

RE: COURT OPERATIONS ON 2-20 AUGUST 2021

SC ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 56-2021, July 30, 2021

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TO

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ALL JUSTICES OF THE APPELLATE COLLEGIATE COURTS, JUDGES OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS, COURT PERSONNEL THEREOF, AND COURT USERS

RE : COURT OPERATIONS ON 2-20 AUGUST 2021

To avert the possible surge in Covid-19 cases due to the Delta variant, and considering that the entire National Capital Region (NCR) has been placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) with heightened restrictions from 30 July 2021 to 5 August 2021, and under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) from 6 August to 20 August 2021, ALL courts and judicial offices in the NCR shall be PHYSICALLY CLOSED from 2 to 20 August 2021. However, they shall continue to operate online and conduct videoconferencing hearings only for urgent incidents and cases, such as, but not limited to, applications for bail, releases due to dismissal of cases or acquittal, habeas corpus, applications for temporary protection orders for Violence Against Women and Children cases, and analogous circumstances. The courts may be reached through their respective hotlines and email addresses as posted in the Supreme Court website.

The time for filing and service of pleadings and motions during this period is SUSPENDED and shall resume after seven (7) calendar days counted from the first day of the physical reopening of the relevant court.

For courts and judicial offices outside the NCR, court operations from 2 August 2021 until further notice shall be as follows:

1. In areas under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), with or without heightened restrictions, and Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), the courts and judicial offices shall be physically closed for the duration of such ECQ or MECQ. However, they shall continue to operate online and conduct videoconferencing hearings only for urgent incidents and cases, such as, but not limited to, applications for bail, releases due to dismissal of cases or acquittal, habeas corpus, applications for temporary protection orders for Violence Against Women and Children cases, and analogous circumstances. The courts may be reached through their respective hotlines and email addresses as posted in the Supreme Court website.

The time for filing and service of pleadings and motions during this period is SUSPENDED and shall resume after seven (7) calendar days counted from the first day of physical reopening of the relevant court.

2. In areas under General Community Quarantine (GCQ), with or without heightened restrictions, and Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), the courts and judicial offices shall be physically open during this period with an in-court skeleton workforce of at least twenty-five percent (25%) to at most fifty percent (50%). It

is understood that those do not belong to this skeleton workforce shall be working from home.

With notice to the Office of the Court Administrator, all judges of the first and second level courts may continue to conduct fully-remote videoconferencing hearings, regardless of the community quarantine classifications and physical location within the country, until further notice, pursuant to OCA Circular No. 67-2021.[1]

All courts shall, act within twenty-four (24) hours from the time the petition or motion is filed in urgent and exceptional cases, e.g., applications for bail, releases due to dismissal of cases or acquittal, habeas corpus, applications for temporary protection orders for Violence Against Women and Children cases, and analogous circumstances.

All prior issuances inconsistent herewith are deemed superseded.

For the guidance and compliance of all concerned.

30 July 2021, Manila

[1]Dated 31 May 2021.

(Sgd.) ALEXANDER G. GESMUNDO

Chief Justice

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