



IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BERMUDA

CIRCULAR NOTICE

ISSUED BY THE REGISTRAR

Ref. A/50

31 May 2018

CIRCULAR No. #15 of 2018

REDUCTION OF COURT SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

The purpose of this Circular is to provide Counsel and all other members of the public with notice as to the reduction of the scope of services provided to Bermuda by the Judicial Department ("the Department"). This notice is also further to Circular No. 13 of 2018 in relation to the Probate Division of the Supreme Court.

The reduction of services set out below is a direct result of the Department's relentless staffing crisis. With just a 51% complement of staff (Supreme Court and Magistrates' Court Divisions), the Department is no longer in a position to continue to attempt to provide full services to the public. The expectations of Counsel and members of the public for efficiency and expediency (despite our desire for the Department operate in this manner), simply cannot be met.

Once there is a substantial increase in the numbers of staff within the Department the reduction of services will be revisited at that time. This is an unfortunate position; however, the patience and understanding of Counsel and members of the public is greatly appreciated during this time.

A. SUPREME COURT DIVISION

Opening Hours

1. With effect from 31 May 2018, **all** Supreme Court Registry locations, including the Court of Appeal Registry, will be operate on the following reduced hours:

Mondays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Tuesdays	Regular Business Hours*
Wednesdays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Thursdays	Regular Business Hours*
Fridays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

*8:30 p.m. to 1 p.m.; reopening at 2:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

2. When the Registries close at 1:00 p.m., arrangements should be made to file documents between **8:30 a.m.** and **1:00 p.m.** If there are urgent filings, arrangements may be made to have them accepted between 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. by contacting the Registrar or Assistant Registrar by email at supremecourt@gov.bm.
3. This Direction does not affect cases already set down for hearing during this period.

Return of Pleadings

4. The projected timeframe for which pleadings can be expected to be returned to Counsel is ten business days from the date which the document was filed.
5. As it relates to petitions for divorce, there is a four week expected turn-a-around for return of the documents where no amendments are required. Where documents have been filed incorrectly, the response period will be four to six weeks.

Swearing of Affidavits

6. Commissioners for Oaths will only be available between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. each day.

Search Praecipis

7. In matters where Search Praecipis are being filed by a person or attorney who is not a party to the proceedings or is not Counsel of record, the turn-a-round time will be six weeks from the date of filing until copies can be expected to be provided (where approval has been granted by the Registrar).

B. MAGISTRATES' COURT DIVISION

Opening Hours

1. With effect from 31 May 2018, the Magistrates' Court Reception Desk, the Family Support Office, the Civil and Criminal/Traffic/Records Sections in the Dame Lois Browne Evans Building will operate on the following reduced hours:

Mondays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Tuesdays	Regular Business Hours*
Wednesdays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Thursdays	Regular Business Hours*
Fridays	8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

2. This Direction does not affect cases already set down for hearing during this period.

*8:30 p.m. to 1 p.m.; reopening at 2:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Criminal Record Requests

3. These requests will be processed within ten business days, exclusive of the date of receipt.

Service of Warrants of Arrest and Orders for Committal to Prison

4. When a party is filing either of these applications in Civil proceedings, he or she should be mindful that the estimated current period for which these are served on the Defendant(s) is approximately three months.

Dated this 31st day of May 2018.



A red circular seal of the Supreme Court of Bermuda is stamped over the signature. The seal features a central coat of arms and the text "THE SEAL OF THE SUPREME COURT OF BERMUDA" around the perimeter. A blue ink signature is written across the seal.

**ACTING REGISTRAR
Alexandra Wheatley**

cc: Attorney-General/Minister of Legal Affairs
Director of Public Prosecutions
Bermuda Bar Association
The Solicitor-General
All Barristers and Attorneys
Commissioner of Corrections
Commissioner of Police
Legal Aid