

MAURITIUS BAR ASSOCIATION



Dear Friends,

In view of the resumption of court business as from 01 June 2020, the Bar Council has made representations for barristers to be included in the list of self-employed professionals who will be allowed to attend their office as from 15 May 2020. You will be kept informed as soon as we obtain a response.

Recommendations for Good Practices for Client Meetings

The Bar Council has worked on a set of Recommendations for Good Practices for Client Meetings which you may find useful so as to prepare for resumption of work. ***These are in addition and do not purport to derogate in any manner whatsoever from any guidelines or directives which are/will be issued by the Ministry of Health and/or any legally empowered authority.***

You may wish to send these (and/or any amendments that you deem fit to bring thereto) to your clients prior to their scheduled appointment to ensure that the appointment is conducted in the safest environment.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any other suggestions.

Hand sanitisers/ Face masks

Subject to availability, the Bar Council will purchase limited quantities of hand sanitisers and masks for use of barristers at the Bar Seat.

Use of Bar Seat

Given the current restrictions relating to the sanitary confinement, the Bar Seat will be operational at a date to be communicated later.

When operational, the doors of the Bar Seat will remain closed. Should you need to use the Seat, please give advance notice to the staff by calling on 213-9130.

For sanitary reasons, the use of the Seat will be reserved for barristers only. No other persons (including clients) will be admitted to the Seat until further notice. The Council is working on arrangements to be able to resume such facilities in safe environment for the staff of the MBA. You will be advised accordingly.

We thank you for your understanding.

Varuna R Bunwaree Goburdhun
Secretary of the Bar Council
11 May 2020

GOOD PRACTICES FOR CLIENT MEETINGS

- It is recommended that barristers conduct telephone and/or video conference for client meetings.
- If physical meetings are necessary, it is suggested that clients be informed in advance that:
 - Your office abides strictly by strict sanitary norms which includes compulsory social distancing and wearing of masks at all times.
 - They may be required to undergo a temperature scan on arrival at your office. Temperature above 38 degrees will trigger concerns of a possibility of infection and access will not be granted. However, alternate arrangements may be made for a meeting via telephone and/or videoconference.
 - They will be required to scan and send advance copies of all documents prior to the meeting.
 - Payment for counsel fees would preferably be done by way of bank transfer. If payment is to be made by cash or cheque, please arrange for minimal handling.
 - Toilet facilities will not be available at your office to limit the risk of infection.
 - They are requested to bring and use their own stationery especially their own pen during the meeting.
 - No other person than the persons whose physical presence is required for the meeting will be admitted to your office.
- It is recommended that you schedule your meetings allowing enough time between appointments to avoid clients waiting in the reception area and meeting other clients and/or posing a threat to your staff. If meetings have overlapped, you may suggest that your client waits outside the office until you are able to see him/her.
- On the client's arrival, it would be preferable if there is installed a doorbell system to allow you and/or your staff open and close the doors for the client, thus limiting contact with door handles.
- The client should be asked to disinfect his/her hands using a hand sanitiser which you will make available at your reception.
- It is recommended that you have face masks available for those clients who are not so equipped.
- It is recommended that you make necessary arrangements to your office to ensure social distancing, such as rearranging the seating of your office to allow for 1.5m between seats, fixing of a plexiglass or other barrier at the reception desk.
- It is suggested that you consider using electronic briefs and email exchange of documents instead of hard copies.

- You may also consider the use of a letterbox and/or dispatch area where all documents/files will be placed and left for 48 hours minimum (or such time as recommended by the health authorities) before you/your staff handle such documents/files. Consequently, it is suggested that you inform your instructing attorneys accordingly.
- It is recommended that you do not keep any originals of documents. If copies have to be made, you must disinfect your hands as well as the photocopy machine after handling originals and returning same to the client.
- It is suggested that you disinfect all areas accessed and/or used by the client after his/her appointment.
- It is recommended that your office is kept well aerated with fresh air, and that your staff and/or colleagues are required to disinfect their office before leaving in the evening.

The Bar Council reminds you that these are in addition and do not purport to derogate in any manner whatsoever from any guidelines or directives which are/will be issued by the Ministry of Health and/or any legally empowered authority.