



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Manila

**OCA CIRCULAR NO. 159-2019**

**TO : ALL JUDGES AND CLERKS OF COURT OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS**

**SUBJECT : AMENDMENT OF SECTION 12, CHAPTER V OF A.M. NO. 03-8-02-SC (GUIDELINES ON THE SELECTION AND DESIGNATION OF EXECUTIVE JUDGES AND DEFINING THEIR POWERS, PREROGATIVES AND DUTIES) DATED 27 JANUARY 2004**

In accordance with the 4 June 2019 Resolution in **A.M. No. 03-8-02-SC** (*Guidelines on the Selection and Designation of Executive Judges and Defining their Powers, Prerogatives and Duties*) effective 15 February 2004, the Court *En Banc* **RESOLVED** to **AMEND** Section 12, Chapter V of said A.M. No. 03-6-02-SC, the full text of which is quoted as follows:

*Section 12. Issuance of search warrants in special criminal cases by the Regional Trial Courts of Manila and Quezon City. - The Executive Judges and, whenever they are on official leave of absence or are not physically present in the station, the Vice-Executive Judges of the RTCs of Manila and Quezon City shall have authority to act on applications filed by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Anti-Crime Task Force (ACTAF), the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), and the Bureau of Customs, for search warrants involving heinous crimes, illegal gambling, illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions as well as violations of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, the Intellectual Property Code, the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001, the Tariff and Customs Code, as amended, **The Securities Regulation Code**, and other relevant laws that may hereafter be enacted by Congress, and included herein by the Supreme Court.*

The applications shall be personally endorsed by the heads of such agencies and shall particularly describe therein the places to be searched and/or the property or things to be seized as prescribed in the Rules of Court. The Executive Judges and Vice-Executive Judges concerned shall issue the warrants, if justified, which may be served in places outside the territorial jurisdiction of the said courts.

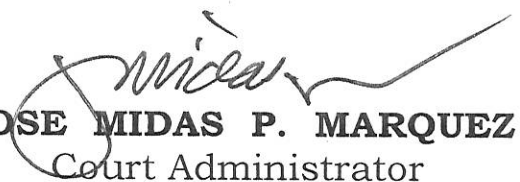
The Executive Judges and the authorized Judges shall keep a special docket book listing names of Judges to whom the applications are assigned, the details of the applications and the results of the searches and seizures made pursuant to the warrants issued.

This Section shall be an exception to Section 2 of Rule 126 of the Rules of Court.  
**(Amendment in bold)**

Any prior circular from the Office of the Court Administrator on this matter which is contrary to the foregoing is hereby superseded.

For your information, guidance and strict compliance.

16 September 2019

  
**JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ**  
Court Administrator