



Australian Capital Territory

Coroner's Court

**Interim Coronial Practice Direction
Issued 6 April 2020**

Coroners Court Interim COVID-19 Measures

Situation

1. Due to increasing uncertainty about the COVID-19 crisis, the need to protect court users and staff and an associated reduction in available court resources, the ACT Coroner's Court will transition to reduced activity arrangements ("arrangements") from 6 April 2020.
2. It is important during this time that the Court remains available to exercise its critical functions.

Application and Purpose

3. This practice direction takes effect on 6 April 2020.
4. These arrangements are designed to allow the Court to operate on an ongoing basis in the current environment, while supporting the Government's response to the crisis and providing appropriate protection to court users and staff.

Hygiene and Self-Isolation

5. Once the arrangements are implemented, it is expected visitors will not need to attend the court precinct in relation to coronial matters, save where any hearing is proceeding. Court staff will be working flexibly and may not always be in attendance at the court precinct.
6. People attending the court precinct must continue to adhere to Government health directions, including social distancing and hygiene practices.
7. Anyone required to self-isolate in accordance with government policy must not attend the court precinct.

Arrangements

8. By operation of this interim coronial practice direction the following arrangements will apply.
9. The critical functions of the Court, defined as:

- a. Receipt of death notifications, decisions in relation to post mortem examinations, directions for any post mortem examination, directions to obtain medical records for review, and processes in relation to notifications of reportable deaths;
 - b. Decisions in relation to release certificates, preparation of necessary documents, and processes in relation to release of bodies of deceased persons once all necessary examinations have been completed;
 - c. Essential investigative paperwork, such as preparation of subpoenas, warrants, coronial scene investigation orders, organ donation consents and similar;
 - d. Dealing with essential correspondence; and
 - e. File closure of non-complex cases where no matter of public safety arises;
- will continue.
10. All of the other work of the Court will be conducted as and when time and resourcing permits.
 11. No new matters will be listed for hearing (including directions hearings) before 1 July 2020.
 12. The continuation of already listed hearings (including directions hearings) is at the discretion of the presiding Coroner. Consideration shall be given to appearances by parties and Counsel Assisting by AVL or telephone.
 13. Interested parties may apply to the court, in writing by email, to the court registry for the listing of urgent matters. Those applications must include the following information and be copied to all interested parties to the proceedings:
 - a. The name of the party
 - b. The court proceeding number
 - c. Contact details (including telephone and email address)
 - d. Reasons why the matter is urgent; and
 - e. If known, the position of other interested parties to the proceeding
 14. Applications for urgent listings will be decided in chambers and the parties will be advised on the outcome by email or telephone.
 15. Communication with the Court is preferred via email to coroners@courts.act.gov.au . This includes the filing of documents. Persons who do not have access to email may leave hardcopy documents in the post box in the foyer of the ACT Law Courts building.
 16. Inspection of subpoenaed material and registry files will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

By direction of the Acting Chief Coroner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jayne Reece', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jayne Reece
Registrar
ACT Magistrates Court
6 April 2020