

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 4 OF 2001

USE OF VIDEO CONFERENCING FOR THE CONDUCT OF HEARINGS

The use of video conferencing for hearings in court can save solicitors' time and reduce costs for litigants. With such a facility, lawyers can "appear before the court" right in the comfort and convenience of the law firm's premises. With such a facility, solicitors no longer need to wait outside the hearing venue as the time could be better utilised.

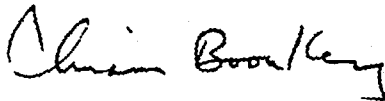
2 For a start, the Supreme Court is exploring the use of video conferencing for matters heard in chambers before a registrar, especially, Pre-Trial Conferences (Set Down) and Pre-Trial Conferences (Admiralty) on a pilot basis. Where video conferencing is used, the hearings will generally be held in Special Chamber No. 4, Singapore Mediation Centre, Level 3, City Hall Building. If it works well and gains popular support, such use may be gradually extended.

3 Solicitors in law firms which are equipped with the requisite facilities should consider using video conferencing for such hearings and inform the Registry accordingly. Law firms which are not equipped with such facilities are encouraged to have them installed. There is no court fee payable by the party applying to use the facility during the trial period. The expenses incurred for using video conferencing, such as, connection charges would be treated as part of the costs of the cause or matter.

4 For the avoidance of doubt, where at least one of the parties has the intention to use video conferencing but not the others, video conferencing will still be used for that hearing except that those solicitors who do not wish to use the facility will have to appear physically in the designated hearing venue.

5 You may wish to refer to paragraph 40A of the Supreme Court Practice Direction (1997 Edition) on issues of compatibility and link-up. We shall also be pleased to explore a possible link-up if your law firm is a subscriber to a commercially available internet video conferencing supplier. To request for the use of video conferencing, you may wish to contact either Mr Low Aik Keong (DID: 332 4250) or Mr Rahim Sanoosi (DID: 332 4293) and the Registry will get in touch with you.

Dated the 19th day of April 2001.



CHIAM BOON KENG
REGISTRAR
SUPREME COURT