



Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Office of the Court Administrator
Manila

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 119 - 2021

TO: ALL JUSTICES OF THE APPELLATE COLLEGIATE COURTS, JUDGES OF THE SECOND AND FIRST LEVEL COURTS, COURT PERSONNEL THEREOF, AND COURT USERS

RE: COURT OPERATIONS BEGINNING 8 SEPTEMBER 2021

In view of the continued surge of confirmed COVID-19 cases in different variants, and considering that the proposed granular or localized lockdown will be pilot-tested in the National Capital Region (NCR) which is on Alert Level 4 (except the City of Manila), upon instructions of Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, **ALL COURTS** in the NCR, except the Supreme Court, shall remain **PHYSICALLY CLOSED** to court users until 30 September 2021, notwithstanding the NCR will be under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) beginning 8 September 2021. However, the courts in the NCR shall continue to operate online and conduct videoconferencing hearings on pending cases and all other matters, whether urgent or not, as far as practicable, so as not to delay the trial of cases and court processes. The said courts may be reached through their respective hotlines and email addresses as posted in the Supreme Court website.

The time for filing and service of pleadings and motions during this period is **SUSPENDED** and shall resume after seven (7) calendar days counted from the first day of the physical reopening of the relevant court, unless otherwise expressly ordered by the relevant court which shall consider the physical closure of the courts and the granular lockdowns.

The essential judicial offices shall maintain the necessary skeleton staff to enable them to address all urgent matters and concerns.

The relevant provisions of Administrative Circular No. 56-2021 shall continue to remain in force for all courts and judicial

offices outside the NCR until further notice, *e.g.*, the courts and judicial offices in areas under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), with or without heightened restrictions, and Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), shall remain physically closed to court users for the duration of such ECQ or MECQ; while the courts and judicial offices in areas under GCQ, with or without heightened restrictions, and Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), shall be physically open during this period with an in-court skeleton workforce of at least twenty-five percent (25%) to at most fifty percent (50%), **UNLESS** the particular court is in a district or zone which is in a granular lockdown, in which case it shall be physically closed to court users and shall follow the guidelines for a physically closed court.

For the guidance and compliance of all concerned.

7 September 2021


JOSE MIDAS P. MARQUEZ
Court Administrator