

Practical Issues to Take Note of During Telecommuting

Dear Members,

With the issuance of the [Infectious Diseases \(Workplace Measures to Prevent Spread of Covid-19\) Regulations 2020](#) on 1 April 2020, we anticipate that a substantial number of legal practitioners and their staff will be working from home during the control period (2 April 2020 – 30 April 2020). Telecommuting on a large-scale basis is likely to raise a number of practical issues.

We highlight three key issues for members to take note of.

1. **How to implement telecommuting:** To assist members in implementing telecommuting arrangements, we share an article written by Council member Lim Seng Siew in his personal capacity (with inputs from members of the Information Technology Committee 2020), containing practical tips for law practices on operational and technology matters involved in making arrangements to work from home. The article can be accessed [here](#).
2. **Compliance with Legal Profession (Solicitors' Accounts) Rules ("SAR"):** We have received queries from members on whether law practices may operate Internet banking services during the current Covid-19 outbreak where many lawyers are telecommuting. Please note that Rule 8(4A)(c) of the SAR prohibits withdrawal of money from a client account by an online banking service, while Rule 8(5) of the SAR prohibits the withdrawal of a sum exceeding \$5,000 from a client account except upon a cheque (or other instruction effecting the withdrawal) signed by 2 solicitors. Under Rule 16 of the SAR, the Council is only empowered to consider whether it can waive any provision of the SAR on a case-by-case basis. If you wish to apply for a waiver of one or more provisions of the SAR in a particular case, please write in to membership@lawsoc.org.sg with the details of the specific case and transaction in question.

3. **Preserving client confidentiality during telecommuting:** It is vital for law practices to ensure that client confidentiality is and continues to be preserved at all times during telecommuting. To guide members and their staff, the COVID-19 Task Force has developed a set of risk management FAQs to provide some pointers on appropriate practices to maintain client confidentiality during telecommuting. The FAQs can be accessed [here](#).

If you have any query, please write in to the Law Society at membership@lawsoc.org.sg or call 6538 2500.

COVID-19 Task Force
3 April 2020