

## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO GAZETTE (EXTRAORDINARY)

Vol. 59

Caroni, Trinidad, Monday 17th August, 2020—Price \$1.00

No. 144

1005

### REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

### PRACTICE DIRECTION

### COURT OPERATIONS COVID-19 PANDEMIC DIRECTIONS WITH EFFECT FROM AUGUST 17 2020 NO. 5

This Practice Direction is issued pursuant to Part 4 of the Civil Proceedings Rules 1998 (as amended), Part 20 of the Criminal Procedure Rules, Part 4 of the Family Proceedings Rules and Part 22 of the Children Court Rules and is applicable to the entire Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago which includes the Supreme Court and all Summary Courts.

The objective of this Practice Direction is to provide for adequate and appropriate measures with effect from August 17, 2020 at the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago to, *inter alia* –

- (a) Ensure continued access to justice;
- (b) Promote efficiency in case flow management and court operations generally;
- (c) Safeguard the health and safety of all stakeholders of the Court, including but not limited to Judges, District Judges, judicial officers, court staff, attorneys-at-law and members of the public;
- (d) Facilitate the use of electronic alternatives to in-person activities at the Court by external stakeholders; and
- (e) Ensure that appropriate administrative arrangements are made for all hearings,

### having regard to:

- (f) the recent increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the advent of community spread within the population;
- (g) the inherent risk to court personnel and members of the public arising from requiring persons to access court buildings physically at this time; and
- (h) recent developments which have required court buildings to be closed and staff to be quarantined.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS

Accordingly, the following measures shall take effect:

### EFFECTIVE DATES

This Practice Direction shall take effect on August 17, 2020 and continue until further notice or otherwise superseded (this period).

### HEARINGS TO BE CONDUCTED BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

- 1. During this period no in-person hearings shall be conducted except as otherwise provided for by these directions and all Judges, Masters, and District Judges shall conduct hearings and/or sittings of the Supreme Court and Summary Courts by electronic means only.
- 2. Where it is impossible to conduct a particular hearing by electronic means, or where in the opinion of the Court a hearing by electronic means is not in the interests of justice, the Court shall adjourn any such hearing and give such directions as may be necessary in the circumstances.
- 3. All jury trials are suspended during this period.
- 4. Prisoners shall not be required to attend a court building physically during this period.
- 5. Children shall not be required to attend a court building physically during this period

### **IN-PERSON HEARINGS**

- 6. Domestic violence matters may be conducted in person in the interests of justice and in keeping with the need to maintain appropriate health and safety requirements if:
  - a. It is deemed absolutely necessary by the Court to physically have the party present; and
  - b. There is no possible means available to the applicant or respondent to appear electronically.
- 7. An in-person hearing in relation to a domestic violence matter will be heard at a prescheduled appointed time save and except for urgent matters that may arise and all parties need not be required to appear in person or in the same room or at the same location.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

- 8. The court shall schedule appointments for in-person domestic violence hearings in such manner as to ensure that there is no congregating of persons and will provide persons with the appointments for their appearance.
- 9. Where a domestic violence in-person hearing is required, the Judge, Master or District Judge must consult with the Registrar of the Supreme Court or the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court as the case may be and the Court Manager of the relevant location, before scheduling to ensure that there is adequate and appropriate space available to allow for appropriate social distancing in keeping with the room capacity standards set by the Judiciary and to maintain national health and safety requirements. Judges, District Judges, judicial officers, attorneys at law and the public are reminded that access to and administrative control over:
  - a. All High Court buildings is exercised by the Registrars and the Court Managers on behalf of the Chief Justice; and
  - b. All District Court buildings is exercised by the Magistracy Registrars and the Court Managers on behalf of the Chief Justice,

and entry may be refused in the interest of safety of all Court users.

- 10. All Judges, Masters and District Judges through their support staff, must provide the Registrar of the Supreme Court or the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court as the case may be, with the names of all persons required to be in attendance at an in-person hearing, including, attorneys-at-law, parties, witnesses and any other person, within the time frame established by the Registrar of the Supreme Court for Supreme Court hearings and the Court Manager for that location for hearings at any District Court location.
- 11. The need for the presence of any member of staff in the court building for an in-person domestic violence hearing will be determined by the Registrar of the Supreme Court jointly with the Family Court Administrator, the Children Court Administrator or Criminal Court Administrator and in the case of a Summary Court by the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court jointly with the Family Court Administrator or the Criminal Court Administrator.
- 12. Attendance in the courtroom for an in-person domestic violence hearing must be limited to each party and their attorney(s)-at-law and any witness under examination where applicable. Persons not directly involved in the proceedings may not enter or sit in the courtroom without the prior joint approval of the Judge, Master or District Judge and the Registrar of the Supreme Court or the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court as the case may be.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

13. Witnesses waiting to give evidence in an in-person domestic violence hearing must remain seated in the designated area until they are required in the courtroom. Once a witness is relieved by the Court, the witness must leave the court building immediately.

### FILING OF DOCUMENTS (SUPREME COURT)

- 14. There shall be no manual filings at the court office and all filings shall be conducted by electronic means only.
- 15. A person who wishes to file an audio and or video exhibit electronically may contact the Registrar of the Supreme Court.
- 16. Attorneys-at-Law, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service and self-represented persons must file documents electronically. Electronic filing is by way of the Judiciary's e-filing platform <a href="https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/filing">https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/filing</a>.
- 17. Electronic filing kiosks are available at the following locations for self-represented persons only who have no other means to file electronically:
  - a. The Hall of Justice;
  - b. Supreme Court, San Fernando;
  - c. Supreme Court, Tobago;
  - d. Children Court (North Building);
  - e. Children Court (South Building);
  - f. Family Court (North); and
  - g. Family Court (Tobago).

Access to these kiosks are for the sole use of self-represented members of the public who are not attorneys-at-law.

- 18. Manual filing at any court office is limited to exceptional circumstances only as determined and approved by the Registrar of the Supreme Court.
- 19. An attorney-at-law or member of the public who wishes to obtain an **Office Copy** may make the request and schedule an appointment by emailing the request to:

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

COURT OFFICE	EMAIL ADDRESS
Supreme Court Hall of Justice – Office	offcopypos@ttlawcourts.org
Copies	
San Fernando Supreme Court Sub-	offcopysfo@ttlawcourts.org
Registry – Office Copies	
Tobago Supreme Court Sub-registry -	offcopytgo@ttlawcourts.org
office copies	
Family Court North court office	<u>fcn.response@ttlawcourts.org</u> .
Family Court <b>Tobago</b> court office	fct.response@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court North court office	ccn.co@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court South court office	ccs.co@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court Tobago court office	cct.co@ttlawcourts.org.

20. An attorney-at-law or member of the public who wishes to conduct any other business in person may make an enquiry or request an appointment by telephone or by emailing the request to the relevant court location. Details of the relevant email addresses and telephone numbers are set out in the Judiciary's E-services Court Directory (Appendix 1). Email address are as follows:

COURT OFFICE	EMAIL ADDRESS
Supreme Court Hall of Justice Court of	HOJCOA.Response@ttlawcourts.org.
Appeal court office	
Supreme Court Hall of Justice Civil court	HOJCV.Response@ttlawcourts.org.
office	
Supreme Court Hall of Justice Criminal	HOJCR.Response@ttlawcourts.org.
court office	
San Fernando Supreme Court Sub-	SCSFDO.Response@ttlawcourts.org.
Registry	
Tobago Supreme Court Sub-registry	HOJTGO.Response@ttlawcourts.org.
Family Court North court office	fcn.response@ttlawcourts.org.
Family Court <b>Tobago</b> court office	fct.response@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court North court office	ccn.co@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court South court office	ccs.co@ttlawcourts.org.
Children Court Tobago court office	cct.co@ttlawcourts.org.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

### FILING OF DOCUMENTS (SUMMARY COURT DOCUMENTS)

- 21. There shall be no manual filings at the court office and all filings shall be conducted by electronic means only.
- 22. A person who wishes to file an audio and or video exhibit electronically may contact the Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court.
- 23. Attorneys-at-Law, members of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service, and members of the public must file documents electronically. Electronic filing is by way of the Judiciary's e-filing platform <a href="https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/filing">https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/filing</a>.
- 24. An attorney-at-law, member of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service or member of the public who wishes to conduct any other business in person at any **District Criminal and Traffic Court court office** may make an enquiry or request an appointment by telephone or by emailing the request to the relevant court location. Details of the relevant email addresses and telephone numbers are set out in the Judiciary's E-services Court Directory (Appendix 1). Email address are as follows:
  - a. mrcc.portofspain@ttlawcourts.org;
  - b. mrcc.tunapuna@ttlawcourts.org;
  - c. mrcc.arima@ttlawcourts.org;
  - d. mrcc.sangregrande@ttlawcourts.org;
  - e. mrcc.chaguanas@ttlawcourts.org;
  - f. mrcc.couva@ttlawcourts.org;
  - g. mrcc.sanfernando@ttlawcourts.org;
  - h. mrcc.siparia@ttlawcourts.org;
  - i. mrcc.pointfortin@ttlawcourts.org;
  - j. mrcc.rioclaro@ttlawcourts.org;
  - k. mrcc.princestown@ttlawcourts.org;
  - 1. mrcc.mayaro@ttlawcourts.org; and
  - m. mrcc.tobago@ttlawcourts.org.

### **SUMMARY COURT MATTERS**

25. Bail for all persons currently on bail is hereby extended to the next scheduled hearing date on the same conditions.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

### PROBATE AND ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES

- 26. Attorneys may lodge **new applications only** at the Probate Registry using the Judiciary's E-Probate Portal.
- 27. Subject to paragraph 26, an attorney who has received an approval for filing may file the approved new application on the appointment date set by the Registrar of the Supreme Court.
- 28. The public may request an appointment to make an application for a small estate by emailing the request to <a href="https://example.com/HOJPB.Response@ttlawcourts.org">HOJPB.Response@ttlawcourts.org</a> or by contacting the Probate Registry at 223-1060 ext. 2264.
- 29. Attorneys and the public may lodge bonds, caveats, warnings and citations in new or existing applications electronically by emailing them to <a href="mailto:Probate.online@ttlawcourts.org">Probate.online@ttlawcourts.org</a>.
- 30. Attorneys and the public may request an appointment to file supplemental affidavits in existing applications or conduct any other business including enquiring as to the status of applications by emailing the request to <a href="https://example.com/HOJPB.Response@ttlawcourts.org">HOJPB.Response@ttlawcourts.org</a>.

### ACCESS TO COURT LOCATIONS BY APPOINTMENT

- 31. An attorney-at-law or any member of the public seeking access to a court building to conduct business must receive an appointment in advance by contacting the relevant court office via the telephone number and/or email address published on the website of the Judiciary.
- 32. Any person who has been granted access to a court building must wear an appropriate mask covering their nose and mouth and is required to comply with all other health and safety protocols in place, including the screening of persons, use of hand sanitisers, the taking of temperatures and social distancing.
- 33. Specific protocols may be instituted at designated areas, locations, departments or offices within a court building to safeguard the health of persons.
- 34. Any person who displays flu-like symptoms, or who otherwise fails to meet the screening standard required for entry, or who fails to comply with any measures or protocols instituted, may be denied entry to a court building.

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

### **FINES**

35. The payment of all fines due during this period is suspended until September 26, 2020.

### MAINTENANCE PAYMENTS

- 36. All persons who have been ordered to pay maintenance must contact the court before the next payment is due to make arrangements to pay and to address conversion to CourtPay for maintenance payments.
- 37. All persons who are ordered to be the recipients of maintenance money must contact the court before the next payment is due to make arrangements to receive the money and to address conversion to CourtPay for maintenance payments.
- 38. The Court can be contacted for this purpose by emailing or calling the relevant court office via the email address or telephone number stated in the Judiciary's E-services Court Directory (Appendix 1).

### SERVICE AND COMMISSIONER FEES

39. All service and commissioner of affidavit fees will be noted during this period and payment will be suspended until December 31, 2020.

### TRAFFIC TICKETS RECEIVED PRIOR TO MAY 26, 2020

40. While provision has been made in the Miscellaneous Amendments Act, Act No. 10 of 2020, for all tickets issued before May 26, 2020 to be settled within six (6) months from May 26, 2020, by payment of 50% of the penalty, the collection of these payments by the Judiciary are hereby suspended until September 26, 2020.

Dated this 17th day of August, 2020

### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

# TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

# JUDICIARY E-SERVICES COURT DIRECTORY

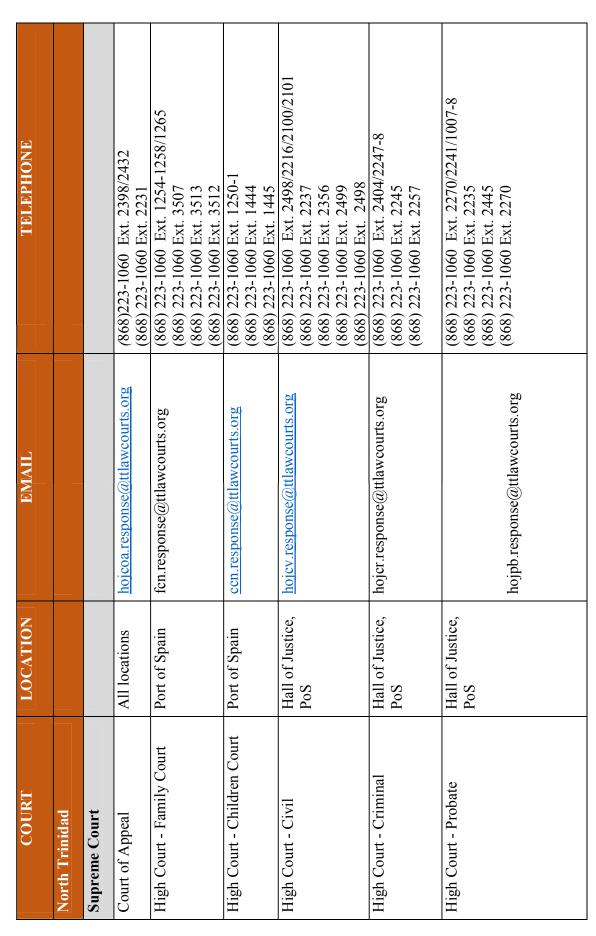
APPENDIX 1

WHAT DO YOU WANT	WHERE?	HOW DOTTO
TO DO?		
Apply for a Domestic Violence Protection order	At Family Courts	Email using domesticviolence.response@ttlawcourts.org
	At Magistrates' Courts	Call the Domestic Violence hotline 866-DVCT (3828)
Apply for urgent custody order	Family Courts	Email or Call the Family Court (North or Tobago)
Apply for urgent custody order	At a Magistrates' Court	Email or Call the relevant Magistrates' Court
Apply for urgent maintenance order	At Family Court	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
	At a Magistrates' Court	
Switch to CourtPay to pay or receive maintenance	At Family Courts	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
	At Magistrates' Courts	
Collect maintenance money	At Family Courts	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
	At Magistrates' Courts	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
Pay maintenance	At Family Courts	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
	At Magistrates' Courts	Call the CourtPay hotline 866-CPAY (2729)
File an urgent Private complaint	At Magistrates' Court	Contact the relevant Magistrates' Court by email or by telephone
Make an urgent Children In Need of Supervison (CHINS) application	At Children Courts	Email or Call the Children Court (North, South, Tobago)

 $\textbf{1005} \color{red} - Continued$ 



WHAT DO YOU WANT	WHERE?	HOW DO I DO IT?
TO DO?		
Pay a ticket	At Magistrates' Court	Call the Magistrates' Court for information
Pay a fine	At Magistrates' Court	Call the Magistrates' Court for information
Find out the date for my Magistrates' Court Matter	At a Magistrates' Court	Call the Magistrates' Court for information
Maintenance	Convert2courtpay@ttlawcourts.org	866-CPAY (2729)
Domestic Violence Matters	domesticviolence.response@ttlawcour	Domestic Violence Hotline: 866-DVCT (3828)
File Urgent High Court Civil		Contact the Civil High Court by email or telephone
Matters	High Court	
Find out the new date for my		Contact the Civil High Court by email or telephone
High Court Civil matter		
Find out the new date for my		Contact the Criminal High Court by email or telephone
High Court Criminal matter		
Find out the new date for my		Contact the Court of Appeal by email or telephone
Appeal	Court of Appeal	
File Urgent Court of Appeal		Contact the Court of Appeal by email or telephone
Matters		
Get copies of Court documents:		Call relevant court or see Practice Direction for email addresses





Trinidad North District			
	Port of Spain District Court	mrcc.portofspain@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2633- 4/2636/2640/2679/2698
		Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace	
			(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2908-9-10/ 2913
	Arima District	mrcc.arima@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2915/ 2916 or 312-2212/312-
	Court	Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2920 or 353-2694/282-4729
		District Clerk of the Peace	286-4029/ 286-4123
		mrcc.tunapuna@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2824/2826/2827-8
	Tunapuna	Magistracy Registrar	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2823 or 312-8879
	District Court	Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2839 or 281-9199
		District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2826
		mrcc.sangregrande@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2945-6/2947/2950
	Sangre Grande	Magistracy Registrar	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2945 or 312-2543
	District Court	Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2948 or 353-4195
		District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2947 or 286-3828
	Chomionog		(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1801-1807
	Cilagualias Dietrict Court		868) 223-1060 Ext. 1802 or 312-9727
	District Court	mrcc.chaguanas@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1820/1843 or 277-2470/281-
		Magistracy Registrar	2530
		Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1801 or 286-5038
		District Clerk of the Peace	



South Trinidad			
Supreme Court			
High Court - Civil	Sun Fernando		(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1608/1610/1619/1621/1634/1640 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1612 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1613 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1614
High Court – Criminal	Supreme Court, San Fernando	scsfdo.response@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1609/1645/1647
High Court – CSR	Supreme Court, San Fernando		(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1621
High Court – Matrimonial	Supreme Court, San Fernando		(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1666/1667
High Court - Children Court	Fyzabad (South)	ccs.response@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1343
Trinidad South District			
	Couva District Court	mrcc.couva@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1821/1825/1833 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1821 or 312-0118 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1828 or 281-2960
	San Fernando District Court	mrce.sanfernando@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1602 or 291-2936 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1917/ 3700 or 366-1773 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1602 or 291-4811 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 3709 or 287-4398 286-5636
	Mayaro District Court	mrcc.mayaro@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2961-2/2964 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2961 or 312-9826 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2968 or 281-4382



### PRACTICE DIRECTION No. 5—COURT OPERATIONS—Continued

/s/Ivor Archie Chief Justice

	Point Fortin District Court Rio Claro District Court Princes Town District Court	mrcc.pointfortin@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace mrcc.rioclaro@ttlawcourts.org mrcc.princestown@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1850-1/1853/1857 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1850 or 312-6985 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1870 or 281-9911 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1851 or 287-9129 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1881-2 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2985 or 312-4753 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2990 or 281-6115 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2986 or 286-4647 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1933/1935/1941/1945
Tobago Supreme Court	Siparia District Court	Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 1931 or 355-6059 868) 223-1060 Ext. 1951 or 287-8016
High Court – Civil/Criminal Family Court	Hall of Justice, Tobago	hojtgo.response@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2002 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 1445 (868) 223-1060 Ext 1259-1261
High Court - Children Court Tobago District		cct.response@ttlawcourts.org	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 6002/6040
	Scarborough District Court	mrcc.tobago@ttlawcourts.org Magistracy Registrar Court Manager District Clerk of the Peace	(868) 223-1060 Ext. 2053/2054/2073 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2053 or 310-9931 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2003 or 353-7356 (868) 223-1060 Ext. 2054 or 286-3702