

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR FUNCTIONING OF STUDIO BASED COURTS**

### **General Instructions**

- **Gate No.1** shall be kept open exclusively for entry and exit of Hon'ble Judges. **Gate No. 3** shall be used for vehicular and pedestrian entry and exit of Registry Officials, Court staff, lawyers and other permitted persons. The other Gates shall remain closed.
- All vehicles of Court staff, lawyers and other permitted persons shall be diverted to the parking area, after entry from Gate No.3.
- Provision for **mandatory thermal check** and sanitization has been made at the entry point into the Court premises, situated near the cycle stand at Gate No. 3. This shall be the only point for entry and exit into the Court premises for lawyers and other permitted persons for hearing through studio based Courts.
- Entry into the Court premises, till further orders, of the Ld. Counsels/parties or other stakeholders, for hearing through studio based Courts will be through daily "**E-passes**".
- E-Pass will be generated on-line by the learned Advocates who have to appear in the Court for hearing, from the website of Patna High Court by providing details pertaining to the case.
- The Ld. arguing counsel/ assistant Lawyer/registered clerk/parties, who have been issued E-passes, shall be permitted to enter the Court premises through the designated gates, after subjecting themselves to the thermal and such other scanning devices as may be installed for detecting body temperature, infection status, etc. as also after verification of their ID Cards.
- **E-Pass** will be valid only for the particular day and time slot for which it is issued and entry in the High Court premises shall be allowed only on the basis of the E-Pass.

- Despite consent by the Ld. Advocates/Parties-in-person, only such number of Counsels/parties may be permitted to appear during hearing inside Courtrooms, so that the total number does not exceed the working capacity of the Court(s) as determined considering the physical distancing norms.
- A designated Court-staff shall be stationed near the entry point who shall note the name and mobile number of the concerned Advocate/litigant/Registered Clerk against the relevant item number(s) of the cause list. Only one arguing counsel along with one assistant Lawyer and one registered clerk, per party, shall be allowed to enter inside the premises and Court-rooms, whose cases are listed for the day.
- Once entry is permitted to any arguing counsel/ assistant Lawyer/registered clerk, as aforesaid, for any such case listed for the day, no other person, for the same case and for the same party, shall be permitted to enter inside the Court premises.
- On entering the Court premises, the Ld. arguing counsel/ assistant Lawyer/registered clerk/parties shall proceed to the Court room where their case is listed and wait for their turn to enter respective Court rooms where the hearing of their respective cases is scheduled.
- Seats in each Court Room shall be limited to bare minimum and entry in the Court shall be permitted to those Advocates/Party-in-person whose matter is called out for hearing and also for Advocates whose item is immediate next, subject to availability of space. The remaining Advocates shall wait in the **Designated Area / Waiting Hall** for their turn maintaining social distance. It shall be incumbent upon the Advocates/Party-in- person to maintain minimum prescribed physical distancing norms between each other.
- Entry of the advocate clerks (limited to one advocate clerk per lawyer) shall be permitted on the basis of their identification by the concerned advocate and display of their I-Cards.

- **Wearing of Face Masks** in the proper manner, frequent use of hand sanitizer and maintaining physical distancing norms is mandatory for all entrants into the High Court premises, including the Court rooms.
- There shall be strict adherence to Social Distancing norms and directions/ guidelines/ SOPs/ advisories issued by the Government of India and the Government of Bihar in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- No entry in the Court blocks shall be permitted to Juniors, Interns or Law students associated with the advocate concerned, relative of any party-in-person/litigant, non-registered clerks.
- Litigants and parties concerned, who are represented by any Advocate, shall only be allowed to enter inside the Court premises where their personal appearance is required by virtue of Court order.
- **Special Visitor Pass** shall be issued to the Litigants / parties concerned, on an application made by them or their Advocate along with the copy of the Court's order directing them to appear in person. Such application shall be made two days prior to the date of hearing to the learned Registrar General. Party shall then produce the Pass along with valid ID proof at the entry gate.
- The Advocates, Party-in-person and registered clerks above the age of 65 years and those suffering from co-morbidities are advised to refrain from entering the Court premises.
- Persons displaying symptoms of flu, fever, cough etc. shall not be permitted entry inside the Court premises.
- In the lifts, entry of maximum three persons shall be allowed at one time.
- The Advocates, Party-in-person and registered clerks shall move out of the High Court premises immediately after the hearing of their case is over.
- An advocate, whose studio based Court hearing, on a particular day, coincides with his case listed for hearing through video conferencing mode on the very same day, shall be required to request the latter Court (hearing the case through video conference mode) to accommodate the hearing of his case in another suitable slot, by sending a whatsapp message to the Court Master concerned, after giving necessary details like his name, case

number and parties name, as also upon due prior intimation to the ld. Advocate for the opposite party.

- The Barrister Association, Lawyers Association, Advocates Association, all other associations, Advocate Library, public utility services and Canteens located in the High Court premises shall remain closed until further orders.