

Public attendance arrangements for a fresh case at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary will reserve as many extra seats as possible and make special public attendance arrangements for a fresh case expected to involve dozens of defendants to be heard tomorrow (March 1) at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts, where the seats for public available will not be able to meet the demand.

As it is anticipated that the case will involve over 40 defendants and a large number of legal representatives may be engaged, all seats (95 in total) in the courtroom will be allocated to them.

Several other cases expected with a large number of observers have already been listed at the West Kowloon Law Courts Building tomorrow.

Having considered the remaining capacity of the available courtrooms and broadcasting facilities of the whole court building, the Judiciary will arrange three court extensions to broadcast the court proceedings of the fresh case concerned for different groups to observe. A total of 66 press seats and 95 public places will be provided at Court 2 (with 30 press seats and some 40 seats for family members), Court 18 (with 36 press seats, 14 public seats and 5 public standees) and the Jurors Assembly Room (with 76 public seats).

Court users who wish to attend the hearing concerned will be required to line up at designated areas at the Atrium on the 1/F of the West Kowloon Law Courts Building. The hearing is expected to commence not earlier than 11am. The distribution of admission tickets for family members is firmly set at 10.15am, while that for other tickets at 10.30am. Court users should follow the instructions of the Judiciary staff and security personnel.

To ensure fair allocation and use of the limited number of seats during the hearing, any seat which has been left vacant for 15 minutes or more during the court hearing will be re-allocated to another court user. This requirement is generally in line with that of the other courts such as the High Court in that the ticket will no longer be valid if the ticket holder has left his/her seat/place for 15 minutes or more.

Meanwhile, court users are reminded that starting from tomorrow all persons who enter the Judiciary premises are required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app, or to have their names, contact numbers and the dates and times of their visits recorded on a registration form, with a view to enhancing protection of court users against COVID-19 infection. The form has been uploaded to the Judiciary website

(www.judiciary.hk/en/court_services_facilities/leavehomesafe.html) and is available at the Judiciary premises.

All persons who do not use the app and refuse to have their contact information recorded will be denied entry to the Judiciary premises.

While the Judiciary will make every effort to minimise inconvenience to court users, it is inevitable that the measure will mean more time required for court users to gain access to the Judiciary premises. As such, court users are advised to download and learn to use the app before going to the Judiciary premises and arrive at the Judiciary premises earlier.