

OFFICE OF THE HIGH COURT LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)

For Facilitating Video Conferencing Interactions between Legal Aid Counsel and Jail Inmates

1. Purpose:

To ensure effective legal representation by facilitating timely and meaningful interaction between legal aid counsel and jail inmates whose matters are pending before the Hon'ble High Court.

2. Scope:

This SOP applies to all legal aid counsel empanelled with the High Court Legal Services Committee and pertains to cases where counsel is appointed to represent convicts or undertrial inmates lodged in jails.

3. Procedure:

A. Intimation by Legal Aid Counsel:

- The appointed legal aid counsel **must inform** the Office of the High Court Legal Services Committee **atleast three (03) working days prior** to the date of **final hearing**.
- The intimation shall include:
 - Case title and number
 - Name of the convict/inmate
 - Jail where the inmate is lodged
 - Date of hearing
 - Counsel's name and contact details

B. Action by Committee Office:

- Upon receiving intimation, the designated official of the Committee shall:
 - Contact the concerned jail authority and request a video conferencing slot for interaction.

- Ensure that the VC slot is scheduled at a mutually convenient time before the listed hearing.
- Share the VC schedule with the counsel.

C. Additional Consultations:

- In addition to the interaction facilitated before the final hearing, if, at any stage during the pendency of the matter, the counsel requires consultation with the inmate (for clarification or due to developments), the counsel shall promptly inform the Committee.
- The Committee shall coordinate with the jail authorities to arrange a follow-up VC session.

4. Coordination with Jail Authorities:

- The Committee shall maintain an updated contact list of all DLSA who shall be the nodal officers for the jails under the Court's jurisdiction to ensure smooth functioning of VC.
- Jail authorities are expected to cooperate in scheduling VC sessions to promote access to justice.

5. Record-Keeping:

- A **VC Interaction Register** (physical or digital) shall be maintained by the Committee Office, recording:
 - Date of request
 - Date and time of scheduled VC
 - Names of counsel and inmate
 - Jail details
 - Status (held/rescheduled/cancelled)

6. Compliance and Review:

- Legal aid counsels are expected to **strictly adhere** to this SOP.
- The SOP shall be reviewed periodically by the Committee for improvements.

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 Secretary
 High Court Legal Services Committee