



**SUPREME COURT & NATIONAL COURT
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Papua New Guinea

**NJSS COVID - 19 Protocols
Protocol No 5 of 2021
For in house and public issue**

It should now be accepted that the COVID 19 Pandemic situation in Papua New Guinea will continue to be a matter of serious concern nationwide. The Judiciary has an important role to play and whilst we must adopt the strictest safety measures, we must also adapt our practices so that we still maintain our normal functions.

In consultation with the Chief Justice, Deputy Chief Justice and Secretary NJSS I now issue this Protocol No 5 of 2021 which will remain in force for 3 months from the date of release.

PROTOCOL 1- STANDARD COVID 19 PRACTICE

1. It remains mandatory that every person entering the court premises, staff as well as public, must wear face masks.
2. Managers must ensure that all workstations are at least 1.5 meters separated (see protocol 2 below).
3. All staff must frequently use hand sanitisers whilst in the office.
4. All staff must maintain high level of hygiene personal or otherwise whilst on court premises.
5. Where anyone feels sick and feverish such person must immediately leave the workplace and seek medical help.
6. Person as described above must not come to work without a medical certificate or after two weeks.
7. All staff responsible for the cleanliness of toilets on the premises must have them cleaned on a regular basis.

PROTOCOL 2 STAFF ATTENDANCE

1. By Friday 16th April, all managers must create two lists of attendance for staff in every division for places like Waigani, Lae, Mt Hagen, Kokopo:
 - a. All staff below managers will work on two-week shift.
 - b. Shift 1 will commence on 19th April to 30th April.

- c. Shift 2 will commence on 3rd May to 14th May; and
 - d. Then first shift will come on board the next set of two weeks and the cycle will continue there after until ceased.
2. A proper record of attendance must be maintained by all managers.
 3. Other locations depending on staff numbers and office spaces may follow the process above or allow all staff to work.
 4. Whatever the case maybe managers must ensure appropriate distance is maintained between workspaces.
 5. In all court locations managers must attend work and keep a presence in the office.

PROTOCOL 3 MANAGERS TO RESUME WORK

To maintain basic services in all divisions and to allow for this protocol to be properly implemented:

1. As of the 13th of April, all managers and track leaders must return to work; and
2. As of the 13th of April, all consultants and advisors must return to work.

PROTOCOL 4 JUDGES CHAMBERS

1. The same protocol applies in Judges chambers.
2. A judge may vary this protocol to suit circumstances affecting his/ her chambers at any time.

PROTOCOL 5 VEHICLE USAGE

1. To minimise infection through public transport all NJSS vehicles may be used to pick up and drop of staff.
2. A protocol must be developed for the proper and supervised use of organisational vehicles:
 - a. For Waigani a protocol must developed by the transport division for approval by Secretary/ Registrar before vehicles are engaged for this purpose; and
 - b. In the Provinces Assistant Registrars are to develop protocols to be approved by the resident judge administrator.

PROTOCOL 6 ONLINE COMMUNICATION

1. NJSS IT division will now investigate and upgrading our online communication facilities.
2. NJSS IT division will also look at connectivity with other law and justice agencies as well as private lawyer firms to enable more use of online communication.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

3. As much as possible all meetings be it local or across the nation must be conducted by teams meeting or other acceptable online applications such as zoom.

VIRTUAL TRAINING

4. All training activities involving more than 10 people must as much as possible be conducted online.

IECMS

5. All training for lawyers, judges and staff must be conducted online at this time.

PRISON HEARINGS

6. Number of prisoners in custody travelling to a court location must be cut to less than 10 people per trip where there is no video link or online hearing is not possible.
7. Where possible and where Correctional Services has the capability, hearing of short applications in criminal cases must be conducted online.

INTRANET

8. NJSS will now launch our Intranet to promote communication and dissemination of information electronically.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

9. NJSS IT will now investigate the use of a document management system to:
 - a. Maintain records; and
 - b. Minimise transmission of papers and documents between desks and offices internally and externally.

PROTOCOL 7 TRAVEL

1. Travel will resume but will be approved for most essential travel only.
2. Meet the national measures as issued by the Controller from time to time.
3. All travel will be subject to the express approval of Chief Justice, for National Court related travels, and Registrar and or Secretary NJSS for administrative matters.

PROTOCOL 9 PUBLIC ACCESS

1. Restrictions on public access remains the same as provided in COVID 19 Protocol 4 of 2021

PROTOCOL 10 TESTING KITS

1. Subject to approval of COVID19 Controller, NJSS will pursue the purchase of testing kits to be supplied to all court locations nationwide.
2. NJSS will develop in consultation the protocol for the application of these testing kits in all its locations.

PROTOCOL 11 CLINIC

1. NJSS will utilise the clinic in Waigani as a source of testing for COVID 19.
2. NJSS will consider engagement of competent and trained nurses with an appropriate experienced and or a medical doctor for our clinic in Waigani.

3. NJSS will pursue liaison with Provincial and National Health agencies to provide exclusive COVID testing assistance to all court locations using our privately purchased testing kits.

Dated 12th April 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Registrar