

## **Notification for Stakeholders**

### **Adjustments to the Mode of Registry Business at the District Court, the Family Court and the Lands Tribunal**

#### **Objective**

Further to our earlier notification on pilot implementation of various measures to adjust the mode of registry business in the High Court (“HC”) with effect from 14 August 2023, the Judiciary has decided to extend the new mode of operation to the District Court (“DC”) level as a transitional measure before the use of iCMS becomes mandatory (where available) for all legally represented litigants in future.

2. Drawing on the operational experience from the HC, we will introduce the following measures at the DC level starting from 4 December 2023 (Monday) –

- (a) mandating the use of drop boxes with simplified procedures for paper filing in respect of selected registry business which does not require immediate processing in the DC Registry;
- (b) enhancing facilitating measures for migration towards electronic filing<sup>1</sup> in DC ; and
- (c) promoting the use of emails for selected registry business in the Family Court (“FC”) and the Lands Tribunal (“LandsT”).

Details are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### **Adjustment Measures**

##### ***Mandatory use of drop boxes for selected businesses for DC***

3. The drop box arrangement at the HC Registry has been running smoothly since its implementation. We are pleased to note that the legal profession generally welcomes the drop box arrangement which has effectively shortened the average queueing time at registry counters.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic filing under the integrated Court Case Management System (“iCMS”) was first rolled out in the District Court in May 2022.

4. Making reference to the practical experience gained during the pilot arrangements at the HC Registry, we will extend the mandatory use of drop box at the DC Registry for the types of documents specified at **Annex**. Similar to the arrangements for the HC, to save legal practitioners' efforts, no deposit form would be required to accompany the drop-box submissions. Proof of receipt for documents submitted to drop boxes, if required, can take the form of acknowledging receipt by registry staff on a copy of the documents (or their backsheets).

5. Subject to clarification by the registries with the depositing party or such other court directions, documents deposited into the drop boxes will be regarded as filed on the same day. These drop box paper submissions will be processed by registry staff within the same day as far as practicable. This will be in tandem with the handling of the documents filed electronically under the iCMS for the DC<sup>2</sup>. Owing to the need for handling the paper documents (received through drop box) and scanning them for uploading into the iCMS, the processing time of each such document may be considerably longer than if the same is filed electronically under iCMS.

***Enhancing facilitating measures for migration towards electronic filing in the DC***

6. Since the roll out of iCMS in the DC in May 2022, we note that the number of registration for iCMS accounts has been on a steady rising trend. As at October 2023, around 30% of the law firms (i.e. over 270) in Hong Kong have already registered for iCMS organization accounts. Some 6.4% of the total number of new cases were initiated through iCMS, while some 1.6% of the total number of documents were filed through electronic filing.

7. As it is the Judiciary's ultimate goal to make iCMS the primary litigation system, we have been stepping up facilitating and support measures to assist court users, particularly legal representatives, in switching to electronic filing and related services under iCMS. We believe that the introduction of drop box and relevant e-communications as a transitional arrangement can help induce a cultural change in the filing practice of the legal profession, from conventional over-the-counter services to contactless transactions, and eventually to electronic transactions.

8. We will be providing more hands-on briefings/demonstrations at the Help Centre and self-help kiosks/facilities for registration, filing and scanning of documents at or near the DC registry/Help Centre. The relevant

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<sup>2</sup> Under the arrangements for the iCMS for the DC, our registry staff aim at completing the processing of time-critical documents within the same working day.

demonstration video clips could also be conveniently accessed at [https://www.judiciary.hk/en/e\\_courts/ref\\_video.html](https://www.judiciary.hk/en/e_courts/ref_video.html).

9. To further promote the use of electronic filing, iCMS promotional videos with sharing of user experience by legal practitioners have also been uploaded onto the Judiciary's website at [https://www.judiciary.hk/en/e\\_courts/ref\\_sharing.html](https://www.judiciary.hk/en/e_courts/ref_sharing.html) and will be shown in the vicinity of the DC registry.

### *Greater use of emails for the FC and the LandsT*

#### *Listing of Hearings*

10. We will enable legal practitioners to use emails for listing of adjourned hearings where listing directions with estimated time have been given by the presiding Judges or Masters of the FC and Presiding Officers and Members of the LandsT.

11. Law firms may send emails to the registries of the FC and the LandsT at [fclisting@judiciary.hk](mailto:fclisting@judiciary.hk) and [ltlisting@judiciary.hk](mailto:ltlisting@judiciary.hk) respectively with their lawyers' available dates. Upon fixing the hearing dates, the registries would send emails to the law firms for confirmation. For the DC, law firms may make use of iCMS for the same purpose.

#### *Special Email Accounts*

12. Since 2020, the Judiciary has set up special one-way email accounts to facilitate remote lodgment of documents to the HC, the DC, the FC and the LandsT, especially during the General Adjourned Period under the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the pilot arrangements adopted for the HC, to enhance communication efficiency, we will turn the one-way email accounts for the FC and the LandsT into two-way ones such that the court may send out messages or documents to legal practitioners. For the DC, iCMS can support such two-way communication as well.

13. To prevent the misuse of the email accounts for purposes other than those as specified above, submission of documents will only be restricted to those specifically invited or permitted by the court. All other documents received will **not** be entertained.

## **Next Steps**

14. The above arrangements shall take effect on 4 December 2023 (Monday) and may be refined in light of operational experience and feedback from court users. We will continue to review and further adjust the mode of operation at court registry as appropriate.

15. We should like to take the opportunity to appeal to the legal profession to register with the iCMS early and make use of the electronic filing and related services where available before it becomes mandatory at a suitable time in future.

## **Enquiries**

16. For general enquiries on the above arrangements, please contact the following officers:

- **District Court** – Ms Anny Tam, Chief Judicial Clerk at 2582 4200;
- **Family Court** – Miss Wendy Shum, Chief Judicial Clerk at 2582 5370;  
and
- **Lands Tribunal** – Ms Ada Law, Chief Judicial Clerk at 2170 3815.

**Judiciary Administration**  
**November 2023**

**List of Documents for the  
Mandatory Use of Drop Box in the District Court Registry**

<b>Document Types for General Civil Cases</b>	
1.	Affidavit/Affirmation (For Filing/ Hearing)
2.	Affidavit/Affirmation of service (O.62)
3.	Certificate of No Intention to Defend
4.	Certificate of Claiming Fixed Costs
5.	Certificate of Service
6.	Certificate of Service O.22, r9
7.	Certificate of Service O.62A,r9
8.	Certificate re Time Estimates for Trial (Para. 25 of PD 5.2)
9.	Listing Questionnaire
10.	Mediation Certificate
11.	Mediation Notice
12.	Mediation Response
13.	Notice of Discontinuance
14.	Notice of Change of Address/ Name of Solicitors
15.	Notice of Intention to Proceed
16.	Notice of Intention to Enter Judgment
17.	Notice to Admit
18.	Notice to Insurer
19.	Notice to Occupants
20.	Questionnaire for PI Actions, PD 18.1
21.	Request for Further and Better Particulars of Pleading / Document
22.	Solicitors' Certificate
23.	Statement of Truth
24.	Timetabling Questionnaire
<b>Document Types related to Employee's Compensation Cases (ECC)</b>	
25.	ECC Certificate of Assessment
26.	ECC Certificate of Review of Assessment
27.	ECC Further and Better Particulars
28.	ECC List of Earnings

<b>Document Types related to Equal Opportunities (EO) Actions</b>	
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29.	EO Questionnaire
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<b>Document Types related to Legal Aid Matters</b>	
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30.	Legal Aid Memorandum of Notification that a party has been refused Legal Aid
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31.	Legal Aid Memorandum of Notification that a party has applied for Legal Aid
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32.	Legal Aid Memorandum of Discharge/Revoke
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33.	Legal Aid Certificate/ Notification of Change of Solicitor/Counsel
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34.	Notice of Amendment of Legal Aid Certificate
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