

# Court to resume normal operations and require rapid antigen tests for jury proceedings

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary announced today (May 6) that in light of the latest public health situation, all court business will return to normal from May 2022, with progressive resumption of all court hearings and jury proceedings as well as slightly reduced capacity in courtrooms and common areas. To enhance public health protection, essential court users (including legal representatives and prosecuting authorities) for jury proceedings will be required to carry out a rapid antigen test (RAT) from May 10, 2022.

Court to return to normal operations under slightly reduced capacity

With progressive resumption of jury proceedings (both at High Court and Coroner's Court) and court hearings (both civil and criminal), all court business will resume as normal under slightly reduced capacity in courtrooms and common areas from May 2022, having regard to the need to ensure the court can continue to carry out business as safely as circumstances allow under the prevailing public health situation.

The court will continue to make greater use of remote hearings and/or paper disposals for civil proceedings and other suitable cases where appropriate. The court will give directions for individual cases in this regard.

All registries, account offices and supporting offices at various levels of court have returned to normal operation. The operating hours have resumed as normal from April 20 (or from the date upon their reopening). The special ticketing and drop-box arrangements at some registries have ceased, as the surge in submissions of court documents immediately following the cessation of the General Adjournment of Proceedings from March 7 to April 11 has subsided.

The Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate preventive and crowd management measures to maintain social distancing and limit people flow in light of the prevailing public health situation.

RAT requirement for essential court users attending jury proceedings

Upon the resumption of jury proceedings from May 10, 2022, all essential court users attending jury proceedings, i.e. legal representatives and prosecuting authorities, will be required to conduct an RAT before coming to the hearing on a daily basis. Taking into account the frequent and extensive

interactions amongst these essential court users and jurors during jury proceedings, this seeks to provide court users with additional health protection by adopting the existing requirement imposed on jurors, Judges and Judicial Officers as well as support staff of the Judiciary from February 2022. Detailed arrangements are at the Annex.

### Implementation of stage three Vaccine Pass

The Judiciary has been implementing the Vaccine Pass for entry into the Judiciary premises since March 2, 2022. Starting from May 31, 2022, the Judiciary will be implementing the stage three Vaccine Pass in accordance with the Government's dosage schedule ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp\\_t1\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_t1_ENG.pdf)). Exemptions will continue to be granted to the following persons:

- (a) children aged under 12;
- (b) holders of the COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate; or
- (c) persons who must enter the relevant Judiciary premises to attend to court business on the day as parties to or witnesses in a legal proceeding, legal representatives with prior permission by the presiding Judge or Judicial Officer concerned to attend a hearing on behalf of their clients, or jurors in a proceeding which has commenced before March 2, 2022.

The Judiciary will continue to conduct active checking at the points of entry by using the QR Code Verification Scanner mobile application developed by the Government for scanning the relevant QR code and keeping the record for 31 days. Court users are advised to allow additional time for checking when they come to the Judiciary premises for court business.