

COVID-19 RELATED ISSUANCES COURT ISSUANCES

Issuance	Salient Points	Extension of Deadlines, if any		
		Action	Original Due Date	Extended Due Date
	Supreme Cou	ırt		
Admin. Circular No. 40-2020 dated May 15, 2020	 Guidelines for all courts in areas under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) during the period of May 16 to 31, 2020: All court branches shall be physically open, but shall function only with a skeleton-staff. It shall operate from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. All electronic communications must be transmitted to and received by courts from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to be acted upon on the same day. All inquiries on cases and transactions shall initially be coursed and acted upon through hotline number, online accounts of the courts. Justices, judges and court personnel with medical conditions may work from home. Pleadings and other court submissions may be electronically filed with the branch where the case is pending or with the Office of the Clerk of Court. The raffle of cases shall proceed regularly, but only members of the Raffle Committee will attend the raffle. No raffle through videoconferencing shall be conducted in the court stations in GCQ areas. In all the videoconferencing hearings in GCQ areas, the justices or judges shall preside from courtrooms or chambers, unless in exceptional circumstances. The videoconferencing hearings in both criminal and civil cases shall be upon joint motion of the 	Filing of petitions, appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions* *Pleadings and other court submissions may still be filed by parties within the reglementary period on or before May 31, 2020 through electronic means, if preferred and able.	Until May 31, 2020	30 calendar days, counted from June 1, 2020



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	 parties or upon orders of the court. Taking of testimony of witness through videoconferencing is akin to taking of a deposition upon oral examination. The documents and affidavits may be received by the court and parties electronically. Civil wedding may be solemnized, provided the parties, witnesses, and guests shall not exceed 5. 			
Admin. Circular No. 39- 2020 dated May 14, 2020	 Guidelines for all courts in areas under Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) until May 31, 2020: Remain physically closed to all court users, but shall continue to operate from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, until May 29, 2020. All electronic communications must be transmitted to and received by these courts from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for these transmissions to be acted upon on the same day; All inquiries on cases or transactions, including requests for documents and services, shall be coursed and acted upon only through respective hotline numbers, email addresses, and/or Facebook accounts of concerned courts, or through the Judiciary Public Assistance Section of the SC in accordance with A.C. 28-2020. No walk-in requests shall be entertained; Raffle of cases shall proceed, either electronically or through videoconferencing. Judge/Justices-onduty arrangement, together with their respective skeleton staff, is discontinued. In the exigency of the service, they may go to their respective courts; Civil weddings may be solemnized, provided 	Filing of petitions and appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions* *Pleadings and other court submissions may still be filed by parties within the reglementary period on or before May 31, 2020 through electronic means, if preferred and able. Court actions with prescribed periods, except urgent matters	Until May 31, 2020	30 calendar days, counted from June 1, 2020 30 calendar days, counted from June 1, 2020



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	parties, witnesses, and guests shall not exceed five (5), and health hygiene protocols and other public medical standards shall be strictly observed during the ceremony; • All official meetings, seminars, trainings, and other functions in the Judiciary, unless conducted through videoconferencing, are deferred until May 31, 2020, except those that may be called or authorized by the Chief Justice or by the Judiciary Task Force on COVID-19; and • Flag raising and retreat shall remain suspended until May 31, 2020-05-14			
	 Guidelines for the Supreme Court: Continue to receive petitions and pleadings electronically, and process the same in accordance with the Internal Rules of the Court; Decision-writing period is extended until May 31, 2020. Court may however hold special en banc and division sessions anytime it may deem fit, either inperson or through videoconferencing; In the exigency of the service, the Chiefs of Offices and Services of the Court, together with their respective skeleton-staff, may be required by the Chief Justice to report to the Court on any of the days from May 18-May 29, 2020. The judicial Staff Heads and any personnel of the Offices of the Associate Justices may likewise be required by their respective Associate Justices to report for work on any of the days from May 16-31, 2020-05-14 			
	Guidelines for the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, and Court of Tax Appeals:			



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	 Continue to receive petitions and pleadings electronically, and process the same pursuant to their respective internal rules Continue to resolve and decide cases pending before them. Regular hearings shall be conducted through videoconferencing. Considering Sandiganbayan and CTA are trial courts, they shall adopt the following procedures set up for RTCs, Family Courts, and First-Level Courts below; and Justices shall continue to draft decisions and orders in their respective residences until May 31, 2020, which decisions may be promulgated or issued once the courts are fully operational, except decisions and orders on urgent matters which shall be promulgated or issued during the MECQ period. 			
	Guidelines for Regional Trial Courts, Family Courts, and First Level Courts: • All initiatory pleadings, in both civil and criminal cases, including criminal complaints, informations, and applications for bail, together with all the required documents in relation thereto, may be filed electronically. Pleadings and other court submissions on pending cases may be electronically filed directly with the branch where the case is pending if the said branch has an official email address. Otherwise, the pleadings and other court submissions may be filed electronically with the Office of the Clerk of Court, which shall forward the said transmission to the branches where the cases are pending. • All courts initially authorized to hear through videoconferencing only urgent matters in criminal			



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	cases involving PDLs are now herein authorized to			
	hear through videoconferencing ALL matters			
	pending before them, in both criminal and civil			
	cases, whether newly-filed or pending, and			
	regardless of the stage of trial.			
	The videoconferencing hearings in both criminal			
	and civil cases shall be upon joint motion of the			
	parties, or upon orders of the court, which shall			
	schedule the said videoconferencing hearings.			
	Under exceptional circumstances, in-court hearings			
	may likewise be conducted by courts authorized to			
	conduct hearings through videoconferencing.			
	For courts which are not authorized to conduct			
	hearings through videoconferencing, in-court			
	hearings conducted by the presiding judge, assisted			
	by the skeleton-staff, shall be limited to urgent			
	matters and other concerns to expedite the			
	proceedings, both in criminal and civil cases. The			
	judges shall see to it that the counsels and parties			
	are duly notified of the in-court hearings to ensure			
	their attendance.			
	In all in-court hearings, health hygiene protocols			
	and other public medical standards shall be strictly			
	observed. [Also applicable to SB and CTA]			
	The taking of the testimony of a witness in a place			
	other than where the court is, through			
	videoconferencing, is akin to the taking of a			
	deposition upon oral examination (Sec. 1, Rule 23			
	as amended) and shall be allowed. If the witness will			



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Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) Circular No. 94-2020 dated	be testifying on (i) duly subscribed written statements given to law enforcement or peace officers, or (ii) affidavits or counter-affidavits submitted before the investigating prosecutor; or (iii) judicial affidavits, subject to additional direct and cross-examination questions, the said documents and affidavits must be received by the court and the parties through electronic transmission in accordance with the Rules on Electronic Evidence, at least three (3) days prior to the scheduled videoconferencing hearing. Night courts and Saturday courts shall remain suspended until May 31, 2020. All presiding judges shall continue to draft decisions and orders in their respective residences until May 31, 2020, which decisions may be promulgated or issued once the courts are fully operational, except decisions and orders on urgent matters which shall be promulgated or issued during the MECQ period. Considering that all court stations nationwide have been provided with the platform Philippine Judiciary 365, all courts in areas under Enhanced Community			
May 4, 2020	Quarantine (ECQ) shall resume the raffle of newly-filed cases through videoconferencing.			
OCA Circular No. 93-2020 dated May 4, 2020	Hearings of urgent matters in criminal cases involving Persons Deprived with Liberty (PDLs) is being pilot tested. In accordance thereof, the following guidelines shall be implemented: 1. Videoconferencing hearings shall only use the officially provided Philippines Judiciary 365			



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	 Videoconferencing hearings shall include all stages of trial of newly-filed and pending criminal cases. Videoconferencing hearings shall be scheduled by the court. The parties shall be notified through their respective email addresses. All submissions from the parties must be received by the court at least 3 days prior the scheduled videoconferencing hearing and all parties must be furnished copies. The proceedings during the videoconferencing hearing shall be recorded by the judge. If during the videoconferencing hearings, the judge issues or promulgates an order or decision, a copy thereof shall immediately by furnished the parties. The service of such order or decision may be done electronically, but proof of receipt should be properly recorded. Judges shall submit weekly report in the videoconferencing hearings that they have conducted. 			
OCA Circular No. 92-2020 dated April 29, 2020	The Court distributed the Official Philippine Judiciary Office 265 Accounts for the pilot testing of videoconference hearings of criminal cases involving PDLs.			



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Admin. Circular No. 37- 2020, dated April 27, 2020	Hearings on urgent matters in criminal cases involving PDLs through videoconferencing shall be pilot tested in			
	 Region V – Legazpi City; Naga City; Sorsogon City; 			
	Visayas			
	 Region VI – Iloilo City; Bacolod City; San Jose, Antique; San Carlos City, Negros Occidental; 			



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	 Region VII – Cebu City; Lapu Lapu City; Mandaue City; Dumaguete City; Tanjay City; Region VIII – Tacloban City; Ormoc City; Mindanao Region IX – Dipolog City; Ipil, Zambaoanga Sibugay; Zamboanga City; Pagadian City; Isabela City, Basilan; Jolo, Sulu; Region X – Cagayan de Oro City; Surigao City; Malaybalay City, Bukidnon; Region XI – Tandag City; Digos City; Gen. Santos City; Koronadal City; Polomok City; Alabel, Sarangani;; Region XII – Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao; Marawi City; Iligan City; Kidapawan City and Midsayap, North Cotabato 			
	 Hearings through videoconferencing shall cover all PDLs; may apply to all stages of trial of newly-filed and pending criminal cases, including but not limited to arraignment, pre-trial, bail hearings, trial proper, and promulgation of judgment; and are only for pilot testing, and shall apply only during this public health emergency period. Courts shall ensure that all the constitutional rights of the accused are protected and observed. Considering that the remote locations of the participants are extensions of the court, the in-person 			



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	appearances, testimonies, and experiences of the litigants and parties in courts shall always be closely resembled in the remote appearances and testimonies of the litigants and parties in the videoconference proceedings. In the same manner, the dignity and solemnity of in-court proceedings shall at all times be mirrored in videoconference proceedings. The Teams application shall be used for videoconference proceedings, and neither shall the courts use a different email address aside from the authorized account officially provided.			
Admin. Circular No. 36-2020, dated April 27, 2020	"GCQ areas" include the following from May 1 to 15, 2020: I. Luzon (a) CAR, except Benguet (b) Region I, except Pangasinan (c) Region II (d) Region III – Aurora (e) Region IV-B, except Oriental Mindoro & Occidental Mindoro (f) Region V, except Albay & Catanduanes 2. Visayas (a) Region VI, except Aklan, Antique, Capiz & Iloilo	Filing of petitions and appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions* * Pleadings and other court submissions may still be filed by parties within the reglementary period on or before 15 May 2020 through electronic means, if	15 March 2020 – 15 May 2020	30 calendar days from 16 May 2020
	 (b) Region VII, except Cebu & Cebu City (c) Region VIII 3. Mindanao (a) Region IX (b) Region X (c) Region XI, except Davao del Norte, Davao City & Davao de Oro 	available. Court actions with prescribed periods, except urgent matters		30 calendar days counted from 16 May 2020



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	(d) Region XII (e) ARMM			
	 All courts in the GCQ areas shall operate as follows: All branches of courts shall be open beginning May 4, 2020, but shall function only with a skeleton-staff to assist the judge, and shall act only on urgent matters. Judges and court personnel who are more than 59 years of age, and those with medical conditions making them vulnerable to be easily infected by Covid-19, may report to courts to act on urgent matters. Otherwise, they shall work from their respective residences, but no court records may be taken out of the court. Younger lawyers are recommended to attend hearings on urgent matters. Operating hours from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Night and Saturday courts remain suspended until 			
	 May 15, 2020. Hearings are still suspended, except on urgent matters as mentioned in A.C. No. 31-2020. Judges in the GCQ areas, in the exercise of their sound discretion, may set for hearing other urgent matters or concerns to expedite the proceedings or the disposition of the cases pending before their courts. Online filing of criminal complaints and information, posting of bail, and submission of other urgent pleadings shall continue to be in effect. Raffle of newly-filed cases shall be conducted beginning May 4, 2020 in accordance with the 			





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	authorities on the proper protocols to be observed and the designation of medical or health care areas for the isolation of suspected infected individuals, and the continuous testing of those who may need it.			
Admin. Circular No. 35-2020, dated April 27, 2020	"ECQ areas" include the following: 1. Luzon (a) NCR (b) CAR – Benguet (c) Region I – Pangasinan (d) Region III – Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Zambales (e) Region IV-A – CALABARZON (f) Region IV-B – Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro (g) Region V – Albay & Catanduanes 2. Visayas (a) Region VI – Aklan, Antique, Capiz, and Iloilo (b) Region VII – Cebu and Cebu City 3. Mindanao (a) Region XI – Davao del Norte, Davao City, and Davao de Oro During the ECQ extended until May 15, 2020, • all courts in the ECQ areas o shall remain physically closed to all court users, and may be reached only through	Filing of petitions and appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions* * Pleadings and other court submissions may still be filed by parties within the reglementary period on or before 15 May 2020 through electronic means, if available. Court actions with prescribed periods, except urgent matters	15 March 2020 – 15 May 2020	30 calendar days from 16 May 2020 30 calendar days counted from 16 May 2020



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f	posting of bail, and submission of other urgent pleadings shall continue to be in effect; the scheduling of justice- and judges-on-duty, together with the skeleton staff, shall continue so that urgent matters may be addressed; night and Saturday courts shall remain suspended; all hearings shall remain suspended, except on urgent matters mentioned in A.C. No. 31-2020; all justices and judges shall continue to draft decisions and orders in their respective residences, which decisions shall be promulgated or issued once the courts are fully operational, except decisions and orders on urgent matters to be promulgated during ECQ period; all official meetings, seminars, and trainings and other functions in the Judiciary within the ECQ areas are deferred, except those that may be called or authorized by the Chief Justice or by the Judiciary Task Force on COVID-19; and			



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OCA Cincular No. 01.20	All indeed of the first and according to our			
OCA Circular No. 91-20, dated April 20, 2020	All judges of the first and second level courts are directed to immediately conduct an inventory of their pending criminal cases which may fall under those (I) may be released after service of minimum imposable penalty or (2) provisional dismissal. They shall immediately act motu propio on cases on PDLs who have been detained for a period at least equal to the minimum penalty of the offense charges and of release such detained on their own recognizance; provided that the court is assured of where the accused may be located while their cases are on-going trial. Motions for recognizance and provisional dismissal of cases resulting to the release of PDLs from detention may be considered urgent and must be immediately set for hearing.			
Admin. Circular No. 34-2020, dated April 8, 2020	All courts nationwide shall remain physically closed until April 30, 2020; may be reached through their respective hotlines, email addresses and/or Facebook accounts; and shall continue to operate (despite physical closure) from 9:00am to 3:00pm, Monday to Friday, until April 30, 2020. However, all electronic communications must be transmitted by court users from 8:30am to 2:00pm. The following shall continue to be in effect until April	Filing of petitions and appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings and other court submissions* *Pleadings and other court submissions may still be filed by parties within the reglementary period on or before 30 April 2020 through electronic means, if available.	15 March 2020 – 30 April 2020	30 calendar days counted from I May 2020



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	 30, 2020: online filing of criminal complaints and informations, posting of bail, and submission of other urgent pleadings; scheduling of justices- and judges-on-duty, together with the skeleton-staff, so that urgent matters may be addressed; suspension of night courts and Saturday courts; and suspension of all court actions on non-urgent matters. 	Court actions with prescribed periods		30 calendar days counted from I May 2020
OCA Circular No. 90-20, dated April 5, 2020	In stations, cities, and provinces where there are Commercial and Family Court Judges, all urgent matters concerning commercial and family cases shall be referred to the Commercial and Family Court Judges- on-Duty, respectively. • Pleadings filed shall first be sent electronically to the Judges-on-Duty who may determine their urgency in their respective residences and thereafter act accordingly (citing A.C. No. 33-2020).			
Admin. Circular No. 33- 2020, dated March 31, 2020	Criminal Complaints and Informations, with other supporting documents, may be filed through email before the proper first or second level court. • Within 3 days from e-filing of the complaint or information, the Judge on duty shall personally evaluate the resolution of the prosecutor and its supporting evidence. • In case of doubt on the existence of probable cause, the Judge on duty may order the prosecutor to submit, through electronic transmission, additional evidence within 3 days from notice. • The issue must be resolved by the court within 10 days from the filing of the complaint or			



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	 In case the Judge on duty determines the accused to be admitted to bail as a matter of right pursuant to Sec. 4, Rule I I 4 of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedure, the accused may initially submit all requirements for bail through electronic transmission. Upon examination of the submissions and a finding of completeness and compliance, the Judge on duty shall sign the approval of the bail and the consequent release order, which shall then be electronically transmitted to the Executive Judge who in turn shall electronically transmit the same within the same day to the proper law enforcement authority/detention facility to enable the release of the accused. The Judge on duty may reduce the amount of bail initially fixed, upon motion of the accused and after giving the prosecutor the opportunity to comment within a non-extendible 24-hour period from the filing of the motion, which motion and order to file comment thereon may be sent electronically. 				
	The initial online submission of the requirements for bail may also be availed of by an accused who has been charged before the court prior to the start of this public health emergency period. The Office of the Court of Administrator shall issue Guidelines, including templates as well as the list of documents which can be practically produced within this period of emergency, within 3 days to ensure proper implementation.				



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Admin. Circular No. 32- 2020, dated March 20, 2020	All courts nationwide: • shall be physically closed; and • may be reached only through their respective hotlines, email addresses, and Facebook accounts, if available, effective 23 March 2020. Only when the matter being raised is urgent will the justice or judge on-duty, together with the skeleton-staff, go to court to receive and act on said urgent matter. Otherwise, they must stay at their respective residences. • All calls and messages shall be entertained from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm, Monday to Friday.			
Admin. Circular No. 31- 2020 dated March 16, 2020	All courts nationwide: • shall reduce operations beginning 16 March 2020 until 15 April 2020; • during said period shall maintain the necessary skeletal staff to act on urgent matters; • shall operate from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm during the period; The following are suspended from 16 March 2020 until 15 April 2020:	Filing petitions and appeals, complaints, motions, pleadings, and other court submissions (Those who prefer to file said pleadings within the reglementary period without the need of the extension granted may do so by facsimile or by	15 March 2020 – 15 April 2020	30 calendar days from 16 April 2020 or 16 May 2020



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	 work in all courts, court offices, divisions, sections, and units, including those in the SC, except in courts and court offices concerned in the resolution of urgent matters and cases; hearings nationwide, except on urgent matters, such as but not limited to petitions, motions and pleadings in relation to bail and habeas corpus, promulgation of judgments of acquittals, reliefs for those who may be arrested and detained during this period, and other related 	transmitting them through electric means, if available.)		
		Court actions with prescribed periods		Extended for 30 calendar days counted from 16 April 2020
	Court of Tax Ap	peals		
Administrative Order No. 04-2020, dated March 17,	CTA Justices shall adopt a skeleton-force for the period of 18 March 2020 until 15 April 2020 during modified			
2020	 operating hours from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, as follows: All Justices are on stand-by to act on urgent matters; All Executive Clerks of Court, CTA Chiefs of Office, CTA Assistant Chiefs of Office, and other officials are on-call basis to assist Justices 			



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	on urgent matters; • The following divisions shall have I personnel in their workstations: a. Receiving Section of Judicial Records Division; b. Records Officer for verification and docketing; c. Cash Division; d. General Services Division; and e. Medical Unit. Should there be litigants with urgent matters, the following guidelines shall be observed: • Only those with urgent official business with the Court may be allowed entry to the CTA premises; and All those entering the Court premises must fill up a			
	declaration form and subjected to a no-contact thermal scanning, and those found to be suffering from fever, flu, and colds, and cough shall be prevented from entering.			