

HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA, BENGALURU

14.01.2022

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR THE DISTRICT AND TRIAL COURTS WITH EFFECT FROM 17TH JANUARY, 2022 TILL FURTHER ORDERS

In view of the fact that large number of Covid-19 positive cases reported everyday in all districts, the functioning of the District and Trial Judiciary will have to be restricted for some time. Hence, following Standard Operating Procedure shall be implemented in all District and Trial Courts (including Family Courts, Labour Courts, Court of Small Causes, Industrial Tribunal) from 17th January, 2022 till further orders.

1. As far as possible, filing of cases should be made through e-filing. E-filing can be made either by using the CIS Software or by sending scanned copy to e-mail ID of respective Districts as per Annexure-A appended to this SOP.
2. For physical filing, adequate numbers of counters shall be set up outside the main court building. The location of filing counters shall be such that Advocates can wait in the queue while maintaining social distancing. The open space may be covered by water proof pandal. Separate filing counters shall be provided for criminal and civil matters, payment of court fee and process fee, copy applications, submitting challans. The places used for filing counters in the pandemic in year 2020 and 2021 shall be used, as far as possible.
3. The following protocol for physical filing, shall be followed with necessary adaptation to local conditions, namely:

- a. Para-legal volunteers will be deputed near the filing counters to monitor use of masks and maintaining social distancing;
 - b. The officials deputed to work in filing counters will be provided with required number of proper masks, gloves and sanitizers before commencing the work;
 - c. The officials in the filing counter shall insist on the advocates / parties-in-person / advocates' clerks mentioning their mobile number, email ID in the vakalathnama / presentation form for further correspondence only with regard to status of the case;
 - d. After scrutiny, intimation shall be sent to the concerned, either for rectification of the objections or for informing the date of hearing on their registered mobile number/email-ID.
4. The Principal District and Sessions Judge shall take steps for setting up. Exclusive counters for Government Advocates/Prosecutors for filing of the pleadings, interlocutory applications etc.
5. In respect of physical presence of the parties to record compromise in the civil cases, physical presence of the petitioners to file petitions under Section 13B of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and Section 28 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the acceptance of the sureties in criminal cases, the procedure laid down by the Division Bench of Hon'ble of High Court of Karnataka in W.P. No. 7338/2020 vide order dated July 10, 2020 shall be followed by all the Courts. The said order may be viewed in the following link.
(<https://karnatakajudiciary.kar.nic.in/noticeBoard/wp-7338-2020-10072020.pdf>)

6. Only those Advocates and their Associates shall be permitted to attend the court proceedings physically who's cases are listed. The Principal District and Sessions Judges shall ensure that minimum number of entry points to the Court precincts are kept open. At all the entry points, which are kept open, health workers of the Government and the police personnel shall remain present, who will regulate the entry in terms of these guidelines. Every person accessing the entry point, including the Judicial Officers, Advocates/Advocates' Clerks/Court Staff etc., shall be checked by the health workers by using thermo sensor gun. In case of staff members, entry shall be allowed only on showing the identity cards. Entry of the members of the Bar and the Advocates' clerks shall be after verifying the identity cards and hearing cause list. The person desirous of seeking entry in the Court premises shall stand in queue by maintaining social distancing and wearing masks.

In order to facilitate entry of advocates in the court premises, the advocates may download the "Telegram" application and join the respective District Trial Courts through the links as per Annexure-B appended to this SOP, in order to download the Cause Lists/Notifications of the concerned Courts and entry to the court premises.

7. Any Advocate intending to avail the services of his clerk, may issue ID Card / Pass for the purpose of filing the papers, applying for certified copy, receiving of certified copy, etc. Persons claiming to be Advocates' clerks shall be allowed to enter the precincts of the

Courts only on production of such identity cards or pass issued by the concerned Advocate.

8. Entry of litigants, parties-in-person and advocate clerks, to the Court Complexes shall be prohibited, except the entry of Police Officers and accused for the purpose of remand. Parties-in-person, will be permitted to enter only for the purpose of physical filing. However, they shall not unnecessarily enter the court offices. Wherever, the accused is produced physically for remand, advocates are permitted to enter the premises for appearance in those particular cases. If presence of any parties is required in the Court halls, entry of litigants shall be allowed provided there is a specific order passed to that effect by the Courts concerned.
9. The Advocates, parties-in-person, advocate clerks and others whose entry is permitted by this SOP for filing of cases, shall scrupulously maintain the norms of physical/social distancing by always maintaining a minimum distance of six feet and shall scrupulously follow the directions and guidelines issued by the High Court from time to time as well as the advisories/SOP issued by the Principal Health Secretary, Government of Karnataka and guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time.
10. It is the responsibility of the Members of the Bar to ensure that the litigants are not unnecessary called to visit the Courts/Court premises.
11. The Bar Associations shall appeal to the litigants not to come to Court unless and until their presence is absolutely necessary.

12. No recreation activity, playing of games, cultural activities, programs shall be allowed in the Bar Associations. Bar Association premises shall be sanitized once in a week.
13. Every person entering the Court Complexes, shall be subjected to thermal scanning and at entry points, an enquiry will be made with him/her as to whether he/she has any symptoms of COVID-19. If it is found that anyone has any symptoms of COVID-19, he/she shall not be given entry into the Court Complex.
14. Courts shall take-up only the emergent/ urgent matters/ bail applications/ Petitions / Interim Applications. The hearing of such matters shall be through Hybrid (Virtual / Physical Mode) As for as possible the same shall be heard through Video Conferencing. For time being rest of matters shall be given date during first/regular hearing.
15. The request for urgent hearing shall be submitted by the Advocates/Party-in-person through the email address of the Principal District Judges/Principal Judges, as the case may be.
16. In the case of extreme urgency, a request for taking of the case which is already filed/filing of interlocutory application in the fresh or already filed cases, can be made by sending email to the registered email IDs of the respective courts. The memo stating the details of urgency with all material particulars shall be forwarded by email. The concerned Principal District Judges/ Principal Judges may, if satisfied about the existence of the extreme urgency, direct that the case/IA will be heard by concerned Judicial Officer by video conferencing hearing.

17. The Unit Heads shall take steps to sanitize the Court premises once in a week regularly.
18. Recording of evidence shall be postponed for the time being, except in those cases where time-bound schedule has been fixed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court or High Court. Evidence can be recorded in such time-bound cases.
19. The Judicial Officers shall make all possible efforts to deliver judgments in cases where judgments are reserved. The pronouncement of judgments shall be made after informing the advocates through video conferencing.
20. The recording of the statement under Section 164 Cr.P.C shall be preferably done through video conferencing. However, considering facts of a particular case, the courts will have discretion to record the statement by allowing personal presence of the witness.
21. Requisition for recording statement under section 164 Cr.P.C. shall be sent only through email-ID of the concerned Court and any order passed thereon shall be communicated to the concerned through SMS/email.
22. As far as possible, in the cases of accused in jail, their statements under Section 313 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, be recorded only through video conferencing.
23. The Principal District & Sessions Judges/Chief Judge shall make arrangements for issuing of certified copies at respective court level only.

24. Canteens/any other food outlets located within the court precincts, shall be kept closed until further orders.
25. Entry of Typists/Job Typists, Xerox operators, Notaries/Oath Commissioners to the Court precincts is prohibited. However, maximum 50% of them are permitted to enter the court complex per day for their respective Jobs on rotation basis as may be decided by the Principal District & Sessions Judge.
26. The itinerary arrangements made to any of the vacant Courts by directing the Presiding Officers of the Courts to itinerate such courts and also the itinerary arrangement made by directing the Presiding Officers of the Courts to itinerate to the Taluks/Villages, are hereby suspended, with immediate effect and until further orders. However, as far as possible, the emergent matters pertaining to itinerary Courts/Taluks/Villages shall be heard through Video Conference in the regular courts itself.
27. The Principal District & Sessions Judge shall ensure that separate arrangements shall be made in each Court for conducting remand proceedings in a structure away from the main Court building, shads, lounge for witnesses etc.

For the City of Bengaluru; the Remand Court at Gurunanank Bhavan at Bengaluru Urban District shall continue to function till further orders.

28. The Principal District Judges/Principal Judges are free to take such additional measures as the local conditions may require.
29. In case of any emergent situation, the Hon'ble Chief Justice will take decisions regarding permitting closure of Courts for sanitization.

BY ORDER OF HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

SD/-

(T.G. SHIVASHANKARE GOWDA)

Registrar General

ANNEXURE - A		
1	Bengaluru City	ccc-blru@hck.gov.in
	Court of Small Causes, Bengaluru	scc-blr@hck.gov.in
	Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Courts	cmm-blr@hck.gov.in
	Family Courts	nyayadegula-blr@hck.gov.in
	Mayo Hall Court	cccmayohall@gmail.com
2	Bengaluru Rural	pdj-blr@hck.gov.in
3	Bagalkot	bgkpdjphfilingbgk@gmail.com
4	Ballari	filingpdjballari@gmail.com
5	Belagavi	efilingbgv@gmail.com
6	Bidar	pdj-bidar@hck.gov.in
7	Chamarajanagara	pdjchamarajanagar@karnataka.gov.in
8	Chikkaballapura	pdjcbpur@karnataka.gov.in
9	Chikkamagaluru	pdj-chikkmluru@hck.gov.in
10	Chitradurga	filingcta@gmail.com
11	D.K. Mangaluru	pdjmangaluru@karnataka.gov.in
12	Davanagere	dvg@gmail.com
13	Dharwad	filingdharwad@gmail.com
14	Gadag	pdj-gadag@hck.gov.in
15	Hassan	pdjhassan@karnataka.gov.in
16	Haveri	filinghaveri@gmail.com
17	Kalaburagi	pdjkalaburagi@karnataka.gov.in
18	Kodagu-Madikeri	pdj.kodagu@gmail.com
19	Kolar	pdjkolar.filing@gmail.com
20	Koppal	kplclosure@gmail.com
21	Mandya	pdjmandya@karnataka.gov.in
22	Mysuru	pdj-mysuru@hck.gov.in
23	Raichur	pdjraichur@karnataka.gov.in
24	Ramanagara	pdjdistrictcourtramanagara@gmail.com.
25	Shivamogga	shimogapdjclosure@gmail.com
26	Tumakuru	pdj-tumakuru@hck.gov.in
27	Udupi	pdj-udupi@hck.gov.in
28	U.K. Karwar	pdjuttarakannada@karnataka.gov.in
29	Vijayapura	pdjvjp@gmail.com
30	Yadgiri	pdj-yadgir@hck.gov.in

ANNEXURE-B**TELEGRAM CHANNEL LINKS**

1	Bagalkot District Judiciary	https://t.me/bagalkotcourts
2	Ballari District Judiciary	https://t.me/ballaricourts
3	Belagavi District Judiciary	https://t.me/belagavicourts
4	Bengaluru District Judiciary	https://t.me/bengalurucourts
5	Bengaluru Rural District Judiciary	https://t.me/bengalurururalcourts
6	Bidar District Judiciary	https://t.me/bidarcourts
7	Chamrajanagar District Judiciary	https://t.me/chamarajnagarcourts
8	Chikballapur District Judiciary	https://t.me/chikballapurcourts
9	Chikkamagaluru District Judiciary	https://t.me/chikkamagalurucourts
10	Chitradurga District Judiciary	https://t.me/chitradurgacourts
11	Dakshina Kannada District Judiciary	https://t.me/dakshinakannadacourts
12	Davangere District Judiciary	https://t.me/davangerecourts
13	Dharwad District Judiciary	https://t.me/dharwadcourts
14	Gadag District Judiciary	https://t.me/gadagcourts
15	Hassan District Judiciary	https://t.me/hassancourts
16	Haveri District Judiciary	https://t.me/havericourts
17	Kalaburagi District Judiciary	https://t.me/kalaburagicourts
18	Kodagu District Judiciary	https://t.me/kodagucourts
19	Kolar District Judiciary	https://t.me/kolarcourts
20	Koppal District Judiciary	https://t.me/koppalcourts
21	Mandya District Judiciary	https://t.me/mandyacourts
22	Mysuru District Judiciary	https://t.me/mysurucourts
23	Raichur District Judiciary	https://t.me/raichurcourts
24	Ramnagar District Judiciary	https://t.me/ramnagarcourts
25	Shivamogga District Judiciary	https://t.me/shivamoggacourts
26	Tumakuru District Judiciary	https://t.me/tumakurucourts
27	Udupi District Judiciary	https://t.me/udupicourts
28	Uttara Kannada District Judiciary	https://t.me/uttarakannadacourts
29	Vijayapura District Judiciary	https://t.me/vijayapuracourts
30	Yadgir District Judiciary	https://t.me/yadgircourts