



**SUPREME COURTS & NATIONAL COURTS
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**NJSS COVID - 19 Protocols
Protocol No 4 of 2021
For in house and public issue**

In view of the rise in COVID-19 cases and in consultation with the Acting Chief Justice, the Judges through the Acting Chief Justice and the Secretary I now issue this protocol.

PROTOCOL 1 PARTIAL SHUT DOWN OF COURTS IN WAIGANI

1. As of Tuesday 30th March 2021, and until Tuesday April 13th, 2021, the court in Waigani will undergo a partial lockdown.
2. This protocol will be reviewed on Tuesday 13th April 2021.

PROTOCOL 2 STAFF ATTENDANCE DURING SHUTDOWN.

1. Staff deployment arrangement under COVID 19 protocol 3 remains the same.
2. All Managers and track leaders will return to work as of Tuesday 30th March 2021.
3. Only 1 or 2 junior officers can assist each manager or track leader. Names of such officers are to be submitted to security by close of business on 30st March 2021.
4. Where there is need for additional staff, approval must be sought from Secretary and or Registrar immediately.

5. Any manager or track leader tested positive must immediately self-isolate and staff working with such manager or track leader must self-isolate for 14 days and be tested for Covid-19 on at least the 10th day of self-isolation.
6. Any staff member tested positive must immediately self-isolate and all staff working with such officer must self-isolate for 14 days and be tested for Covid-19 on at least the 10th day of self-isolation.
7. In the event of 5 and 6 above the manager track lead or staff member must ensure the members of your family are also tested for Covid 19.
8. Any staff member feeling sick must remain at home and seek assistance.
9. The place of work affected will be closed and cleaned immediately.

PROTOCOL 3 **JUDGES CHAMBERS**

1. Judges are responsible for decision as to whether their staff come to work with them or not.
2. Where a judge is tested positive, Protocol 2 (5) and (6) shall apply to the Judge and officers of the judge's chambers.
3. Where a Judge's staff is tested positive, he should notify the judge and seek medical assistance. Such officer must also get his family members to be tested and get medical assistance should they be also tested positive.
4. A staff of a judge who feels sick must remain at home and not come to work.
5. Staff will only resume work when approved by a judge and in any case with a Covid-19 negative test result.

PROTOCOL 4 **ENTRY INTO COURT PREMISES**

A. ENTRY AT GATES

1. Only Judges, Directors of PNGCJE and Paul Kelly can enter through the judges' gate. Upon entry at the gate, security officers with temperature guns will check temperatures and ensure Judges and occupants in their vehicles are masked.
2. All staff must come in through the main gate. There will be screening and monitoring at this gate. All officers entry will be recorded by Security at this gate.

3. Only Lawyers and lead parties/ Litigants (one per party) can enter court premises on the date and time scheduled for their hearings per Protocol 5.
4. All persons entering the Court premises must wear masks always covering both their mouths and nose whilst inside the Court premises and have their hands sanitised.
5. Immediately after a hearing of each of their cases, counsel and parties shall leave the Court and Court premises.

B. ENTRY INTO COURTROOMS

A security guard shall be posted at each Court Room during session to.

- a. Ensure all persons wishing to enter any Court Room is wearing their masks and their hands are sanitised.
- b. Ensure only one lawyer and one person per party enters a Court Room and duly masked and hand sanitised.
- c. Ensure lawyers and parties enter the Court Room strictly following the scheduling of their cases and in any case ensure a maximum of 10 people subject to social distancing are allowed in at any one time. No more access is to be given after the tenth person is allowed in.

C. ENQUIRY AT REGISTRY & GENERAL OFFICES

1. All enquiries with the Registry shall be made by phone numbers and or email address provided in protocol 3 of 2021.
2. If access is necessary only one person per issue is to be admitted and directed to
 - a. the cement platform outside new wing to await assistance or.
 - b. to the foyer to await assistance.
3. All persons admitted under (2) above must wear masks always covering both their mouths and nose whilst inside the Court premises and have their hands sanitised.
4. A security officer will be on duty at the two places specified under 2 (a) and (b) to direct.
 - a. Persons one at a time to the counter for assistance.
 - b. only one counter door is to be opened for this purpose.
 - c. A security officer at each counter location shall ensure each person is masked and their hands are sanitised.

5. Entry to general offices Registry or Corporate Services
 - a. All clients should be dealt with by phone or email.
 - b. If access is necessary, the visitor must be screened at the gate before entry.
 - c. All persons admitted under (b) above must wear masks always covering both their mouths and nose whilst inside the Court premises and have their hands sanitised.
 - d. This protocol applies to all service providers including maintenance workers, IT workers, food deliveries etc.

PROTOCOL 5 DAILY DIARY AND LISTINGS

1. Daily diary will be issued as normal, however.
 - a. Each case shall be given a time slot for hearing between 10 to 20 minutes per case or as a Judge may direct.
 - b. Judges' chambers to provide timing for each case to Mathew Bae a day before the schedule date.
 - c. The list in 1 (b) above must go out to the lawyers and public at least one day before the sitting and or first thing in the morning.
 - d. Each case will be listed per time slot.
 - e. Lawyers and parties will attend as per time slot.
 - f. This is necessary and required to reduce the number of people in courtrooms at any one time and to avoid unnecessary crowding of Court Rooms.

PROTOCOL 6 FRESH MATTERS/ URGENT APPLICATIONS

1. All fresh matters criminal or civil shall be referred to the relevant Judge's chambers for chambers directions for parties to comply and return to the Court on dates fixed by such orders.
2. All IECMS matters will continue to be managed and dealt with by Kandakasi DCJ unless he otherwise directs in writing while the other Judges will deal with matters on their respective lists.
3. Matters considered urgent must after meeting requirements for urgent matters shall be referred to the relevant Judge's chambers for directions.
4. Matters referred for further hearing must follow protocol 5 above.

PROTOCOL 7. DUTY TRAVEL

1. Given the increased number of Covid cases mainly attributed to Judges and Staff on duty travel, all duty travel outside a Judge or Staff's residential location is now suspended for a month.
2. Any request for travel must be approved by Chief Justice and or Deputy Chief Justice and this protocol applies to any future travel that might have been approved previously.

PROTOCOL 8. DAILY and CONTINUOUS TESTING

1. Management will now work at arranging facilities for continuous in-house testing.
2. When the testing facilities are in place, all Judges and Staff who have not yet had their tests done tested, repeat tests for anyone who has had contact with a confirmed case of covid after his or her last test and anyone with signs and symptoms of Covid-19.
3. Management will now arrange for automatic temperature scanners in each office entrances for continuous recording of body temperatures.

PROTOCOL 9 COURT SITTINGS

1. Due to limited resources, judges are reminded that, sitting in court during this lockdown period is risky and are required to properly assess the risks and allow for sittings only after carefully and properly assessing the risks.
2. Subject to each Judge critically assessing and making responsible decisions for the safety of him or herself, Court Staff and others and ensuring a strict adherence to these Protocols, there are no restrictions on court sittings.
3. Judges in Waigani may opt to use online sitting facilities in court 8, 9 and 10.
4. Court room 9 is reserved for IECMS.
5. Any Judge wishing to use any of the three Court Rooms, will indicate to Kandakasi DCJ and all other Judges in Waigani for appropriate scheduling and allocation of any of the Court Rooms on a first come first serve basis.

Protocol 10. PROVINCIAL APPLICATION

1. This protocol may be applied to all provincial locations with appropriate adaptation to local situations where there are known Covid-19 cases in the relevant province.
2. The relevant Provincial Judge Administrator is required to make a critical assessment of the risks and make decisions to shutdown partially or fully depending on the level or exposure and number Covid-19 cases in the relevant province in consultation with the Chief Justice.

Protocol 11.

CENTRAL POINT OF CONTACT

1. The Registrar is now the designated officer for the purposes of disseminating all information on COVID 19 throughout the country.
2. This includes information of people testing positive, information relating proposed shut down, information on supply of necessary equipment and supplies needed etc.
3. The COVID 19 team will assist the Registrar in this regard.

Issued on the 30th of March 2021



Registrar