

Announcement by Judiciary

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary announced today (March 14) that in line with the re-opening of court registries and offices in a staggered and progressive manner starting from March 9, the Lands Tribunal Registry and the Magistrates' Courts Registries and offices will be re-opened on March 17 (Tuesday).

Because of the need to reduce the people flow, some of the business of the re-opened registries will be suspended during the initial re-opening period. As such, some services of the Lands Tribunal Registry will be suspended.

The suspended services of all re-opened registries may gradually be resumed ahead of the cessation of the General Adjourned Period ("GAP") on March 22 after taking into account all the relevant factors, including the capacity of the registries in handling the workload and the impact on crowd control, and if the public health situation permits. In this regard, the following services of the High Court Registry will be resumed from March 16 (Monday):

- (a) Filing of petition for self-bankruptcy; and
- (b) Registration of enduring power of attorney and the lodging of related documents.

An updated list of suspended business for all re-opened court and tribunal registries is set out in the Annex. It is also uploaded onto the Judiciary website.

While court and tribunal registries will be generally re-opened for business, special arrangements will be made for the registries to handle filing and other business in an orderly and effective manner. Furthermore, it is anticipated that in the initial period there will be a significant number of people wishing to do filing, payment and other business at the Lands Tribunal and Magistrates Court registries/accounts offices. While the Judiciary will take measures to increase the capacity of the registries/offices as appropriate during the initial period (which may last up to March 20) and regulate the flow of people, parties and legal representatives are urged not to do filing, payment and other business in the first few days of the re-opening of these registries, unless they are really urgent and must be done in the first few days of re-opening.

Any party or court user who needs to use any of the suspended business at the re-opened registries on the ground of urgency may apply to the relevant court in writing with justifications.

Preventive and crowd management measures

Having struck a careful balance between public health considerations and the orderly re-opening of registries, the Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate preventive and crowd management measures for the health protection of all people who enter and remain in the court premises. Court users are required to have their body temperature taken and wear a surgical mask before they are allowed to enter and remain in the court premises. The Judiciary will constantly review the situation and introduce any new measures as appropriate.

In order to manage people flow, special arrangements, including queuing and the introduction of a ticketing and triage system, will be put in place as appropriate to regulate the entry of court users into and inside the court premises. Latest detailed arrangements will be provided and uploaded onto the Judiciary website. Court users are strongly advised to check the updated information from the Judiciary website, and follow the advice of the Judiciary staff and security personnel when they attend court premises for court business.

Enquiries and information updates

For general enquiries, the following hotlines will be operated from Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 1pm and from 2pm to 5.30pm:

- General Information: 2869 0869
- Court of Final Appeal: 2123 0123
- High Court: 2523 2212
- Probate: 2840 1683
- District Court: 2845 5696
- Family Court: 2840 1218
- Lands Tribunal: 2771 3034
- Labour Tribunal: 2625 0020
- Small Claims Tribunal: 2877 4068
- Magistrates' Courts: 2677 8373
- Bailiff Section: 2802 7510
- Court Language Section: 2388 1364

The Judiciary will continue to post updated information, including Daily Cause Lists, messages related to the Judiciary's arrangements arising from public health considerations, and advice to court users visiting the courts during the GAP, on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk). Court users are advised to check the website for updated information as necessary.