

SOP FOR ONLINE LOK ADALAT

1. A Party willing to settle his dispute through Lok Adalat, may by himself or by his advocate, in the case the party is already represented by an advocate, shall file an application online, upon prior notice to the respondent/s at the email address of the Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee that is (email address), within 10 days from uploading the Notice of Intimation of Lok Adalat, in the official website of the High Court at (HC email address).The application shall be accompanied with copy/copies of the Notice/Notices with acknowledgement. The party may also forward scanned copies of the proof of service of Notice to the designated email address of the Member Secretary as specified above.
2. In the event the Union of India and the State of West Bengal are party respondents, the service of Notice by email to the designated email address of the Office of the Advocate General for West Bengal, in case of West Bengal, and the designated email address of the Office of the Additional Solicitor General, in the case of Union of India, shall be construed as service of Notice upon the said respondents.
3. The respondent shall within 7 days from the date of receipt of the said application, shall express its intention and willingness to participate in the Lok Adalat, and in the event no such response is received, it shall be construed that the respondent has no objection if the matter is referred to Lok Adalat for settlement and a communication to that effect shall be made by the Secretary, HCLSC to such party immediately after expiry of the said period.
4. The Secretary, on expiry of the aforesaid period, shall prepare a list of cases to be transferred to Lok Adalat and place it before the Chairperson of the HCLS Committee for necessary directions.
5. During online Lok Adalat, physical presence of the parties and their shall be avoided as far as possible, and it is only with the consent of parties and their advocates, that the physical presence of the parties and their advocates shall be allowed. The Lok Adalat, however, shall for the ends for justice, may not refuse hybrid hearings.

6. In cases where applications are filed with consent terms, either by petitions or affidavits, and all the parties agreeing to the terms are not physically present, there may not be any further requirement of signature/s of the advocate/s and the party/ies who has/have already put his/ their signature/s after the Order is transcribed and duly signed by the judges presiding the Bench as acceptance of the Order.

7. However in cases where a party and/or his advocate and/or both are not physically present and the matter is disposed off online by recording settlement, such party and his advocate shall upon receipt of the Order through email, shall communicate its acceptance to the Secretary of the High Court Legal Services Committee. The communication of acceptance shall be accompanied by the signature of the party, a self attested scanned copy of Aadhar or Voter ID card or first and last page of Passport and the first page of the Passbook of his bank account .The Secretary, HCLSC upon, verifying such details, shall take on record, said documents, which shall form part of the record. Any payment directed to be made under settlement, shall be remitted to the designated bank account as furnished by the claimant through RTGS transfer.

8. All claimants, if physically present in Court during hearing in Lok Adalat, shall produce self attested Photostat copies of Aadhar or Voter ID card or first and last page of Passport and the first page of the Passbook of his bank account, which shall form part of the record.

9. In the event any claimant is unable to attend Lok Adalat, Secretary of HCLSC shall approach the Member Secretary of the State Legal Services Authority with a request to make necessary arrangement for obtaining the signature on the Order as acceptance of the terms, after being satisfied with the identity of such person and upon production of any of the aforesaid specified documents.

10. The authorised representative of SLSA, after obtaining aforementioned documents, shall forward it to the Member Secretary of SLSA, with a compliance report, and the Member Secretary SLSA shall in turn forward it to Secretary HCLSC. The said documents shall form part of the respective case record.
11. Depending upon the number of cases, the Committee shall decide the number of Benches and also the additional rooms that maybe required as a waiting room, for the advocates and their clients. Separate rooms shall be allotted for advocates and parties with proper address systems.
12. No one shall be allowed to enter Court premises without masks. Everyone shall pass through thermal temperature screening checks.
13. All measures should be taken for the safety and security of the Hon'ble Judges and members attending Lok Adalat. Appropriate COVID health protocols shall be adhered to, including social distancing norms.
14. All Courts and rooms shall be fully sanitised, one day prior to the date fixed for Lok Adalats. Adequate number of sanitizers and hand wash shall be made available on the day fixed for the Lok Adalat.
15. It is made clear that unless there is acceptance of the order by the parties in the mode and manner as indicated above the order passed in the Lok Adalat shall not be enforceable.
16. The entire proceedings of the online Lok Adalat shall be recorded and preserved.