



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

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 167-2023

TO: ALL CONCERNED JUDGES AND COURT PERSONNEL OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS, AS WELL AS COURT USERS, IN AREAS PLACED UNDER ALERT LEVELS 1 AND 2

SUBJECT: COURT OPERATIONS FROM 25 TO 30 APRIL 2023 UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS OF THE COURT

Due to the report that the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) has placed several areas in the country under Alert Levels 1 and 2 in response to increasing cases of COVID-19, and with prior clearance from Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, **court operations** from 25 to 30 April 2023 in the hereunder listed places shall be as follows:

AREAS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 1
LUZON
National Capital Region (NCR)
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR): Abra, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Baguio City, Benguet (Buguias, Sablan and Tublay), Ifugao (Alfonso Lista [Potia], Kiangnan, Lagawe, Lamut);
Region 1: Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Dagupan City;
Region 2: Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, City of Santiago;
Region 3: Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Angeles City, Olongapo City;
Region 4A: Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Lucena City, Quezon Province (Alabat, Atimonan, Candelaria, City of Tayabas, Dolores, Gumaca, Lucban, Mauban, Padre Burgos, Pagbilao, Perez, Plaridel, Polillo, Quezon, Sampaloc, San Antonio, Sariaya, Tiaong, Unisan);
Region 4B: Marinduque, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Romblon, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan (Cagayancillo, Culion, El Nido [Bacuit], Kalayaan); and,
Region 5: Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, Naga City, Camarines Norte (Basud, Capalonga, Daet, San Vicente, Talisay), Masbate (Balud, Batuan, City of Masbate, Mandaon, Milagros, San Fernando).
VISAYAS
Region 6: Aklan, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo Province, Bacolod City, Iloilo City; Antique (Anini-y, Barbaza, San Jose, Sebaste, Tobias Fornier [Dao]), Negros Occidental (Cadiz City, Candoni, City of Himamaylan, City of Talisay, City of Victorias, Enrique B. Magalona [Saravia], Ilog, La Carlota City, Murcia, Ponte Verde, Pulupandan, Sagay City, San Enrique, Silay City, Valladolid);
Region 7: Siquijor, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Bohol (Alburquerque, Balilihan, Batuan, Calape, Corella, Dimiao, Duero, Garcia Hernandez, Jagna, Lila, Loay, Loboc, Maribojoc, Pres. Carlos P. Garcia [Pitogo], San Isidro, San Miguel, Sevilla, Sikatuna, Tagbilaran City), Cebu Province (Alboy, Borbon, City of Naga, City of Talisay, Oslob, Pilar, Poro, Santander, Tudela), Negros Oriental (Amlan [Ayuqitan], Bacong, Dauin, Dumaguete City, Valencia Luzurriaga), Zamboanguita); and,
Region 8: Biliran, Eastern Samar, Northern Samar, Southern Leyte, Ormoc City, Tacloban City, Leyte (Abuyog, Albueria, Bato, Barugo, City of Baybay, Dulag, Hindang, Inopacan,

Javier [Bugho], La Paz, Leyte, Matag-ob, Matalom, Palo, Pastrana, Tabontabon, Tunga, Villaba), Samar [Western Samar] (City of Catbalogan, Marabut, Mpotiong, Pagsanghan, Paranas [Wright], San Sebastian, Talalora, Tarangnan, Zumarraga).
MINDANAO
Region 9: Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga Sibugay, City of Isabela, Zamboanga City;
Region 10: Bukidnon, Camiguin, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, Cagayan de Oro City, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte (Bacolod, Baroy, Kauswagan, Kolabugan, Lala Linamon, Tubod);
Region 11: Davao Oriental, Davao City, Davao de Oro (Mawab, Montevista, Nabunturan, New Bataan), Davao del Norte (Braulio E. Dujali, Island Garden City of Samal, Santo Tomas), Davao del Sur (Padada), Davao Occidental (Don Marcelino, Malita, Santa Maria);
Region 12: South Cotabato, General Santos City, Cotabato [North Cotabato] (Antipas, Arakan, City of Kidapawan, Kabacan, President Roxas), Sarangani (Maitum), Sultan Kudarat (Bagumbayan, City of Tacurong, Kalamansig, Lebak, President Quirino);
Region 13 (CARAGA): Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Butuan City, Dinagat Islands (Cagdianao, Dinagat, Libjo [Albor], Loreto, Tubajon);
and,
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): Lanao del Sur, Cotabato City, Maguindano (South Upi, Upi), Sulu (Hadji Panglima Tahil [Marunggas]; Tawi-Tawi (Turtle Islands).

AREAS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 2 (except in Provinces where certain cities or municipalities have been placed under Alert Level 1)
LUZON
Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR): Benguet, Ifugao; Region 4A: Quezon Province; Region 4B: Palawan; and, Region 5: Camarines Norte, Masbate.
VISAYAS
Region 6: Antique, Negros Occidental; Region 7: Bohol, Cebu Province, Negros Oriental; and, Region 8: Leyte, Samar [Western Samar].
MINDANAO
Region 10: Lanao del Norte Region 11: Davao de Oro, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Occidental; Region 12: Cotabato [North Cotabato], Sultan Kudarat; and, Region 13 (CARAGA): Dinagat Islands; and, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): Basilan, Maguindanao, Sulu; Tawi-Tawi.

COURT OPERATION GUIDELINES (Alert Level 1 or 2, or higher)
<input type="checkbox"/> Courts and judicial offices are PHYSICALLY OPEN
<input type="checkbox"/> 50% to 75% workforce
<input type="checkbox"/> For Judges without court space or facilities of their own, but they already have their own personnel, maintain a skeleton workforce of at least 30%
<input type="checkbox"/> No Saturday duty is allowed
<input type="checkbox"/> Night courts are not allowed to operate in stations where these have been organized or required
<input type="checkbox"/> Pleadings, motions and other court submissions may be filed or served by registered mail, through the services of duly accredited private couriers, or by transmitting them through electronic mail in accordance with the existing electronic filing guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular office hours as prescribed in OCA Circular No. 09-2015 dated 21 January 2015 shall be observed, i.e., Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to

5:00 P.M. (for Judicial Regions 1 to 12) and 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (for National Capital Judicial Region)
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal filing and follow-up of cases are allowed, subject to strict health protocols being observed

If the IATF places a particular province under Alert Level 2 but identifies certain cities or municipalities therein under Alert Level 1 or places an area under a conflicting Alert Level system with a more restrictive health protocol, such classification will not in any way affect the observance of the required court operation guidelines as provided herein.

Further, while in-court or face-to-face hearings are given priority, all Judges are hereby allowed or permitted until 30 April 2023 to conduct fully remote videoconferencing hearings, for at **most** thrice in a week, regardless of their location in the country, with notice to the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA).

In addition, all health and safety protocols against COVID-19 prescribed by the Court and the OCA, as well as those required by the IATF and the Department of Health, shall be complied with whatever is the Alert Level of a particular area.

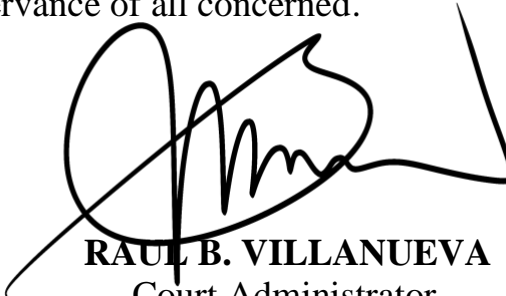
Court personnel who are not scheduled to report to the court/office shall be considered under a work-from-home arrangement, wherein their official time for work will be in accordance with what is prescribed in OCA Circular No. 09-2015. More importantly, those required to work-from-home during the subject period must ensure that their lines of communication are always open.

In case there are pressing concerns that the Judges or court personnel may have regarding their operations until 30 April 2023, the same shall be referred to the OCA for appropriate action.

All other issuances of the Court or the OCA that are inconsistent herewith will no longer be applicable to the courts in areas under either Alert Level 1 or 2 until 30 April 2023.

For the strict compliance and observance of all concerned.

24 April 2023



RAUL B. VILLANUEVA
Court Administrator