



# Hong Kong – General adjournment of court proceedings ends with more guidance for remote hearings

4 May 2022

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As we reported in our 4 April 2022 update, court proceedings were generally adjourned between 7 March and 11 April 2022 owing to the severity of “Wave 5” of the COVID-19 pandemic in Hong Kong. This was the second such adjournment – the first having been between January and May 2020. The number of infections reached approximately 75,000 reported cases per day at their peak in March 2022 (in a city of approximately 7.5 million people). At the time of writing, daily reported cases have decreased to approximately 500 per day.

Against this background, on 31 March 2022 the judiciary announced the end of the “general adjourned period”. The courts gradually resumed business on 12 April 2022. The [judiciary’s press release](#) and [“Notification for Stakeholders”](#) confirm details of the resumption. As yet, there appears to be no reliable information on the number of court hearings that have been delayed because of the second general adjournment. During the first general adjournment it is thought that approximately 25% of the courts’ annual caseload was affected.

To mitigate the effect of the pandemic on the courts’ business, on 25 March 2022 the judiciary announced another [“Guidance Note for Remote Hearings for Civil Business in the High Court”](#). This is the fourth guidance note pursuant to the courts’ incremental approach to the use of remote hearings. The guidance note recognises that the severity of the pandemic could impact on the ability of judges to attend court in person. Therefore, on 3 March 2022, the Chief Justice issued a direction, pursuant to s. 28(1) of the High Court Ordinance, that appointed

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a judge’s residence “as a place where he/she may sit for the purpose of exercising the civil jurisdiction of the High Court”. All stakeholders (including, legal representatives) have had to familiarise themselves with developments.

### Contact us

Please contact Carmel or Jennifer if you have any queries regarding the issues raised in this article.

This article is intended to give general information only. It is not a complete statement of the law. It is not intended to be relied upon or to be a substitute for legal advice in relation to particular circumstances.

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