



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

OCA CIRCULAR NO. 41-2022

TO: ALL CONCERNED JUDGES, COURT PERSONNEL AND COURT USERS OF THE FIRST AND SECOND LEVEL COURTS IN AREAS PLACED UNDER ALERT LEVELS 1 AND 2 PER IATF RESOLUTION NO. 163-A

SUBJECT: COURT OPERATIONS FROM 1 MARCH 2022 UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS OF THE COURT

Pursuant to the authority granted by Chief Justice Alexander G. Gesmundo, and as the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) issued IATF Resolution No. 163-A dated 27 February 2022 placing provinces, highly urbanized cities (HUCs), and independent component cities (ICCs) under their respective Alert Levels 1 and 2 classifications effective 1 to 15 March 2022, **court operations** in the concerned areas **from 1 March 2022 until further orders of the Court** shall be governed by the applicable provisions of OCA Circular No. 134-2021 dated 5 November 2021, as amended by OCA Circular No. 146-2021 dated 29 November 2021, subject to adjustments on the required skeleton workforce and operational policies, as follows:

AREAS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 1
LUZON
National Capital Judicial Region Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR): Abra, Apayao, Baguio City, Kalinga; Region 1: Dagupan City, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan; Region 2: Batanes, Cagayan, City of Santiago, Isabela, Quirino; Region 3: Angeles City, Aurora, Bataan, Bulacan, Olongapo City, Pampanga, Tarlac; Region 4A: Cavite, Laguna; Region 4B: Marinduque, Puerto Princesa City, Romblon; and, Region 5: Naga City, Catanduanes.
VISAYAS
Region 6: Aklan, Bacolod City, Capiz, Guimaras; Region 7: Siquijor; and, Region 8: Biliran.
MINDANAO
Region 9: Zamboanga City; Region 10: Cagayan de Oro City, Camiguin; and, Region 11: Davao City

COURT OPERATIONS GUIDELINES (Alert Level 1)
<input type="checkbox"/> Courts and judicial offices are FULLY OPERATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Full on-site ¹ staff complement to report for work

¹ Sec. 6, *Guidelines on the Nationwide Implementation of Alert Level System for COVID-19 Response* (as of 14 December 2021)

COURT OPERATIONS GUIDELINES (Alert Level 1) – cont.
<input type="checkbox"/> For Judges without court space or facilities of their own, but they already have their own personnel, maintain a skeleton workforce of at least 75%
<input type="checkbox"/> Night courts are allowed to operate in stations where these have been organized or required
<input type="checkbox"/> Executive Judges may conduct jail visitations as provided for in OCA Circular No. 107-2013 dated 30 August 2013
<input type="checkbox"/> Flag raising/lowering ceremonies can be held

AREAS UNDER ALERT LEVEL 2
LUZON
<p>Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR): Benguet, Ifugao, Mountain Province;</p> <p>Region 2: Nueva Vizcaya;</p> <p>Region 3: Nueva Ecija, Zambales;</p> <p>Region 4A: Batangas, Lucena City, Quezon Province, Rizal;</p> <p>Region 4B: Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, Palawan; and,</p> <p>Region 5: Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Masbate, Sorsogon.</p>
VISAYAS
<p>Region 6: Antique, Iloilo City, Iloilo Province, Negros Occidental;</p> <p>Region 7: Bohol, Cebu Province, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Negros Oriental; and,</p> <p>Region 8: Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Ormoc City, Southern Leyte, Tacloban City, Western Samar.</p>
MINDANAO
<p>Region 9: City of Isabela, Zamboanga del Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay;</p> <p>Region 10: Bukidnon, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental;</p> <p>Region 11: Davao de Oro, Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte, Davao Oriental, Davao Occidental;</p> <p>Region 12: General Santos City, North Cotabato, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat;</p> <p>Region 13 (CARAGA): Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Butuan City, Dinagat Islands; and,</p> <p>Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): Basilan, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Cotabato City, Lanao del Sur.</p>

COURT OPERATIONS GUIDELINES (Alert Level 2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Courts and judicial offices are PHYSICALLY OPEN
<input type="checkbox"/> Maintain a skeleton workforce of at least 80% ²
<input type="checkbox"/> For Judges without court space or facilities of their own, but they already have their own personnel, maintain a skeleton workforce of at least 50% to at most 75%
<input type="checkbox"/> Night courts are not yet allowed to operate

In addition to the above, the following are the common court operations guidelines for areas under Alert Levels 1 and 2:

² Id., Sec. 5(4)

COMMON COURT OPERATIONS GUIDELINES (Alert Levels 1 & 2)
<input type="checkbox"/> Pleadings, motions and other court submissions may be filed or served by registered mail, through the services of duly accredited private couriers, or by transmitting them through electronic mail in accordance with the existing electronic filing guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/> In case an area is placed under a conflicting Alert Level system and Community Quarantine classification, as categorized herein, the more restrictive court operation protocols as provided in the Alert Level system or Community Quarantine classification shall prevail
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular office hours as prescribed in OCA Circular No. 09-2015 dated 21 January 2015 shall be observed, i.e., Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (for Judicial Regions 1 to 12) and 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (for National Capital Judicial Region)
<input type="checkbox"/> For Saturday duty, the appropriate manpower complement shall be determined and scheduled by the concerned Executive Judge
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal filing and follow-up of cases are allowed
<input type="checkbox"/> Judges to give priority to in-court or face-to-face hearings and continue to conduct videoconferencing hearings in the courtrooms ³ . A videoconferencing hearing, as an alternative mode ⁴ to in-court proceedings, may be conducted in instances enumerated in A.M. No. 20-12-01-SC dated 09 December 2020.

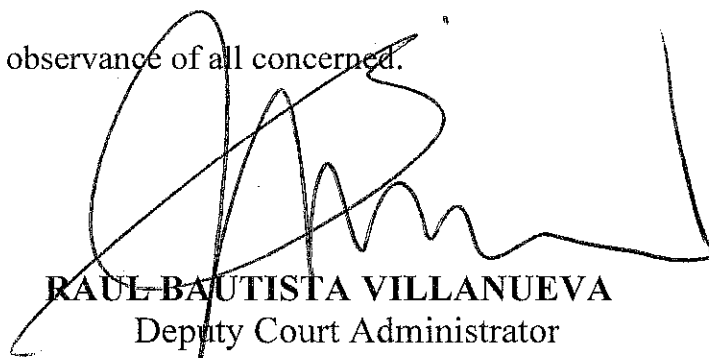
Accordingly, all other issuances of the Court or the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) that are not consistent herewith will no longer be applicable to the courts in areas under either Alert Level 1 or 2.

All health and safety protocols against COVID-19 prescribed by the Court and the OCA, as well as those required by the IATF and the Department of Health, shall be complied with whatever is the Alert Level of a particular area.

In the event that there are pressing concerns that the Judges or court personnel may have regarding their operations from 1 March 2022, the same shall be referred to the OCA for appropriate action.

For the strict compliance and observance of all concerned.

28 February 2022


RAUL BAUTISTA VILLANUEVA
 Deputy Court Administrator
 and OCA Officer-in-Charge
 (Per Memorandum Order No. 108-2021 dated 17 November 2021)

OCA Circ-court operations(alert levels 1&2) feb 2022

³ A.M. No. 20-12-01-SC dated 09 December 2020 (*Guidelines on the Conduct of Videoconferencing*), Sec. II(B)(1)

⁴ Id., Sec. I(3)(b)