

# IN THE STATE COURTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

## REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 2 OF 2016

### CASE DOCKETING SYSTEM FOR COMPLEX CRIMINAL CASES

With effect from 30 May 2016, the Criminal Justice Division of the State Courts will start implementing a case docketing system for complex criminal cases.

#### **Purpose of docketing system**

1 The purpose of the case docketing system is to identify and assign complex criminal cases for docketing before senior judges with extensive experience, so that these cases can be managed more effectively and pre-trial delay can be minimised.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Identification of cases for docketing**

2 Complex criminal cases will be identified by the pre-trial conference court (PTC Court) for docketing. The complexity of a case may be indicated by various criteria, including the number of charges, the number of defendants, and the complexity and sensitivity of the subject matter.

3 A case will be identified for docketing only if a prosecutor has been assigned to follow through with the matter to its conclusion.

#### **Management of docketed cases**

4 The docketed case will be scheduled for PTC before the docket judge on a day convenient to parties, at 9.00 am or 2.15 pm or any other suitable time, so that parties may attend to trials and other court commitments with minimal disruption.

5 The docket judge will conduct PTCs for the docketed case, giving such directions as are expedient for the effective management and early disposition of the case. Where appropriate, parties may be permitted to provide updates by written correspondence instead of physically attending before

---

<sup>1</sup> The establishment of a docket system was mooted by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon at the State Courts Workplan on 24 April 2015:

Under the State Courts' Case Docketing System, *complex criminal cases will be identified and assigned to selected senior Judges with extensive experience so that these cases can be managed more effectively and pre-trial delay can thereby be minimised.* The assigned Judges will follow the case through its life cycle and so become better acquainted with the issues. The Judges will also be better placed to maintain the pace of the proceedings at a satisfactory level and avoid unnecessary delays. We expect that the end result of this will be to *enhance the management of these cases with attendant savings in the number of hearing days that may be required.* In addition, it will *facilitate the opportunity for a measure of judicial specialisation in certain categories of cases*, such as those involving white-collar offences.

A pilot of the docket system commenced from July 2015.

the docket judge. For cases that undergo criminal case disclosure conference (CCDC), the CCDC process will be conducted before the PTC Court or before any other judge other than the docket judge, so as not to preclude the docket judge from hearing the matter should the case proceed to trial.<sup>2</sup>

6 In appropriate cases, the proceedings before the docket judge may take a criminal case resolution (CCR) track.<sup>3</sup> For example, the docket judge may give a sentence indication upon request by the parties; and if the matter were to proceed to trial, the docket judge may facilitate discussions between parties on the agreed facts and issues in dispute, and help narrow down the issues for trial.

### **Disposition of docketed cases**

7 Where the prosecution decides to withdraw the charges against any defendant in a docketed case, the application to withdraw the charges can be heard before the docket judge. An order of discharge amounting to an acquittal (DATA) or discharge not amounting to an acquittal (DNATA), as the case may be, may be ordered by the docket judge.

8 Where the defendant in a docketed case decides to plead guilty, the plea will generally be taken before the docket judge. Where it is inexpedient for the docket judge to take the plea, the case will be transferred to the PTC Court for another judge to be assigned to take the plea.

9 Where the defendant decides to claim trial, the docket judge may hear the trial if the parties so consent. Where one or more parties do not consent to the trial being heard before the docket judge, or where the docket judge is unable to hear the trial for any other reason, the case will be transferred to the PTC Court for another judge to be assigned to hear the trial.

10 For the purpose of fixing trial dates, the docket judge may discuss with parties about the number of hearing days required and the suitable trial dates, and inform the PTC Court so that the necessary dates for the trial may be blocked off on the court diary if the dates are available. Parties may also be required to attend at the PTC Court to take trial dates.

Dated this 30<sup>th</sup> day of May 2016.



JENNIFER MARIE  
REGISTRAR  
STATE COURTS

---

<sup>2</sup> Section 160(3) of the CPC provides: “Where an accused claims trial, the Magistrate or District Judge who had presided over the criminal case disclosure conference in relation to the accused’s case must not conduct the trial.”

<sup>3</sup> Registrar’s Circular No. 4 of 2011 on “Criminal Case Resolution (CCR)”:  
<<https://www.statecourts.gov.sg/Lawyer/Documents/RC4Of2011.pdf>>