

POST-LOCKDOWN FUNCTIONING OF COURT

1. Courts can resume physical functioning in a restricted form only after the transport services, particularly, suburban trains and public transport system, are resumed. Most lawyers and Court staff use suburban trains and public transport to reach Courts. Without such services resuming, it may not be feasible to resume normal Court work even at a reduced level.
2. Once lockdown measures are eased and there is a definite announcement regarding the resumption of suburban trains and the public transport system, it will take at least a week before the Courts can resume physical functioning in any form. The Court rooms have to be cleaned, the buildings have to be sanitised and requisite measures have to be put in place before physical Court functioning resumes even in a reduced form.
3. Only two of the entry gates to the High Court, Main Building will be open, i.e. Gate-‘E’ on Old Post Office Street and Gate-‘B’, the Main Gate on the southern side near Surya Sen statue,. Apart from this, only the Judges’ Gate will remain open for Judges, Registrars, drivers, orderlies and protocol personnel. However, other Court staff should use the other gates.
4. While resuming physical Court functioning, everyone must abide by the advisories and directives issued by the Central and State Governments regarding hygiene, distancing, not crowding and

the like. The proposals hereafter are in tune with such Government directives and adversaries.

5. Mentioning will be allowed only by way of Vide Conference between 4.30pm and 5pm on every working day, restricted to six or seven Courts at a time. Mentioning schedules pertaining to respective Benches will be announced in advance on the High Court Website for the convenience of all concerned. Till such time that all restrictions as to movement and crowding are absolutely lifted, persons not having work in Court and litigants who are not appearing in person or who have not been directed to appear before any Court, should refrain from coming to Court. In any event, unless there is definite business, lawyers should try and come close to the time when their matters are scheduled to be taken up and leave not much later than after their matters are over.
6. It is proposed that Benches will sit on a staggered basis. If, there are, say, 27 Benches in all (Division Benches and Single Benches put together), 14 Benches will sit on Monday, Wednesday and Friday in one week and Tuesday and Thursday of the following week. Similarly, 13 other Benches will sit on Tuesday and Thursday of the first week and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the second week. Such system will continue to ensure regular functioning of Courts but with much less footfall in the Court arena, both of lawyers and staff.
7. It is proposed that every Bench will indicate a cluster of four to six matters which will be taken up in Courts on every hour of

sitting. If such matters are exhausted, other matters scheduled later in that day will not be taken up during such time. If the matters are not exhausted during the allocated time, they will stand adjourned till another day, but will not spill over into the times allotted for other matters on that particular day. This will ensure certainty of matters and limited need for lawyers to stay the entire day in Court.

8. It is proposed that apart from the Judges on the Bench, three Court staff will be present in every Court room at any given point of time. No more than six lawyers and litigants will be allowed entry into any Court room at any given point of time. If a particular matter requires more lawyers, such matter will stand adjourned unless the parties agree otherwise without compromising on the number of persons being permitted entry into a particular Court room. For the larger Court rooms, like Court Nos. 1, 8, 11, 12 and 16 and some Court rooms in the Centenary Building, a maximum of eight persons other than the Judges and Court staff will be allowed access to such Court rooms at any given point of time.
9. There can be no crowding in the Court corridors. In keeping with the Government advisories, PWD will mark circles on the corridors. A person may stand in the corridors within such circles or may use the corridor as a passage but persons should not remain in the corridor unless within a circle or for merely passing through.

10. It is proposed that the distancing norms be also maintained in the Library Rooms. It is suggested that no more than 25 per cent of the sitting capacity in any library room be allowed entry into such room at any given point of time. However, this has to be monitored by the Libraries and members of the Bar.
11. With such restricted functioning of the Court, it is expected that the number of lawyers, clerks and others connected will be much reduced in the Court rooms and the number of vehicles parked around the Court buildings will also be minimal and reasonable. The litigants and other staff who may not be required to be present should be discouraged from coming to the Court or remaining in the Court premises beyond the period absolutely necessary.
12. All lifts will be functional. However, no more than three persons will be allowed on the smaller lifts and not more than five persons will be allowed on the bigger lifts at a time.
13. The traveller connecting to the Main Building and the Centenary Building will be functional on an experimental basis as long as the two-step gap norm is maintained.
14. In the event, physical functioning of the Court resumes but it is observed that the distancing and health and hygiene advisories are not been met, the Chief Justice may be constrained to stop the physical functioning of Court.
15. At the Filing Counters, the Oath Commissioners' Office and Certified Copy Sections, crowding will not be permitted. Queuing

should be followed by maintaining distancing norms and designated circles would be put in place on the floor.

16. Applications for obtaining certified copy may be made online as per the information to be put up on the High Court website.
17. For the time being, the canteens and refreshment services in the High Court premises will not resume.
18. The Lawazima Court will publish a list of limited number of matters. Times will also be indicated so that the Lawazima Court is not crowded.
19. Mentioning before the individual Benches will resume a week before physical functioning of Court resumes so that the list of matters can be arranged accordingly, based on the urgency of the matters.
20. A degree of responsibility and dignity has to be inculcated to adhere to a rational code of conduct for the benefit of individuals and the society at large.