

## Announcement by Judiciary

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The Judiciary today (April 8) announced that in view of the latest public health considerations, the General Adjourned Period (GAP) will continue from April 14 (Tuesday) to May 3 (Sunday), and be subject to review having regard to the prevailing public health situation. The Judiciary wishes to again underline the fact that the public's health and safety, including that of court users and Judiciary staff, remain paramount considerations in the handling of court operations by the Judiciary.

### Remote Hearing

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The Judiciary issued on April 2 a Guidance Note for Remote Hearings for Civil Business in the High Court, which sets out the practice for remote hearings by video conferencing facilities (VCF) in civil cases in the Court of Appeal (CA) and the Court of First Instance (CFI) of the High Court during GAP. In this regard, two cases have already been heard by way of VCF on April 6 and 7 at the CA and the CFI respectively. The proceedings for both cases were conducted smoothly and further remote hearings using VCF may be held for suitable cases in the near future.

The Judiciary will continue to work closely with the legal profession and other stakeholders to further promote and explore the use of remote hearings.

### Court Proceedings

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All court/tribunal hearings will generally be adjourned during this period unless they are urgent and essential business as directed by the presiding Judges and Judicial Officers. Parties will be notified only if their hearings will be held as scheduled during this period.

Other urgent and essential hearings will continue to be handled in accordance with the established mechanisms, including the Duty Judge system. However, given the

recent rapid changes in the public health situation and having regard to the Government's prevailing preventive measures, the Judiciary will continue to monitor the situation very closely to see if any refinement to the list of urgent and essential hearings and/or matters during the period may be needed. The updated list of urgent and essential hearings and matters is uploaded onto the Judiciary website, and court users and the public are strongly urged to check the website regularly as the list may be subject to change at short notice due to the rapidly changing public health situation.

Three Magistrates' Courts (MCs) will operate each day from Monday to Friday, while Saturday and holiday sittings will be adopted for Saturdays and public holidays respectively as usual. The detailed arrangements are as follows:

April 14 (Tuesday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 15 (Wednesday)	Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open
April 16 (Thursday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Shatin MCs will open
April 17 (Friday)	Eastern MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open
April 18 (Saturday)	Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 19 (Sunday)	No MCs will open
April 20 (Monday)	Kwun Tong MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Shatin MCs will open
April 21 (Tuesday)	Eastern MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 22 (Wednesday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Tuen Mun MCs will open
April 23 (Thursday)	Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Shatin MCs will open
April 24 (Friday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 25 (Saturday)	Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 26 (Sunday)	No MCs will open
April 27 (Monday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs, and Tuen Mun MCs will open
April 28 (Tuesday)	Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Shatin MCs will open

April 29 (Wednesday)	Eastern MCs, Kowloon City MCs and Fanling MCs will open
April 30 (Thursday)	Holiday sitting will be adopted and Kwun Tong MCs will open
May 1 (Friday)	No MCs will open
May 2 (Saturday)	Saturday sitting will be adopted, i.e. Kwun Tong MCs, West Kowloon MCs and Fanling MCs will open
May 3 (Sunday)	No MCs will open

### Registries and Offices

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Registries and offices at various levels of courts and tribunals will remain closed during this period, but enhanced measures will be suitably introduced to support the revised scope of urgent and essential business. The list of business that will be handled by the registries during this period is uploaded onto the Judiciary website. Again, court users and the public are strongly urged to check the website regularly as the list may be subject to change at short notice due to the rapidly changing public health situation.

### Preventive and Crowd Management Measures

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The Judiciary will continue to put in place appropriate preventive and crowd management measures for the health protection of all people who are required to enter and remain in the court premises for urgent and essential business. Court users are required to have their body temperature taken and wear a surgical mask before they are allowed to enter and remain in the court premises.

To support the above arrangements, necessary queuing and other crowd management measures, as well as security controls to limit the number of court users entering and remaining in the Judiciary premises, will be put in place as appropriate.

To maintain social distancing, chessboard seating arrangement is adopted in courtrooms and lobbies with seating capacity cut by half. Additional holding spaces or waiting areas are provided whenever possible. Broadcasting of proceedings is arranged

on a needs basis. Capacity limits are set for confined areas such as registries and offices to avoid crowding of users.

Parties, legal representatives and other court users who are subject to any quarantine requirement or medical surveillance of the Government should not come to the Judiciary premises but to as soon as practicable apply to the court for permission of absence or inform the court with reasons for absence as appropriate.

Information on the detailed arrangements will be provided and uploaded onto the Judiciary website. Court users are strongly advised to check the updated information on the Judiciary website, and follow the advice of the Judiciary staff and security personnel when they attend court premises for court business.

For enquiries regarding general arrangements on the court businesses during the period, the following hotlines are being operated from Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 4pm:

- General Information: 2869 0869
- Court of Final Appeal: 2123 0123
- High Court: 2523 2212
- Probate: 2840 1683
- District Court: 2845 5696
- Family Court: 2840 1218
- Lands Tribunal: 2771 3034
- Labour Tribunal: 2625 0020
- Small Claims Tribunal: 2877 4068
- Magistrates' Courts: 2677 8373

The Judiciary will continue to post updated information, including Daily Cause Lists, messages related to the Judiciary's arrangements arising from public health considerations, and advice to court users visiting the courts, on the Judiciary website

([www.judiciary.hk](http://www.judiciary.hk)). Court users are advised to check the website for updated information as necessary.

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