

HIGH COURT OF SINDH AT KARACHI

No. Gaz/SOPs/VideoLink

Dated 06.06.2023

C I R C U L A R

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR VIDEO LINK FACILITY

In order to effectively and efficiently scrutinize and prioritize video link facility/requests, the Hon'ble Chief Justice has been pleased to order that following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) be observed while evaluating, scrutinizing and approving video link requests:

1. Eligibility for Video-Link Service

- 1.1. Any advocate/petitioner in person may request (on a prescribed video link request form available on the official website of this Court) to avail the video-link facility / service.
- 1.2. The applicant in his/her application for video-link request (on a prescribed video link request form) must explain sufficient, valid, genuine and justifiable ground to avail the video-link facility.
- 1.3. Such facility will be available for particular cases categorized in para 3 of this Circular.

2. Functions of Judicial Branches at Principal Seat at Karachi, its bench at Sukkur and Circuit Courts at Hyderabad and Larkana.

- 2.1. *Data Entry:* The concerned official of Deputy / Assistant Registrar office (Principal Seat-Karachi) and relevant officer/officials at benches / Circuits (Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana) shall enter/feed into the Case Flow Management System (CFMS) any/all video link requests.
- 2.2. *Scrutiny:* The video-link requests/applications will be applied online and thereafter the applicant, along with the downloaded video link request form, shall appear before the Deputy / Assistant Registrar of concerned branch at Principal Seat (Karachi), and relevant officer at Benches / Circuits (Hyderabad, Sukkur and Larkana) within three days for its confirmation or otherwise.
- 2.3. The video-link application/ request shall be filed with the concerned Deputy / Assistant Registrar and after scrutiny based on the criteria categorized herein, be placed for its approval before Honorable Chief Justice.
- 2.4. Subject to approval of Honorable Chief Justice, the application / request of video-link facility may be placed before the concerned bench for directions as to fixation for hearing the matter, where after it shall be displayed accordingly in the cause list.

2.5. The Deputy / Assistant Registrar of concerned branch may summarily reject any application in case of not meeting the Scrutiny / evaluation criteria, as mentioned hereinafter.

3. Categories of cases / matters wherein requests for video link may be considered.

- a) Cases of sensitive matters wherein safety and security of parties, litigants and / or lawyers are involved.
- b) Any other circumstances wherein the physical appearance of parties, litigants and advocates are beyond human control or in case of natural calamity which may lead to standstill the case/court proceedings and/or result in consequences beyond restitution/reparation.
- c) Any other justification appropriate, valid and logical as deemed so by the Honorable Chief Justice.
- d) Review applications or part heard matters arising out of the aforesaid category, in case, the Honorable Judge / Judges are available at relevant bench / circuit.

4. Functions of the IT Section.

4.1 *Verification:* The relevant official at I.T Section shall verify and update (if required) all the video link requests/entries, as well as, their status (i.e. approved, rejected, pending, etc.)

4.2 *Video Link Arrangements.* The Network team at IT Section of SHC shall ensure necessary arrangements vis-à-vis video-link facility so that the approved requests may be handled effectively and efficiently.

4.3 *Availability.* The IT personnel / technicians shall be present on both ends of video link facility and he shall conduct a trial test of video link court, 15 minutes prior to scheduled time in order to ensure that all the technical gadgets are in working condition.

4.4 *Status Update/Entry:* The status of the video link requests (approved, pending, rejected, etc.) will be updated on the official website www.shc.gov.pk.

5. General Instructions:

- a) The concerned branch, with the approval of concerned bench, shall fix the schedule for convening the video link court, once the request of video link is allowed.
- b) Video conferencing shall ordinarily take place during the Court hours, however, the bench may pass suitable directions concerning the timing and schedule of video conferencing as may be deemed fit.
- c) All protocols applicable to a physical court shall apply to these virtual proceedings.

- d) The video link facility may be used at all stages of judicial proceedings and / or any other proceedings conducted by the court.
- e) The Honorable Chief Justice may if satisfied that the operation of any part of SOPs is causing undue hardship, by an order and / or amendment dispense with or relax the requirements of that part of SOPs to such extent and may also add further directions to streamline the video link proceedings smoothly.
- f) For the time being, the video Link facility is subject to the availability of connection / slot. Any Advocate or any applicant willing to avail video-link facility for any reason whatsoever shall not claim this facility as a matter of right.
- g) The applicant and / or advocate has to mention specifically that he will avail such video link facility for a particular hearing or for continuous hearings, which of course will be subject to the approval by the Court hearing the matter.
- h) The concerned advocates, parties, Government representatives etc. must ensure their presence at user end facility at specified Video Link Court along with their identity proof at least 30 minutes prior to the time fixed for hearing as per cause list.
- i) Proceedings shall be conducted at fixed time and date.
- j) No application for adjournment will be entertained, once the schedule of video link court is fixed / convened.
- k) Before commencement of video link court, the presence of all the participants shall be ensured, verified and recorded. In case of any Government functionary whose identity is not readily available, he shall furnish name, parentage, designation and address.
- l) The advocates, police officers etc. who are supposed to attend through video-link should be in proper uniform/dress
- m) No one shall be allowed to carry electronic or any other recording device including cell phones inside the notified place of video link court as video recording by unauthorized person is strictly prohibited.
- n) No person including any advocate can claim or apply for copy of transcript of such video link court recording / proceeding.
- o) If any Advocate / party or other concerned has to submit any document during the virtual proceedings then the same shall have to be submitted with the concerned Assistant Registrar at least three days before the date fixed for the case along with necessary number of copies for Court and other side so that the same may be transmitted accordingly to concerned branch dealing with the case for filing the same in the Court file.

p) Save as otherwise provided, the guidelines set out herein are without prejudice to the procedure or rules indicated elsewhere qua specific instances wherein proceedings are conducted via video conferencing.


(ABDUL RAZZAQ)
REGISTRAR

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to:

1. The Advocate General Sindh, Karachi.
2. The Prosecutor General Sindh, Karachi.
3. All the learned District & Sessions Judges, in Sindh.
4. The Official Assignee, Karachi.
5. The Secretary, High Court Bar Association Karachi.
6. The Secretary, Sindh Bar Council, Karachi.
7. The Secretaries, All Bar Association in Sindh.
8. The Secretary, Government of Sindh, Law Department, Karachi.
9. The Additional Registrars, (O.S) and (Writ), the Deputy Registrar (Judicial) of this Court at Principal Seat Karachi, for implementation.
10. The Additional Registrars, High Court of Sindh, Bench at Sukkur and Circuit Courts at Hyderabad, Larkana and Mirpurkhas, for implementation.
11. The I/c Director I.T. of this Court, to upload the above SOP for Video Link Facility and develop a system on the official website of this Court so that the applicants can fill the Video Link Request Form Online, which shall generate a separate Reference ID for every application.
12. All the Officers/Assistant Registrars and Librarian of this Court.
13. All the Court Associates for placing before the Hon'ble Judges of this Court.
14. The Sindh Judicial Academy, Karachi.
15. All the Registrars, Tribunals/Special Courts in Sindh.
16. Office file.


I/C Assistant Registrar (Gazette)

Video Link Request Form

<i>Video Link Request Date</i>		<i>From</i>		<i>To</i>	
		<i>Bench/Circuit</i>		<i>Bench/Circuit</i>	
<i>Primary Information</i>					
<i>Case Number/ID</i>					
<i>Case Title</i>					
<i>Fixed Before (Court/Bench)</i>					
<i>Case Fixed For (Date)</i>					
<i>Advocate/Petitioner Name (who intend to argue the case through video-link)</i>					
<i>Advocate/Petitioner CNIC</i>		<i>Advocate ID</i>			
<i>Reason/Justification for appearance through video-Link</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 				
<i>Contact Information</i>					
<i>Address:</i>					
<i>Active Mobile & Whatsapp No.</i>					
<i>Email Address</i>					

Undertaking:

I, _____ advocate/focal person for _____ undertake that the information given above is true/authentic to the best of my knowledge, and I shall not record court proceedings through any device, nor make the same public on any platform, and if does so, may be proceeded against under the applicable laws.

Name & Signature
 (Lawyer/Focal person/Petitioner in Person)