

RE : Supreme Court (“SC”) *Administrative Circular No. 31-2020*
Rising Cases of COVID-19 Infection

DATE ISSUED : 16 March 2020



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ?

- The **Supreme Court Administrative Circular** “adjusted” the operating hours of the judicial branch of government as a result of the **COVID-19** pandemic, which placed several provinces and cities in the country under *enhanced community quarantine* (“ECQ”)



Among the noteworthy adjustments are the following :

- **ALL HEARINGS NATIONWIDE are SUSPENDED** during the ECQ period, except for **urgent matters** such as :
 - Petitions, motions and pleadings in relation to **bail** and *habeas corpus*;
 - Promulgation of judgements of **acquittals**;
 - Reliefs for those who are **arrested** or **detained** during this period; and
 - Other related actions that may be filed in relation to the measures imposed at the local or national levels to address the declared **health emergency**.
- The filing of *Petitions, Appeals, Complaints, Motions, Pleadings* and other Court submissions that fall due during the period covering 15 March 2020 until 15 April 2020 have been **EXTENDED for thirty (30) calendar days**, the same to be counted from 16 April 2020. However, for those who prefer to file their pleadings within the required period, they may do so submit the same by facsimile or through electronic means, if available.



HERE'S AN EXAMPLE :



- If Atty. Juan dela Cruz is required to file his *Answer* on 21 March 2020 (deadline for filing), he has the following options:
 - He may file his *Answer*, without being in default, on 21 May 2020 (or 30 days counted from 16 April 2020; or
 - He may file his *Answer* on or before 21 March 2020 either by **facsimile** or by any **electronic means** (e.g. e-mail), if available.

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