

## **SUPREME COURT OF INDIA**

### **Modified Standard Operating Procedure for physical hearing (with hybrid option) before Hon'ble Court**

In continuation of directions already notified regarding functioning of the Supreme Court of India, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, more particularly through Circulars dated 14.03.2020, 23.03.2020, 30.08.2020, 05.03.2021 & 28.08.2021, and on consideration of the requests received from the Bar Associations, and on recommendations of the Hon'ble Judges Committee in that regard, the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India has been pleased to direct as follows:-

1. In view of the encouraging response from the Bar and with a view to further facilitate hearing through physical mode, all the matters listed on Wednesday and Thursday, as non-miscellaneous days, would be heard only in physical presence of the counsels/parties in Court-rooms.
2. All the matters listed on Tuesday, as a non-miscellaneous day, would also be heard in physical mode, however, on prior application by the AOR for the party, appearance through video/tele-conferencing mode will be facilitated. The AOR desirous of availing such facility of video linkage for hearing on Tuesday, as a non-miscellaneous day, shall have to apply for the same by 1.00 p.m. on the previous working day, on email id **vc.request@sci.nic.in**.
3. Unless and otherwise directed by Hon'ble Court/Bench, all matters, irrespective of their nature, listed on miscellaneous days shall continue to be heard through video/tele-conferencing mode till further orders.
4. There may be break(s) for a period of about 15 minutes at the discretion of the Hon'ble Bench during the hearings in Court-room in physical mode so that Court-room may be sanitized, for which it is necessary that the entire Court-room be vacated.

5. If Hon'ble Bench is of the view that in a particular matter listed on non-miscellaneous days, the number of Counsels are more than the working capacity of the Court-room, as per Covid-19 norms, the Registry will facilitate hearing of such matters through video/tele-conferencing/hybrid mode.
6. In a matter listed for hearing through physical mode, one AOR [or his nominee], one Arguing Counsel and one Junior Counsel per party will be allowed entry into the Court-room; one registered Clerk per party, as may be chosen by the AOR, shall be allowed to carry paper books/journals etc. up to the Court-rooms.
7. The Entry of the Counsels into the High Security Zone to appear for hearing through physical mode will be through Proximity Cards/Photo entry passes and for party in person through Photo entry passes which will be issued by the Registry as per the practice followed before the onset of Covid-19 pandemic.
8. Ld. Counsels awaiting their hearing(s), may wait in the designated waiting areas or Bar Lounges/Libraries and may avoid crowding in the corridors.
9. The guidelines and protocols for prevention of COVID contagion including wearing of masks, frequent use of hand sanitizer and maintaining safe distancing norms are mandatory for all the entrants into the Supreme Court premises. The entrants into High Security Zone may be required to undergo thermal check or other devices for detecting body temperature, health status etc.
10. On completion of hearing of their respective cases, the Ld. Counsels shall move out of the Court-rooms to accommodate Ld. Counsel(s) in the subsequent matter(s).
11. It is reiterated that in order to facilitate video/tele-conferencing for the Ld. Advocates/Counsels, a dedicated VC Facilitation Centre is located in Block 'B/C', Ground Floor, Additional Building Complex, Supreme

Court of India, which can be accessed through Gate No.1 of that Complex.

12. It is further reiterated that to facilitate appearance of Ld. Advocates/ Litigants through video-conferencing mode, the Supreme Court Video Conferencing Facilitation Rooms (SCI VC ROOM) in the seven District Courts Complexes of Delhi, as notified vide Circular dated 13.06.2020 on Supreme Court website i.e. <https://www.sci.gov.in>, under the head Notices and Circular, continue to function.

The aforesaid modified SOP will come into effect from 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2021.

Sd/-

[Secretary General]

07.10.2021