

Announcement by Judiciary

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Judiciary today (March 22) announced that in view of latest developments in the public health situation, the General Adjourned Period ("GAP"), which has been in effect since January 29, will be extended for two weeks from March 23 (Monday) until April 5 (Sunday), and be subject to review having regard to the prevailing public health situation. This announcement supersedes the one made on March 20.

Court Proceedings

No court hearings will be held on March 23 (Monday) except for fresh remand cases at the Magistrates' Courts. However, the courts may continue to deal with cases on paper if the presiding Judge or Judicial Officer considers them to be urgent and essential court business.

For court hearings originally scheduled for March 24 (Tuesday) to April 5 (Sunday), they will generally be adjourned and will not be held unless they are urgent and essential as directed by the court. Parties will be notified if their hearings will be held as scheduled during these two weeks.

Other urgent and essential hearings will continue to be handled in accordance with the established mechanisms, including the Duty Judge system. The updated list of urgent and essential hearings and matters is uploaded onto the Judiciary website for reference of court users and the public.

The Magistrates' Courts will adopt basically the Holiday or Saturday sitting arrangement in the light of caseload and other factors. They will handle urgent and essential cases, including fresh remand cases and eight-day cases. The detailed arrangements are as follows:

March 23 (Monday)	Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts will open
March 24 (Tuesday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open
March 25 (Wednesday)	West Kowloon Magistrates' Court will open
March 26 (Thursday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open

March 27 (Friday)	Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts will open
March 28 (Saturday)	The usual Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Eastern Magistrates' Courts, Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts and Shatin Magistrates' Courts will open
March 29 (Sunday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open
March 30 (Monday)	Fanling Magistrates' Courts will open
March 31 (Tuesday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open
April 1 (Wednesday)	Eastern Magistrates' Courts will open
April 2 (Thursday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open
April 3 (Friday)	Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts will open
April 4 (Saturday)	The usual Holiday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Shatin Magistrates' Courts will open
April 5 (Sunday)	No Magistrates' Courts will open

Registries and Offices

Court/tribunal registries and offices will generally be closed during this period. The registries and offices will only provide support for the handling of the above urgent and essential court hearings/matters through the Duty Judge and Duty Master systems. The Judiciary will continue to review the scope of business and make suitable announcement as appropriate.

Preventive and crowd management measures

The Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate preventive and crowd management measures for the health protection of all people who are required to enter and remain in the court premises for urgent and essential business. 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.

To support the above arrangements, necessary queuing and other crowd management measures, as well as security controls to limit the number of court users entering and remaining in the Judiciary premises, will be put in place as appropriate. To maintain social distancing, the seating capacity of courtrooms and lobbies are reduced by about 50 per cent. In addition,

capacity limits are set for confined areas such as registries and offices to avoid crowding of users.

Parties, legal representatives and other court users are reminded that they should not come to the Judiciary premises to attend court proceedings or conduct businesses at court registry/office if they are subject to quarantine requirement or medical surveillance of the Government. Court users who are subject to any quarantine requirement or medical surveillance of the Government should as soon as practicable apply to the court for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

Information on the detailed arrangements will be provided and uploaded onto the Judiciary website. Court users are strongly advised to check the updated information on the Judiciary website, and follow the advice of the Judiciary staff and security personnel when they attend court premises for court business.

For enquiries regarding general arrangements on the court businesses during the period, the following hotlines are being operated from Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm:

- 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

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, on the Judiciary website (www.judiciary.hk). Court users are advised to check the website for updated information as necessary.