

PRACTICE NOTE

USE OF THE INTEGRATED COURT CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CASE COMMENCEMENT IN THE HIGH COURT

Part A: Introduction

1. To enhance the efficiency of court operations through greater and wider use of technology, the integrated Court Case Management System (“iCMS”) has been made available since 2022 as an option in specified proceedings across different court levels. The Judiciary is planning to mandate the use of iCMS by legal representatives in such proceedings incrementally by phases as from the last quarter of 2026. This initiative seeks to give effect to the underlying objectives in Order 1A, rule 1 of the Rules of the High Court (Cap. 4 sub. leg. A, “RHC”) by active case management, which includes making use of technology.

2. This Practice Note sets out a new requirement to (a) encourage law firms to register a user account under iCMS and start using it on a voluntary basis as soon as possible, and (b) enable them to familiarize themselves with the system, especially in commencing new cases, in preparation for the mandatory use of the iCMS.

Part B: Scope of application

3. This Practice Note applies to the commencement of new cases in the following types of proceedings in the High Court (collectively “Specified Proceedings”):

- (1) Civil Appeal Cases (CACV) in the Court of Appeal;
- (2) Commercial Cases (HCCL), Construction and Arbitration Cases (HCCT), Intellectual Property Cases (HCIP), Personal Injuries Cases (HCPI), and Civil Action Cases (HCA) in the Court of First Instance; and
- (3) A proceeding to which RHC apply and for which the use of electronic technology has been implemented under a notice published under section 32(2) of the Court Proceedings (Electronic Technology) Ordinance (Cap. 638)¹.

4. The restrictions in Part C apply to a law firm which has not commenced any new case in any one of the Specified Proceedings by electronic means under the iCMS (“Applicable Law Firm”).

5. For the avoidance of doubt, the restrictions in Part C will not apply to a law firm once it has commenced one or more new cases in one or more of the Specified Proceedings by electronic means under the iCMS.

Part C: Requirement of permission to commence a new case in the Specified Proceedings by conventional mode

6. Unless prior permission has been given under paragraph 9, an Applicable Law Firm may only commence a new case in any of the Specified Proceedings by electronic means under the iCMS.

7. For the purpose of paragraph 6:

- (1) the High Court Accounts Office will not accept or process payment of fee tendered on behalf of an Applicable Law Firm for

¹ The implementation notice published by the Judiciary is accessible at: https://www.judiciary.hk/en/e_courts/Ann_IN.html.

the purpose of commencing a new case in any of the Specified Proceedings by conventional mode; and

- (2) the High Court Registry (including, for the avoidance of doubt, the appeals registry of the Clerk of Court's Office) will not accept or process an originating document presented on behalf of an Applicable Law Firm for issuance or filing in any of the Specified Proceedings by conventional mode, even if, for any reason, the prescribed court fee has already been paid.

8. Paragraph 7 does not apply if permission has been given under paragraph 9.

Part D: Application for permission to commence a new case in the Specified Proceedings by conventional mode

9. An Applicable Law Firm may apply to a Practice Master of the High Court ("Practice Master") for permission to commence a new case in one of the Specified Proceedings by conventional mode.

10. An application under paragraph 9 shall be made in accordance with the following procedure and requirements:

- (1) The Applicable Law Firm should approach the Masters' Clerks Office at Room LG343, LG3, High Court Building to make an appointment for attending before the Practice Master.
- (2) As far as reasonably practicable, an Applicable Law Firm which has not yet registered a user account in the iCMS should, before approaching the Masters' Clerks Office, approach the iCMS support team at Room LG101, LG1, High Court Building with a

view to forthwith registering a user account under the iCMS and filing the new case by electronic means under the system.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions under Practice Direction 14.1, the hearing shall be attended by a solicitor who is familiar with the general operation and management of the firm, and the new case to be commenced. The solicitor appearing before the Practice Master shall explain to the satisfaction of the Practice Master:

- (a) if applicable, the impracticability of registering a user account in the iCMS;
- (b) the circumstances necessitating the new case to be commenced in the conventional mode; and/or
- (c) the impracticability of commencing the new case by electronic means under the iCMS.

11. The Practice Master may permit an Applicable Law Firm to commence a new case in one of the Specified Proceedings in the conventional mode and direct that the restrictions in Part C shall not apply to that particular filing, if satisfied that (a) good cause has been shown, and (b) it is in the interest of justice to do so having regard to the underlying objectives in Order 1A of RHC and the primary aim of securing the just resolution of disputes in accordance with the substantive rights of the parties.

12. The Practice Master, when granting permission under paragraph 11, may in his discretion impose conditions, including but not limited to one or more of the following:

- (1) Requiring the staff of the Applicable Law Firm to attend iCMS training and/or familiarization session(s) conducted by the iCMS support team of the Judiciary at a specified time and location in the High Court;
 - (2) Requiring the Applicable Law Firm to schedule an appointment for an iCMS training and/or familiarization session to be conducted by the iCMS support team of the Judiciary at the office of the firm;
 - (3) Requiring the Applicable Law Firm to schedule an appointment with the iCMS support team of the Judiciary to resolve, or otherwise look into, any technical problems as may be identified during the hearing before the Practice Master;
 - (4) Stipulating such other measures which, in the opinion of the Practice Master, will enable the Applicable Law Firm to prepare for the mandatory use of the iCMS and/or further the objectives in paragraph 1 above.
13. This Practice Note comes into effect on 1 June 2026.

Dated this 18th day of May 2026.

(Simon Kwang)
Registrar, High Court