



IN THE SUBORDINATE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 1 OF 2009

ENHANCEMENT OF THE PRE-TRIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF NON-COMMUNITY COURT CRIMINAL CASES

1 This circular on the pre-trial management process of non-community court criminal cases is intended to be read in conjunction with Registrar's Circular No. 3 of 2008.

2 With effect from Monday, 2 February 2009, the Centralised Pre-Trial Conference Court at Court 17 will conduct all Pre-Trial Conferences ("PTCs") formerly conducted in Courts 2, 4, 5 and 24 unless a case is transferred for special management before the Senior District Judge.

Caseflow management

3 The practices, procedures and goals of the Centralised PTC Court are intended to promote the just and timely disposition of criminal cases before the court and optimise the use of available judicial resources. To these ends, the four important objectives of PTCs are to:

- (1) discuss the possibility of resolution of any or all of the issues whether by way of a plea of guilt or otherwise;
- (2) identify and narrow the issues to be determined at trial;
- (3) identify admissions and agreements on facts which would not be contested; and
- (4) estimate the duration of the trial.

Schedule of fixings

4 The first or fresh PTC of a case would be fixed in the afternoon unless it is connected to a case which has already been fixed for a further PTC ("FPTC").

Prosecutors/counsel should therefore not apply for the first or fresh PTC to be listed in the morning unless it falls within this exception.

5 The fixing of fresh PTCs/FPTCs will be done according to the classification of offences. The four broad groupings, along with the respective dates and time belts of the fresh PTC/FPTCs of the four groupings are available at the Centralised PTC Court.

6 Prosecutors/counsel may apply to schedule the fresh PTCs/FPTCs on particular days and in time belts to their convenience according to the classifications. Such requests would be accommodated if the Centralised PTC Court's schedule permits.

Availability of listings

7 A provisional weekly listing of the scheduled fresh PTCs/FPTCs is available on the Subordinate Courts website at www.subcourts.gov.sg by 5.00 pm of the preceding Wednesday. The final list is uploaded by 3.00 pm of the preceding Friday.

Extension of JusticeOnLine to counsel

8 With effect from 2 February 2009, the option of attending PTCs at the Centralised PTC Court *via* JusticeOnLine ("JOL") would be available to a limited number of firms on a pilot basis. The JOL FPTCs would be scheduled at 11.45 am and the fresh JOL PTCs at 3.00 pm. A set of guidelines governing the scope and procedures for the use of JOL at the Centralised PTC Court ("JOL Guidelines") will be available at the JOL informational website at <http://www.justiceonline.com.sg>.

9 With effect from 2 March 2009, the use of JOL for criminal PTCs at the Centralised PTC Court would be available to all subscribers of JOL.

Duty to inform of previous commitments

10 When taking a PTC date, a date for a plea of guilt hearing ('PG' hearing) or trial dates, every counsel has a duty to disclose previous commitments to another court that may conflict with a proposed fixing of a fresh PTC/FPTC, PG hearing or trial. .

Respect for commitment

11 By taking a fresh PTC/FPTC date during a particular time belt or a PG hearing or trial dates, counsel is presumed to have made a commitment to appear punctually and to

be bound not to make any other commitments that would make it impossible to keep commitments already made in other courts.

12 For FPTCs, counsel are expected to appear within the first 15 minutes of the start of a time belt. A queue number would be issued to counsel by a court officer when they arrive and counsel will appear before the PTC Judge on the basis of the chronological order of the queue numbers issued. For fresh PTCs, counsel are expected to appear between 2.15 pm and 2.30 pm and counsel would attend in chronological order of the queue numbers issued.

13 If a counsel is absent when his queue number is called, the PTC judge may proceed to make such orders as he deems fit.

Requests for change

14 Prosecutors/counsel may apply to change the date and/or timing of a FPTC if there is a subsequent clash with another court fixture. Such an application must be made immediately upon there being such a clash.

15 If a prosecutor/counsel has a hearing on the fresh PTC/FPTC date, the prosecutor/counsel should apply for the fresh PTC to be scheduled at 2.00 pm and/or the FPTC at 8.45am/9.00 am or at 12.40pm. Prosecutors/counsel should not apply to stand down a trial to attend a fresh PTC/FPTC.

16 Prosecutors/counsel are reminded to make all applications for change of date or time belt to the Centralised PTC Court *via* the dedicated email account, *Subcourt_Centralised_PTC@subct.gov.sg*.

Plea of guilt hearings

17 The Centralised PTC Court will schedule up to six PG hearings at 9.30 am, up to six PG hearings at 11.00 am and two at 3.30 pm in each of the two PG Courts rostered on a weekly basis. In addition, the two courts will also hear PG hearings transferred from Court 26 and Court 23 in the afternoons.

18 In addition to indicating the suitable date for a PG hearing, prosecutors/counsel should indicate the time slot that is suitable. When a PG hearing date has been set, the PG hearing is expected to take place on that date. If an adjournment is granted, the PG hearing will be re-fixed before the same judge.

Application for standard documents

19 To facilitate the applications for standard documents like the section 122(6) Criminal Procedure Code (Cap 68) statements by counsel from enforcement agencies, counsel who are instructed by the date of the first mention and have not obtained such documents should use the forms that are available at the bar table at Court 26 and Court 23 and place the completed forms in a designated tray at the bar table. The forms will be deposited by the court staff into the letter-boxes of the respective enforcement agencies for collection the following morning. Counsel who are instructed after the first mention may also use these forms which will also be available at Counter No. 3 of the Crime Registry.

Dated this 30th day of January 2009.



HOO SHEAU PENG
REGISTRAR
SUBORDINATE COURTS