

NOTICE

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, initially a Procedure for e-mentioning, e-filing, listing uploading and hearing of matters through video conferencing was adopted. Thereafter studio based courts were set up inside the courtrooms providing access to stakeholders who did not have the technological infrastructure to provide continued access to justice for all. Thus courts were functioning through both modes, i.e virtual as well as physical. Now the competent authority has decided that the Court will start functioning in physical mode purely on **“experimental basis” for further “two weeks”** while observing the social distancing norms.

Physical presence of all the stakeholders within the Court premises shall be guided by the general instructions contained in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) adopted for the functioning of the Court.

In order to minimize the footfall, **“only 35(Civil), 45(Criminal) cases”** will be listed before each Hon’ble Bench. However, Hon’ble Benches may take up other cases as per convenience of all stake holders in the matter through virtual mode in the session other than the session of physical mode.

It is further notified that matters likely to be listed in the week commencing from 4.1.2021 shall comprise of the cases left over and/or adjourned by the respective bench upto 23.12.2020 and thereafter, apart from other specially assigned matters.

Date : 6th February, 2021
Place: Patna

By Order of Hon’ble the Chief Justice
Sd/-
(Registrar General)

REVISED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR
PHYSICAL FUNCTIONING OF THE 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.
- **Gate No.-4** is opened for the entry of learned Advocates, registered Clerks holding E-Pass for the day and Staff having valid Identity Cards. No vehicles will be allowed to enter the High Court premises through **Gate No.-4**.
- Advocate, having e-pass for the day and self driving the vehicle, will be allowed to enter the Court Premises through **Gate No. 2** along-with his registered clerk subject to strict compliance of standard protocol and screening.
- In order to avoid over crowding / jamming of vehicle at Gate No. 2, the Learned advocate self driving a vehicle shall drop the other occupants of the vehicle at the entry point for further verification/screening and would enter the Gate No. 2 with his vehicle quickly, after screening.
- 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 shall be made at the entry point into the Court premises Gate No. 2 & 3. This shall be the only point for entry and exit into the Court premises for lawyers and other permitted persons. The thermal checking will be done by personnel provided by the State Government through the office of the Civil Surgeon. The number of health workers manning the thermal check post will be subject to the number of footfall in the High Court Premises.

- 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.
- Persons displaying symptoms of flu, fever, cough etc. shall not be permitted entry inside the Court premises.
- The Courts will function in two shifts from 10:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. The one hour period between 1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. will be utilized for sanitizing the entire Court premise / Court rooms for the next shift of hearing.
- **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. Once inside the premises, nobody will be allowed to remove the Face Mask and it will be mandatory to wear the Mask till they remain in the High Court premises.
- Entry into the Court premises, till further orders, of the Ld. Counsels/parties or other stakeholders, for hearing will be through daily "**E-passes**".
- **E-pass** will be generated to the Learned Advocates who have to appear in the Court for hearing, from the website of Patna High Court by providing details of the case. 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.
- 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 to such 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 along with their respective registered clerks/Party-in-person to maintain minimum prescribed physical distancing norms between each other.
- Entry of the advocate clerks (limited to one advocate clerk per set of petitioners/ respondents/ lawyer) shall be permitted on the basis of their identification by the concerned advocate and display of their I-Cards.
- 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 from time to time, in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Copies of the latest advisory of the Government are attached separately.
- 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 Pass** shall be issued to the persons directed to appear/ 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 online 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 shall move out of the High Court premises immediately after the hearing of their case is over.
- In the lifts, entry of maximum three persons including the lift-man shall be allowed at one time.
- E-Pass for fifteen (15), days will be issued to the office bearers of Association's in advance effective from the date of commencing physical functioning of the High Court.
- SOP as regard to physical Court functioning, be put on publication for awareness of general public and other stake holders by uploading the same on official website of Patna High Court, distribution in form of pamphlets, by using Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) at District Court / Sub-divisional Court level with a direction to the District Judges to give maximum publicity. Further a water- proof banner fitted in frame, be placed at entry point of High Court highlighting contents of SOP.
- The Barrister Association, Lawyers Association, Advocates Association, all other associations, Advocate Library and Canteens located in the High Court premises shall remain closed until further orders.