



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

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 02-2022

TO: ALL JUDGES, CONCERNED COURT PERSONNEL AND COURT USERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 3, WITH HEIGHTENED RESTRICTIONS, PURSUANT TO IATF RESOLUTION NOS. 155¹, 155-A², 155-B³, AND 156-A⁴

SUBJECT: COURT OPERATIONS FROM 10 TO 14 JANUARY 2022

Upon clearing with Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, taking into account the alarming increase in the number of COVID-19 infections in the courts in areas recently declared under Alert Level 3 by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), with heightened restrictions as reiterated and implemented pursuant to the pertinent provisions of the “Guidelines on the Nationwide Implementation of Alert Level System for COVID-19 Response”, and the need for continued testing of Judges and court personnel in the covered areas, court operations from 10 to 14 January 2022 in the National Capital Region; Bulacan in Region 3; Cavite, Rizal, & Laguna in Region 4-A; Baguio City in the Cordillera Administrative Region; Dagupan City in Region 1; City of Santiago City & Cagayan in Region 2; Angeles City, Bataan, Olongapo City, Pampanga, & Zambales in Region 3; Batangas and Lucena City in Region 4-A; Naga City in Region 5; Iloilo City in Region 6; and Lapu-lapu City in Region 7, shall be governed by the following:

1. All courts and essential judicial offices in the above-named areas shall continue to be physically open on a limited basis confined only to transactions that are of urgent nature;
2. There will be no minimum or maximum skeleton workforce that will be maintained during the said period. Instead, the Executive Judges (EJs) and/or Presiding Judges (PJs) shall have the discretion to determine the number of staff who need to report on-site;
3. The concerned EJs/PJs should see to it that the individual health condition of those reporting on-site will be thoroughly checked upon entering the courts or judicial offices and that they do not have the slightest symptoms of COVID-19 infection;
4. Saturday duty continues to be suspended and regular office/working hours shall be from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.;
5. No in-court hearing will be allowed during the above period;

¹ Dated 31 December 2021, subject of OCA Circular No. 160-2021A

² Dated 3 January 2022, subject of OCA Memorandum No. 01-2022

³ Dated 5 January 2022, subject of OCA Memorandum No. 02-2022

⁴ Dated 6 January 2022, subject of OCA Memorandum No. 04-2022

6. Only videoconferencing hearings involving pending cases already scheduled or which must be scheduled during the said period, whether urgent or not, can be conducted by the Judges and this can be done regardless of their location. Still, Judges should ensure that pending matters with their court are attended to and expeditiously addressed;

7. With the exception of criminal information, personal filing/service of all pleadings, motions, and other court submissions shall not be allowed during the aforesaid period. Accordingly, filing/service thereof may be done via registered mail, through the services of duly accredited private couriers, or by electronic mail (e-mail) to the official e-mail addresses of the concerned courts or judicial offices in accordance with existing electronic filing guidelines; and,

8. All safety and health protocols being required by the IATF in its Resolution No. 155, as modified or amended by other subsequent resolutions, shall be strictly observed.

As there is an increasing need or demand for Judges and court personnel to undergo COVID-19 testing via antigen or Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) tests, everyone is reminded that, pursuant to OCA Circular No. 80-2021 dated 15 June 2021, the expenses for the same may be reimbursed from the Office of the Court Administrator, through the Financial Management Office (OCA-FMO), the procedure for which is specifically outlined therein.

Further, and unless modified by a subsequent issuance from the OCA on applicable health protocols, it must be stressed that those who have been tested positive for the virus through antigen tests are required to undergo confirmatory RT-PCR tests, as provided in OCA Circular No. 101-2020 dated 30 June 2020. Those Judges and/or court personnel who may get in close contact with individuals who are positive for the virus via antigen tests, by way of clarification, can go on self-quarantine or isolation only if they themselves have been antigen tested and found positive for COVID-19, or upon medical advice to do so. For those found positive for the virus via RT-PCR tests, the protocols being observed per OCA Circular No. 101-2020 shall remain applicable at this time.

The provisions of earlier OCA circular/s and memorandum orders which are not inconsistent herewith shall remain in full force and effect.

9 January 2022



RAUL BAUTISTA VILLANUEVA
Deputy Court Administrator
and OCA-Officer-in-Charge

(Per Memorandum Order No. 108-2021 dated 17 November 2021)