

- (6) All hearings listed before the Supreme Court during the period 23 March 2020 – 3 April 2020 shall be adjourned administratively to a date to be fixed. The parties are **not** required to attend the Supreme Court, and will be contacted in due course concerning a date for the hearing to be listed.
- (7) The Supreme Court Registries located at the Government Administration Building, 2nd Floor and the Dame Lois Browne Evans Building, 3rd Floor, will be closed until **Monday, 6 April 2020**.
- (8) If an application is considered **urgent or time sensitive**, the parties **MUST** contact the Court by email at supremecourt@gov.bm **immediately** and explain the urgency of the matter so that this may be taken into consideration. The Court will make every effort to list any application that is considered urgent or time sensitive.
- (9) During the period 23 March – 3 April 2020, only new applications that are urgent and/or responses on urgent active applications within the Probate Division may be submitted to supremecourt@gov.bm. You will be advised when original hard copies can be filed.
- (10) We are not accepting the filing of pleadings **via email** unless the parties have been directed to do so by the Judicial Department.
- (11) Searches of all Cause Books are suspended unless the search is urgent. Urgent requests shall be made by email to supremecourt@gov.bm. A full explanation must be provided as to why the search is urgent.
- (12) All Search Praecipes currently filed will not be processed until further notice.

(13) The Courts' delivery service is suspended. If you have queries regarding documents for collection please contact supremecourt@gov.bm.

We will continue to review and monitor the above Precautionary Measures and whether they should be extended and/or expanded, and the public will be advised concerning any changes.

We thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times, and apologise for any inconvenience the above Precautionary Measures may cause.

Dated the 23rd day of March 2020



CC: The Attorney-General's Chambers
Department of Public Prosecutions
Hamilton Police Station
Commissioner of Police
Commissioner of Corrections
Magistrates Court
Bermuda Bar Association
Legal Aid Office

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