

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TRIBUNAL

Practice Direction No 1

COVID-19 Emergency Directions

These Practice Directions are issued pursuant to **Rules 1.3 and 1.5 of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal Rules 2016**.

In order to safeguard the health of staff and members of the public during the novel coronavirus ('COVID-19') emergency in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, and to ensure business continuity with minimal inconvenience to all stakeholders, the Equal Opportunity Tribunal ('the Tribunal') will implement the following measures from Monday March 16, 2020 to Friday April 17, 2020 ('this period'): -

COURT HEARINGS DURING THIS PERIOD

1. Sittings of the Tribunal are suspended save and except matters deemed by the Tribunal to be fit for hearing in this period.

DEEMING MATTERS FIT FOR HEARING IN THIS PERIOD

2. The Tribunal may on its own motion, deem a matter fit for hearing in this period.
3. Any party in a matter before the Tribunal may apply to have the matter or any application pertaining thereto deemed fit for hearing in this period.
4. A Notice of Application (Form No. 4) must be made and must be accompanied by an affidavit setting out the facts and reasons which make the application fit for hearing in this period. The Application may be sent to the Registry by via email to eot.courtstaff@gov.tt.
5. In appropriate cases, applications may be dealt with, without a hearing and email notifications of orders may be issued.
6. Where hearings are impractical, hearings may be telephonic or by video conference and or attendance at any in-court hearing may be limited to Attorneys, parties and necessary witnesses.

DEADLINES AND TRIAL DATES

7. With respect to deadlines which have been the subject of previous orders issued by the Tribunal and which will expire during this period, deadline will be extended to April 24, 2020.
8. Attorneys will be contacted by the Registry with respect to the scheduling of affected Trials.

OPENING OF REGISTRY

9. The Registry will be opened during this period on Fridays (commencing Friday March 27, 2020) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon (save for Public Holidays) unless otherwise notified.

OTHER MATTERS

10. In the interest of public health and safety and in order to maintain the appropriate social distancing, attendance at the Tribunal building may be limited to attorneys, parties and necessary witnesses. Attorneys are encouraged to utilise, and the Tribunal will as far as practicable use, telephonic, emails, video technology and digital methods for communication.
11. The Tribunal may establish screening standards as well as health and safety protocols for entry into the court building. Persons may be denied entry into the building if they display flu like symptoms related to Covid-19, or otherwise fail to meet the screening standards required for entry.
12. Anyone with legitimate business who is ill, caring for someone who is ill or is in a high risk category as stated by the Ministry of Health is advised to communicate with the Registry via telephone at 868 485 8547 or email to cot.courtstaff@gov.tt.

Dated this 16th day of March, 2020.

/s/ Donna Prowell-Raphael,
Chairman/Judge, Equal Opportunity Tribunal.