



2. Judges are also **EXHORTED** to be mindful of the hours set for hearing and to start the hearings on time.
3. Pursuant to Republic Act No. 9482<sup>2</sup>, all judges are **REMINDED** to implement appropriate working schedules among their court personnel to enable them to attend to and serve litigants who are within the premises of the court during lunch break, and prior to the end of official working hours. The judges shall adopt a rotation system of personnel and provide a skeleton force to ensure that units dealing directly with the public, such as the receiving, process-serving, and the cashier, are accessible to the public at all times, including lunch and break times.
4. All judges and court personnel shall file the appropriate application for leave in case of their inability to report for work, in accordance with Item IV, Administrative Circular No. 08-2009.<sup>3</sup>

#### **B. Strict Observance of Session Hours<sup>4</sup>**

1. The session hours of all Regional Trial Courts, Metropolitan Trial Courts, Municipal Trial Courts in Cities, Municipal Trial Courts, and Municipal Circuit Trial Courts shall be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 n.n. and from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., from Monday to Friday.
2. The hours in the morning and afternoon shall be devoted to the conduct of trial, unless already done, in which case the afternoon hours shall be utilized for (1) the conduct of pre-trial conferences; (2) writing of decisions, resolutions, or orders; or (3) the continuation of trial on the merits, whenever rendered necessary, as may be required by the Rules of Court, statutes, or circulars in specified cases.
3. Except those requiring immediate action, all motions should be scheduled for hearing on Friday, or if Friday is a non-working day, in the next business day. The unauthorized practice of

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<sup>2</sup> An Act to Improve Efficiency in the Delivery of Government Service to the Public by Reducing Bureaucratic Red Tape, Preventing Graft and Corruption, and Providing Penalties Therefor

<sup>3</sup> Guidelines in cases of Prolonged Absences, Tardiness and Undertime, Filing of Applications for Leave and Availment of the Rehabilitation Privilege, dated 12 January 2007

<sup>4</sup> OCA Circular No. 63-2001 dated 3 October 2001, citing Administrative Circular No. 3-99

some judges of entertaining motions or setting them for hearing on any other day or time must be avoided.

### C. Proper Office Attire and Appearance of Judges and Court Personnel<sup>5</sup>

1. Judges at all times shall be in business attire.
2. Skirts of office uniforms or casual office attire should be at least knee-length (one inch above the knee may be allowed).
3. Appropriate footwear shall mean closed formal shoes; however, mules, sling-back shoes and peep-toe shoes are allowed.
4. The following are prohibited office attire when performing official functions:
  - a) Gauzy, transparent or net-like blouse or shirt;
  - b) Sando, sleeveless, strapless or spaghetti-strapped blouses, tank tops (unless worn as an undershirt), blouses with over-plunging necklines;
  - c) Collarless t-shirts for men;
  - d) Micro-mini skirts, walking shorts, cycling shorts, leggings, tights, jogging pants, pedal pushers;
  - e) Sandals and step-ins exposing the toes; and
  - f) Rubber sandals, slippers, and "bakya."
5. The sporting of long and unkempt hair, as well as wearing of earrings and other body ornaments by male judges and court personnel are not allowed.
6. The Identification Card (I.D.) forms part of the official uniform/appropriate office attire. Thus, it must be worn at all times while on official duty.

### D. Posting of Court Calendar

All judges are **STRICTLY** required to ensure the posting of their court calendars outside their courtrooms at least one (1) day before the scheduled hearings.

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<sup>5</sup> OCA Circular No. 157-2013 dated 2 December 2013

## E. Conduct of Flag Raising and Lowering Ceremonies<sup>6</sup>

1. The flag-raising ceremony shall be observed every Monday morning and the flag lowering ceremony every Friday afternoon. The ceremony shall be simple and dignified and shall include the playing or singing of the Philippine National Anthem.<sup>7</sup>
2. All Executive Judges shall supervise the holding of the flag-raising and flag lowering ceremonies in their respective Halls of Justice buildings or courthouses, and shall ensure the attendance of all judges and court personnel in the rites.
3. A report on the absentees in both ceremonies for every month shall be submitted to the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) within the first ten (10) days of the succeeding month.

The Executive Judges shall strictly monitor compliance with this Circular by the judges and court personnel under their administrative supervision. The Deputy Court Administrators and the Legal Office, OCA, shall likewise oversee compliance by the Executive Judges, Presiding Judges and court personnel under their respective areas of administrative supervision.

For strict compliance.

10 November 2015

  
JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ  
Court Administrator

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<sup>6</sup> OCA Circular No. 136-2010 dated 5 October 2010

<sup>7</sup> Sec. 18, RA 8491