

COURT OF APPEAL
Practice Direction No 1/2020
Emergency Directions – COVID 19

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This practice direction is made with the concurrence of the President and Judges of the Court of Appeal in response to the COVID 19 virus and the Prime Minister's declaration of Jamaica as a disaster zone.
- 1.2 In recognition of the need to limit physical contact, as much as is possible, in order to contain the spread of the COVID 19 virus, this practice direction is intended to protect the health of all judges, staff members, close protection officers and security guards at the Court of Appeal as well as all attorneys-at-law and members of the public, while providing reduced court services.
- 1.3 This practice direction takes effect immediately and may be altered as the situation develops.

2. Hearings

- 2.1 All in person hearings in chambers and in open court have been suspended until Monday, 11 May 2020.
- 2.2 Hearings of urgent applications as well as case management conferences that are listed for hearing before a single judge of appeal will be conducted by way of the use of telephone conferences or other electronic means.
- 2.3 In general, and in so far as the court deems appropriate, matters scheduled for hearing in court will be considered by the court on paper. However, if the court determines that the matter should proceed by way of oral submissions, the matters will, unless deemed by the court to be urgent, be rescheduled to a later date.
- 2.4 Urgent matters for which an oral presentation is deemed by the court to be necessary, shall be conducted with the use of telephone conference, video conference or other electronic means.
- 2.5 During the period 23 March 2020 to 8 May 2020, all judgments of the court and/or single judges of appeal will be delivered in open court/chambers by whatever means the court/single judge of appeal deems appropriate, including teleconferences or other electronic means.

- 2.6 In criminal cases, the bail of all applicants/appellants whose hearing dates fall within the period 23 March 2020 to 8 May 2020 is hereby extended to 11 May 2020 at 9:30 am, at which time they shall be expected to appear before the court.
- 2.7 The Registrar of the Court of Appeal shall make contact with the respective parties to advise them how the court intends to deal with particular matters.

3. Access to the court building

- 3.1 All persons accessing the court building will be required to have their hands sanitised by the security guards stationed at the entrance points. The security guards will be authorized to decline entry to persons who refuse to comply with this requirement.
- 3.2 Persons exhibiting signs of the COVID 19 virus will not be granted entry to the court building.
- 3.3 Persons exhibiting signs of the COVID 19 virus after entry to the court building will be asked to leave the building immediately.
- 3.4 Public entrance to the court building, in particular the registry, will be limited to ten (10) persons or less, in keeping with the guidelines prescribed by the Government of Jamaica.

4. The registry

- 4.1 While the registry of the court will remain open to the public during its usual opening hours, the registry will be operating with reduced staff.
- 4.2 All users of the court are therefore asked to attend the registry only where absolutely necessary.
- 4.3 For general queries and information please contact the registry by telephone at (876) 633-7201 or by email at registry@courtofappeal.gov.jm



C. Dennis Morrison, OJ, CD
President of the Court of Appeal
Corrected and reissued 25 March 2020