



In the Supreme Court of Bermuda

A/50

27 May 2021

CIRCULAR NO. 7 OF 2021

TO ALL ATTORNEYS

TRANSITIONAL INCREASE OF SERVICES (COVID-19)

This Practice Direction is issued further to Circular 6 of 2021.

Given the phased re-opening by the Bermuda Government since the lifting of the 'Stay at Home Order' the Court will continue its transition to re-opening to providing full services.

It should be noted that the health, safety and welfare of the Members of the Public, as well as Court Administrative Staff continues to be our paramount concern so services will continue to be limited and be revisited.

EFFECTIVE 31 MAY 2021 THROUGH 2 JULY 2021:

GENERAL:

- (i) Members of the Public are encouraged to email or call the Court in respect of any queries rather than attending Court offices. Queries may be emailed to supremecourt@gov.bm or made by telephone on 292-1350 in relation to the Supreme Court, or made by telephone on 295-5151 in relation to the Magistrates' Court.
- (ii) The following Court services remain **suspended** until further notice:
 - (a) Swearing of affidavits; and
 - (b) Certifying Copies;
- (iii) Criminal Record checks will resume on 31 May 2021.

SUPREME COURT:

- (1) The Supreme Court and the Court of Appeal Registries (Government Administration Building, 2nd Floor and the Dame Lois Browne Evans Building, 3rd Floor) will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- (2) All hearings and trials listed during this period will proceed via audio/visual means, unless otherwise directed. Where the nature of the hearing requires the parties to appear in person, the matter will be listed at the discretion of the presiding Judge or the Registrar.
- (3) Jury trials will resume and **will proceed in person**.

- (4) The Court will continue to prioritize the listing of applications that are considered urgent or time sensitive. If an application is considered **urgent or time sensitive**, the parties **MUST** contact the Court by email at supremecourt@gov.bm **immediately** and explain the urgency of the matter so that this may be taken into consideration.
- (5) We are not accepting the filing of pleadings outside of the registry hours set out in paragraph (1) above **via email** unless the parties have been directed to do so by the Judicial Department. If correspondence or applications are sent via email which are not explicitly stated as being urgent it is likely this correspondence will not be addressed. **Likewise, do not send "follow up" emails unless the matter is urgent.**
- (6) Searches of the Supreme Court Cause Books will continue to be **by appointment only**. Please send an email to supremecourt@gov.bm to schedule an appointment.

In order to assist law firms with being able to complete/advise on commercial transactions, the Court will continue to provide firms with an electronic copy of the Supreme Court Cause Book to show any new matters which have been entered from the previous search carried out:

- (a) Requests to be sent the electronic copy of the Cause Book should be e-mailed to supremecourt@gov.bm with the subject matter being "Cause Book Electronic Search Request".
 - (b) A scanned Search Praeipce for this purpose should be attached to the email request and received by 1 p.m. each Tuesday and Friday.
 - (c) The request should include the last listing number recorded.
 - (d) The electronic copy of the Cause Book will be distributed at **3 p.m. each Tuesday and Friday.**
- (7) The Courts' delivery service will resume on 7 June 2021. If you have queries regarding documents for collection please contact supremecourt@gov.bm.

MAGISTRATES' COURT:

- (8) All hearings and trials listed during this period **will proceed in person**, unless otherwise directed.
- (9) Traffic court will continue as normally scheduled; however, Defendants will continue to be dispersed over three (3) court rooms rather than being required to congregate in the hallway and/or having a large crowd in Court #1. When Defendants appear they will be directed to the appropriate Court Room accordingly.
- (10) The Magistrates' Court filing will be open **Monday to Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.**
- (11) If an application is considered **urgent or time sensitive**, the parties **MUST** contact the Court by email **immediately** using the table below and explain the urgency of the matter so that this may be taken into consideration. The Court will make every effort to list any application that is considered urgent or time sensitive.

MAGISTRATES COURT EMERGENCY CONTACT	
DIVISION	EMAIL
CIVIL	civil@gov.bm
CRIMINAL	records@gov.bm
FAMILY/JUVENILE	childsupport@gov.bm
MENTAL HEALTH COURT	awilliams@gov.bm
BAILIFF	ctterry@gov.bm

(12) The Cashiers Desk remain open in accordance with the Circular No. 5 of 2021. Opening hours are as follows: **9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (closed between 1 p.m. and 2:15 p.m.)**.

We will continue to review and monitor the above to determine whether they should be extended and/or expanded. The public will be advised concerning any changes.

We thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we navigate through these unprecedented times, and apologise for any inconvenience the reduction in services may cause.

Dated the 27th May 2021



REGISTRAR

CC: The Attorney-General's Chambers
 Department of Public Prosecutions
 Hamilton Police Station
 Commissioner of Police
 Commissioner of Corrections
 Magistrates Court
 Bermuda Bar Association
 Legal Aid Office