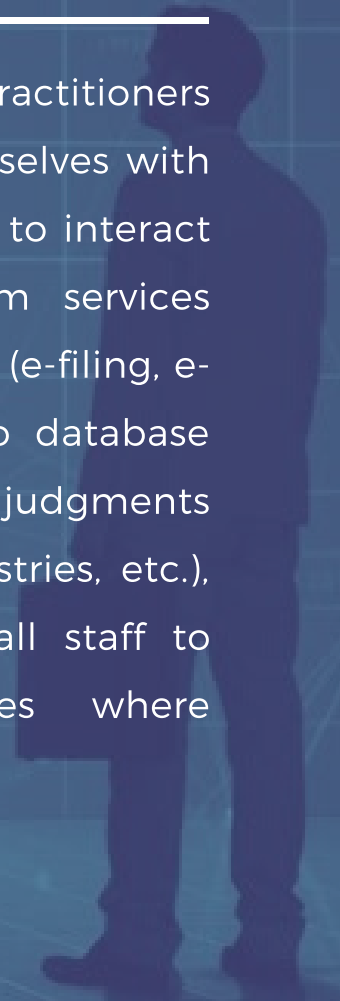




Embrace Digital Transformation: Engage with Stakeholders Electronically

Office managers and practitioners ought to familiarize themselves with the opportunities for staff to interact with clients and perform services using electronic resources (e-filing, e-mail, electronic access to database services like PIMS, judgments databases, electronic registries, etc.), and actively encourage all staff to engage these measures where available.



welcome to the new normal

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

As a consequence of the current Pandemic facing our nation and the world at large, various Practice Directions have been issued in keeping with the need for social distancing and the general well-being of all stakeholders who utilise the legal systems in Trinidad and Tobago. The following directions and/or procedures touch and concern inter alia, Court hearings, filings and dates. Being cognizant of these directions, the ancillary matters associated with same, and all communication emanating from the Judiciary and other entities with like powers and/or duties, is key to ensuring that your legal practice functions at its optimum during these challenging times. To efficiently and effectively navigate this new normal, outlined below are some of the considerations that practitioners should be mindful towards.

E-HEARINGS

Learn about the operationalisation of electronic hearings and Virtual Courts

E-FILINGS

Get informed about filing by electronic means and other e-services made available by the judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago.

PROBATE

A guide on the new procedures implemented for the filing of new applications at the Probate Registry.

BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE

Expected operations of the Board of Inland Revenue during this period.

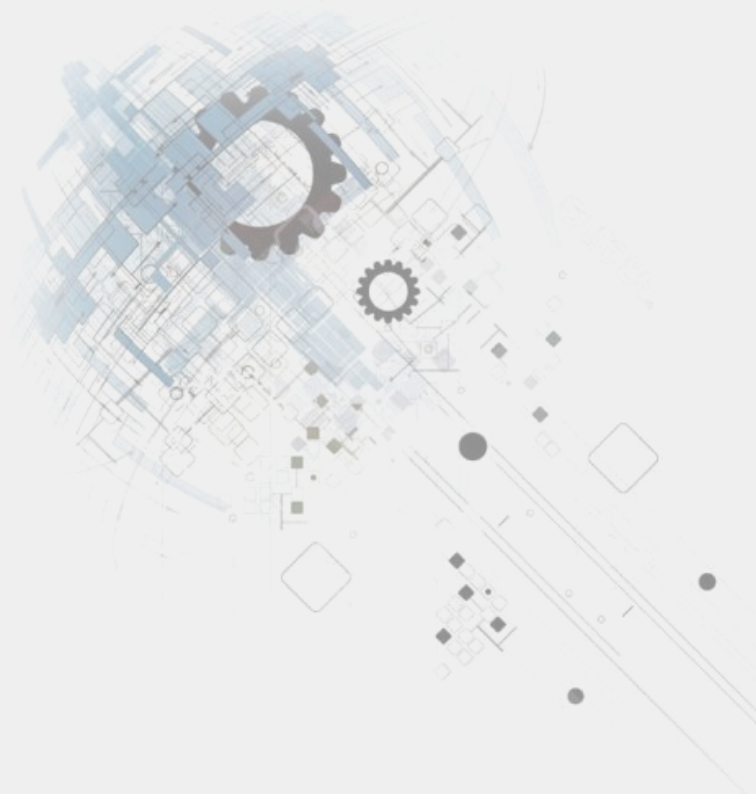


REGISTRAR'S GENERAL DEPARTMENT

Online services now being offered by the Registrar General's Department.

TRIBUNALS & COMMISSIONS

Systems and procedures implemented by the Courts of superior records and regulatory bodies.



E-HEARINGS

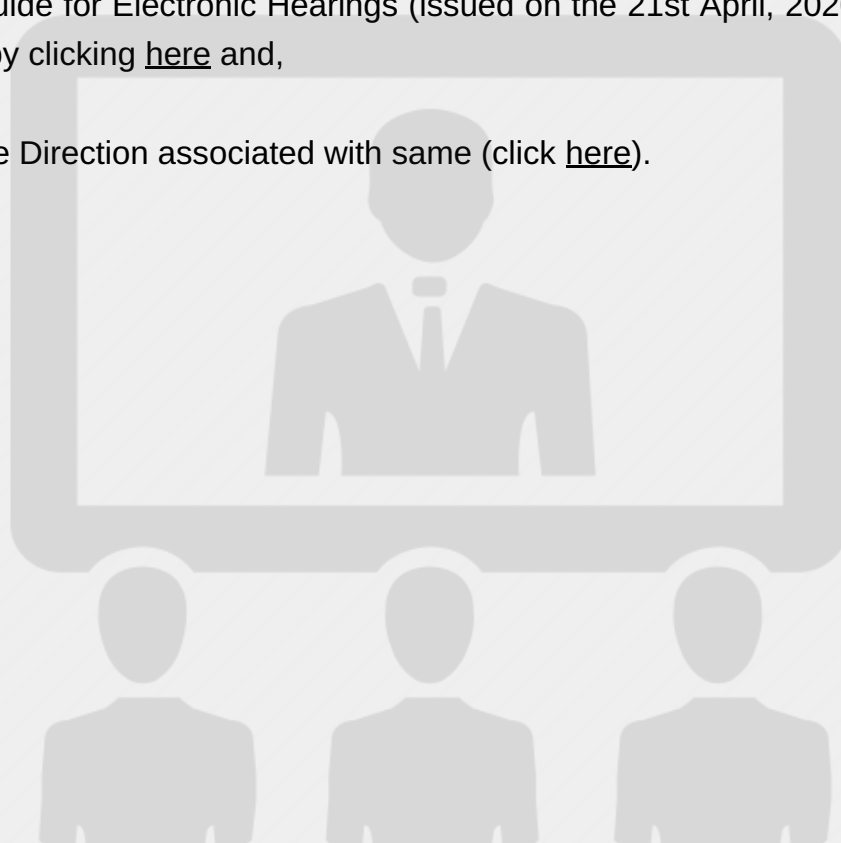
E L E C T R O N I C H E A R I N G S
A N D V I R T U A L C O U R T -
R O O M S



- Electronic hearings and Virtual Courts have been operationalised to deal with urgent matters during this period. In preparation for this, practitioners should ensure that their devices meet the minimum software and hardware requirements to attend such hearings.
- The Judiciary has selected Microsoft (MS) Teams as its preferred method for these hearings.
- The software "Microsoft Teams" is available on various platforms, including MS Windows, Mac OS, iOS, Android and Linux.
- Microsoft (MS) advises that any computer using Teams should have a processor with at least 1.6Ghz and 2GB of Random Access Memory.
- The device chosen should also have ample audio and video capabilities, and a reliable internet connection (an internet bandwidth of 10Mbps or higher is recommended).
- While attending these hearings, both practitioners and their clients should observe and abide by the well-established Court etiquette, protocol and procedures, such as attire and the manner in which one addresses the Court.
- In keeping with the foregoing, it is therefore essential that the location selected by you and your clients to attend these hearings, is adequate to conduct the session.



- The space should be well lit and free from any distractions and/or disturbances.
- In general, a professional setting must be maintained throughout the course of the proceedings.
- Where your office comprises of several attorneys who are likely to be required to attend virtual hearings, a schedule should be made to ensure appropriate allocation of shared resources for e-hearings.
- Additionally, you are to provide all that is necessary to facilitate the hearings on your side; by way of example, if an oath is to be taken by someone attending the hearing at your office, you are to ensure that the relevant religious text is available to effect same.
- Kindly note, it remains possible for a witness to make a solemn affirmation pursuant and/or in accordance with section 6 of the Oaths Act Chapter 7:01 if applicable.
- If your case is to be heard at one of the twelve (12) Virtual Courts setup by the Judiciary to deal with Criminal matters, you are advised to contact the Judiciary in advance for guidance in relation to same.
- Further information on all the above, can be obtained by viewing the Judiciary's Practice Guide for Electronic Hearings (issued on the 21st April, 2020), which can be accessed by clicking [here](#) and,
- the Practice Direction associated with same (click [here](#)).





E-FILINGS

FILING BY
ELECTRONIC MEANS

Filing by Electronic means is currently available for all matters deemed urgent, and practitioners can gain access to file if required, via the following portal: <https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/filing/>

Attorneys are also advised to register for e-services with the Judiciary at <https://eservices.ttlawcourts.org/login> in preparation for when filing of all matters electronically (regardless of their gravity), become available.

Please ensure that you follow all guidelines issued by the Judiciary when filing electronically. The most recent release from the Judiciary in connection with the above was issued on the 2nd April, 2020, and can be viewed [here](#).



PROBATE & ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES

P R O B A T E R E G I S T R Y
A P P L I C A T I O N S

The Judiciary has advised that from Monday 4th May, 2020, new applications can be filed at the Probate Registry via their E-portal. They have further advised, that the Lodging of bonds, caveats, warnings, searches for appearance and citations for approval should be e-mailed to the Registry at the following address: Probate.online@ttlawcourts.org

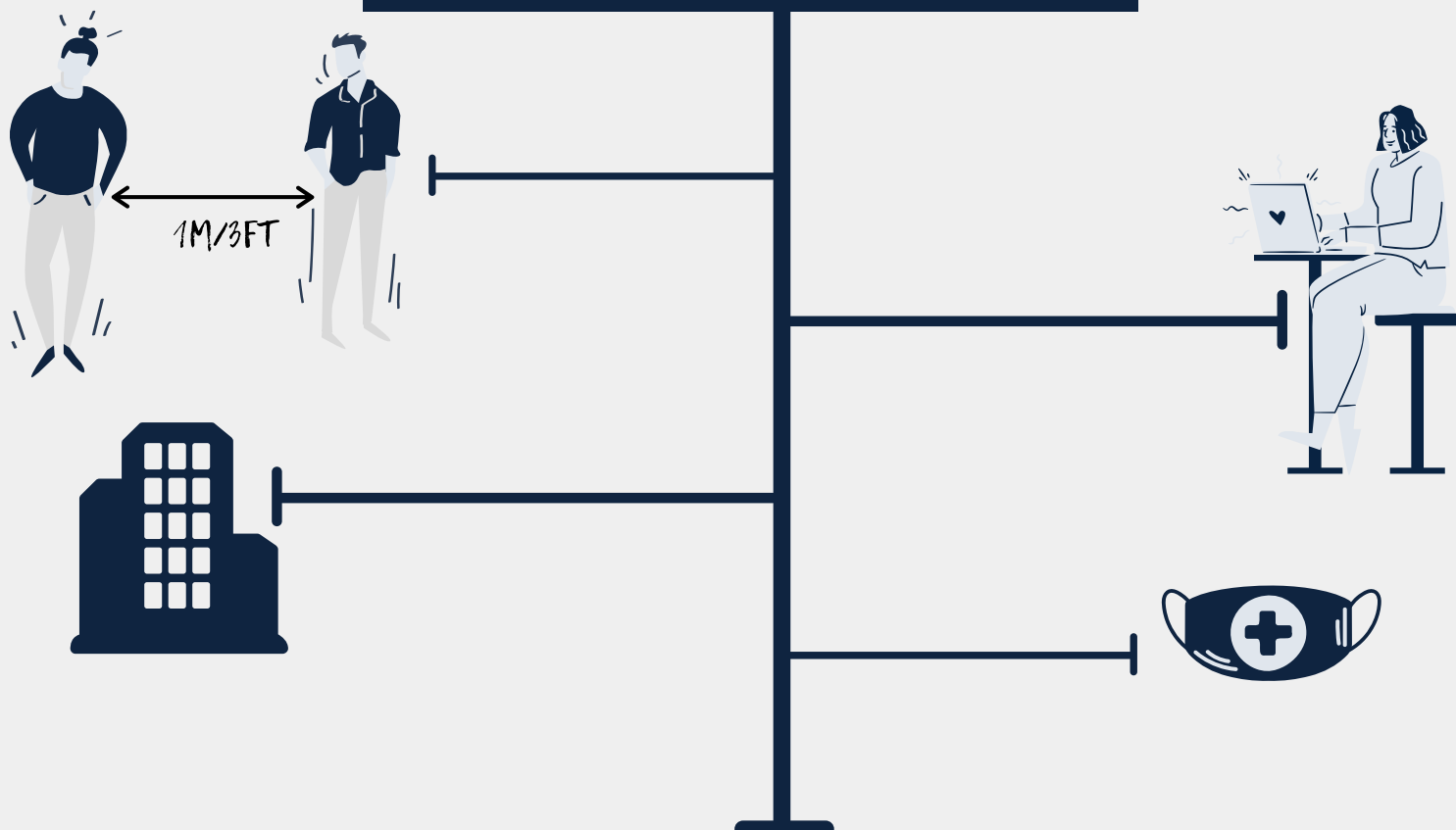
All other business related to Probate, including requests for an appointment, can be made by e-mailing them at: HOJPB.Response@ttlawcourts.org.

Online searches may still be lodged at the following page: <https://probate.ttlawcourts.org/> further information on the Probate Registry and its operations at this time, can be obtained [here](#).



BOARD OF INLAND REVENUE

E X P E C T E D O P E R A T I O N S



The Board continues to offer its full range of services, but advises that in keeping with the need for social distancing at this time, you should not visit their offices unless it is absolutely necessary. They have issued a release which gives greater details of their expected operations during this period:

<http://www.ird.gov.tt/news/adjustments-to-the-board-of-inland-revenue-services-in-light-of-the-covid-19-pandemic>



REGISTRAR'S GENERAL DEPARTMENT

ONLINE SERVICES

Effective 19th March, 2020, the Registrar's General Department (RGD) revised significantly the procedures for access to their services. Many of the said services provided by the RGD are now being offered online.

These online services include inter alia, Electronic Payments, Land and Company searches of the databases held at the RGD, Electronic Filing, and applications for birth, marriage and death certificates.

The range of online services available at the RGD can be viewed by visiting: <https://agla.gov.tt/home/online-services/> .This link also includes access to the online services which are available at the Intellectual Property Office of Trinidad and Tobago.



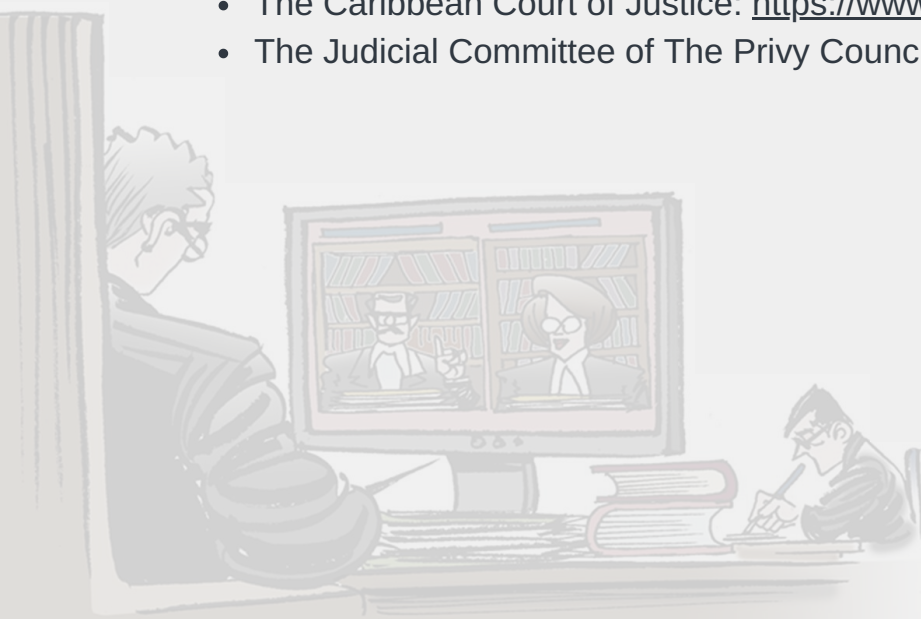


TRIBUNALS & COMMISSIONS

C O U R T S O F S U P E R I O R
R E C O R D S

It is advisable depending on your areas of practice, to check the website and/or social media pages of all relevant Courts of superior records and regulatory bodies, to ascertain what systems and/or procedures they may have implemented to manage their operations during the current Pandemic. Some of these institutions are listed below for your ease of reference:

- The Industrial Court: <http://www.industrialcourt.org.tt/>
- The Equal Opportunity Commission: <http://www.equalopportunity.gov.tt/>
- The Equal Opportunity Tribunal: <https://www.eottt.org/>
- The Tax Appeal Board: <https://taxappealboard.gov.tt/>
- The Environmental Commission: <http://www.ec.gov.tt/>
- The Caribbean Court of Justice: <https://www.ccj.org/>
- The Judicial Committee of The Privy Council: <https://www.jcpc.uk/>





LAW ASSOCIATION OF
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

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The Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to assisting all legal professionals as far as reasonably practicable. This brochure is produced by our Information Technology Committee and is one of a series containing guidance which we hope will assist legal professionals in continuing business operations during the Pandemic period. We hope this information has been useful to you.

If you have any questions, comments and/or suggestions on how to improve the information contained in this brochure, please feel free to contact the IT Committee at admin@lawassociationtt.com