



CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER FOR THE COURTS OF JAMAICA

"Timely Delivery of a High Standard of Justice for All"

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF JAMAICA



The Jamaican Court system is charged with a mandate to ensure that justice is delivered to the people of Jamaica in a fair, efficient and timely manner. I am committed to that vision as I recognise that public confidence in the administration of Justice in our island's Courts is critical in any civilized and well-ordered society.

However, it must be appreciated that the effective administration of our system of justice will invariably depend on the extent to which all stakeholders of the system are willing to fulfil their respective roles. This means that we all must play our part responsibly, whether as Judges, attorneys, court staff, police officers or members of the public who are the primary users of the service provided by our Courts.

I welcome this initiative by the Court Management Services (CMS) and fully endorse the underlying objectives. I believe that in time the Service Charter will become an indispensable tool for all members of the public, in knowing what to expect when they interact with the court system and what is expected of them in return.

Let us all work together to achieve the high standards of service in a court system of which we, as Jamaicans, can all be proud.

The Hon Mrs. Justice Zaila McCalla O.J.
Chief Justice of Jamaica

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER



The justice system is fundamental to the proper functioning of any modern society, and at the heart of this system is our Courts. We are aware that attending court is not a common experience for many, which may overwhelm some persons, making them anxious about what to expect. Against this background, we are seeking to make

each customer experience an exceptional one. It is therefore no coincidence that this charter was designed, putting customers at the heart of what we do and sets out the standard of service you can expect from the Courts.

This charter serves as one of the measures that we have developed to make the Courts more user-friendly, effective and responsive to the needs of all our customers, regardless of who they are. It holds us accountable for our actions and serves as a guide for us to operate at the highest ethical standards, in a manner that upholds our values. It helps us to monitor our performance and to measure whether or not we are meeting our commitments to you. It also outlines your responsibilities as a customer and what you can do if you are not happy with the service you have received.

The process of providing excellent service is ongoing as we seek to ensure that the proper systems and procedures are in place to fulfil our stated commitments. We will endeavour to improve on these standards as we strive to deliver excellent service to you, despite the constraints and challenges of limited resources. We are depending on a mutually beneficial partnership with you for the realisation of the promises outlined in this charter.

Carol Hughes (Mrs)
Principal Executive Officer (Acting)

Purpose

This Service Charter outlines the standard of service you can expect from the administrative staff of Jamaica's Courts and the steps you can take if you are not happy with the service you have received. It also outlines your responsibilities as a client of the Courts.

Our Mission

Timely delivery of a high standard of justice for all.

Our Commitment

We aim to:

- Provide friendly and efficient service for all clients of the Courts.
- Provide a customer centered and safe environment for clients of the court.
- Dispense fair and equal treatment to all clients of the court regardless of age, ethnicity, origin, gender, disability, or religious beliefs.





What You Can Expect From Us

When you visit a court, staff will:

- Be courteous, helpful, professional and respectful to your needs.
- Provide fair treatment for all parties whether they appear with legal representation or not.
- Deliver prompt and responsive service within a reasonable time of your arrival at the court.
- Be respectful of your privacy (unless there are legal requirements to disclose information).
- Provide information that is clear and understandable.
- Listen to your requests and give directions accordingly.
- Listen to comments about our services and try our best to resolve those that can be resolved.
- Provide adequate information on court dates and cases.

When you call us, our staff will:

- Answer telephone calls within four rings and ensure that enquires are dealt with courteously and efficiently.
- Tell you what is happening: if you have to be put on hold and if we transfer the call, you will be informed of the name of the person to whom you are being transferred.

When you write to us, we will:

- Acknowledge receipt of your correspondence within five (5) working days.
- Provide a written reply to your letters and emails within a maximum of ten (10) working days. When this is not possible, notification will be made by whatever means available.
- When responding to letters or emails we will be clear, precise, concise and courteous. All responses will bear a signatory's name, date, full address and reference number where applicable.

What We Cannot Do

- Recommend to you a named attorney-at-law.
- Tell you what the decision of the Court will be.
- Interpret, intervene or change orders made by a Judicial officer.
- Facilitate you to communicate with a Judge other than at the hearing of your court case.
- Perform any activity which will be in breach of the Law, ethical conduct required of Judicial Officers, Policies of the Court Management Services, or the Staff Orders of the Government of Jamaica.

Remember...

Court staff can only give information as it relates to procedures and general matters relating to the Courts, but they cannot give you legal advice. If you are financially unable to engage legal representation, you may contact the Legal Aid Clinic at 131 Tower Street, Kingston, or call them at (876) 922-3792, the Legal Aid Clinic in Montego Bay at 42B Union Street or call them at 952-2183/971-7150 or the Norman Manley Law School Legal Aid Clinic on the Mona Campus of The University of the West Indies at 927-1007 or 977-2880.

How You Can Help Us Serve You Better

- You should provide complete and accurate information.
- Where applicable, provide the required documents.
- Advise court staff of any special needs that you might have.
- Read and follow instructions provided to you.
- Conduct business in a disciplined and respectful manner.
- Conform to Court rules and security procedures.
- Arrive on time for Court hearings.
- Provide feedback on our service (completing customer service feedback forms, using the complaint system at www.cms.gov.jm/complaints/ or calling us at 1-888-429-5269)
- Use Court facilities with care.

If You Are Not Happy With the Services Received...



We value your feedback about our administrative processes and conduct, including any suggestions about how we can improve our service.

If you are not satisfied with the service you have received, you should speak to a **Supervisor** or the **Court Administrator**. If the Court Administrator cannot satisfy your

concern, the Court Administrator will refer you to someone who can help you. You may submit your complaints using our **Complaints Management System**, accessible through the Supreme Court Website – www.supremecourt.gov.jm.

Call Toll Free: **1-888-429-5269**

You may also email us at: customerservice@cms.gov.jm

More complex complaints should be forwarded to:

**The Principal Executive Officer
Court Management Services
8th Floor, The Towers
25 Dominica Drive
Kingston 5
1-876-665- 3701**

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint you may contact:

**The Public Defender
Office of the Public Defender
78 Harbour Street
Kingston**

**1-876-922-7089
publicdefender@opd.gov.jm**

The Role of the Judiciary

The **Judiciary** is a separate and independent branch of Government. The other branches are the **Legislature** (Parliament) and the **Executive** (The Cabinet). As a branch of government the Judiciary generally does not make law. That is the responsibility of the Legislature (parliament).

The Judiciary is tasked with ensuring that there is fair and equitable treatment of all persons who appear before the Courts. The Judiciary also does not enforce law. That is the responsibility of the Executive branch (Cabinet). Rather, the Judiciary interprets law and applies it to the facts of each case which appears in the Courts. The Judiciary is headed by the Chief Justice.

The Role of the Chief Justice

The Chief Justice is the head of the Judiciary and is appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition. The Chief Justice is responsible for the administration of the Courts in Jamaica. The Chief Justice presides over matters in the Supreme Court and on specified occasions, may preside at the Court of Appeal. The Chief Justice also chairs several Boards and Committees that are critical to the Justice System, including Judicial Service Commission, the Supreme Court Rules Committee, the Queen's Counsel Committee, the Advisory Board of the Justice Training Institute and the Archives Advisory Committee.



The Court Management Services

The Court Management Services (CMS) was established by Cabinet decision and the operationalisation of the entity commenced on November 1, 2010. The move to establish the CMS was based on a recommendation of a Justice Sector review. It was recognised that creating a Court administrative entity would separate certain administrative functions of the Judicial and Executive arms of Government. Notably, the Jamaican Constitution stipulates that there are three separate and independent arms of government.

The CMS's establishment allows the Judiciary and the Courts to have greater input in budgetary decisions and execution of some important activities surrounding the operations of the Courts. The CMS is led by a Principal Executive Officer (PEO) who is an accounting officer. The PEO reports to the Chief Justice of Jamaica, who is the Head of the Judiciary, and to Parliament in respect of accounting matters. The CMS is responsible for performing a range of court-related administrative services. These include:

1. Finance and Accounts
2. Human Resource Management and Administration
3. Information Communication Technology Services
4. Client Services and Communications
5. Property Management and Maintenance
6. Internal Audit

For further information contact:

Client Services – Communications and Information Division

Court Management Services

8th Floor, The Towers

25 Dominica Drive

Kingston 5

Tele: 1-876- 665-3701

Jamaica's Court System

The Privy Council

The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is the court of final appeal for Jamaica and some other Commonwealth Countries that have retained the right of appeal, to the Committee.

Court of Appeal

The Court of Appeal is the highest appellate Court in Jamaica. Appeals against decisions from both the Supreme Court and Parish Courts are heard in the Court of Appeal. The Court is comprised of a President and six other Judges. If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Supreme Court or the Parish Court, you can appeal to the Court of Appeal.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is regulated by the Judicature (Supreme Court) Act. It has unlimited original jurisdiction in criminal, civil and constitutional cases. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice, who is Head of the Judiciary, a Senior Puisne Judge and at least thirty other Puisne Judges. There is legislative provision for a maximum of 40 Supreme Court Judges to be appointed. The work of the Court is conducted in a number of different divisions, based on the nature and subject matter of cases to be heard.

The Divisions of the Supreme Court are: Criminal (Circuit Courts) & Gun Courts; Civil; Commercial, Insolvency, Probate, Matrimonial, Admiralty and Review/Constitutional. Specialised Superior Courts in which Supreme Court Judges sit have also been created to complement the work of the Supreme Court. These are the Revenue Court established under the Revenue Court Act in 1971 and the Gun Court (High Court and Circuit Court Divisions) established under the Gun Court Act in 1974. The Gun Court Act was amended in 1999 to include the Western Regional Gun Court, with geographical jurisdiction for the parishes of St. James, Hanover, Trelawny and Westmoreland.

The Circuit Courts outside of Kingston are convened in each parish usually at specific times in the year with special sittings scheduled as neces-

sary.

However, the Circuit Court in Kingston (known as the Home Circuit Court), the High Court Division of the Gun Court (sits in Kingston) and the Western Regional Gun Court located in Montego Bay, sits continuously .

In addition to the Western Regional Gun Court, there is also a Western Regional Registry of the Supreme Court which was introduced in July 2015,

Parish Courts

A Parish Court is situated in each parish and has jurisdiction within that parish and extends one mile beyond the parish boundary. The Court is presided over by a Parish Court Judge. This Court has limited Jurisdiction in Criminal and Civil cases. They have jurisdiction to deal with cases including:

- Recovery of Possession
- Recovery of Rent
- Granting of Probate
- Letters of Administration

Other specialized Courts presided over by Parish Court Judges are the **Family Court**, the **Traffic Court**, the **Drug Treatment Court**, the **Coroner's Court**, the **Special Coroner's Court**, the **Children's Court** and the **Drug Treatment Court** located at the Corporate Area Criminal Court, St. James, St. Catherine, St. Thomas and Manchester. A Drug Treatment Programme has also been introduced at the Family Courts.

Petty Sessions Court

The Petty Sessions court is a court of summary jurisdiction for minor offences that are tried without a jury. The Petty Sessions Court hears matters under the Towns and Communities Act, The Constabulary Force Act and some sections of The Offences Against the Person Act for example, disorderly conduct, threats, assault, indecent language, resisting arrest and petty theft to name a few. The Court is presided over by two or three Justices of the Peace or a Parish Court Judge.

COURTS - CORPORATE AREA

COURT	TELEPHONE
The Court of Appeal Public Building West King Street, Kingston Email: info@courtofappeal.gov.jm	(876)922-8300-7 (876)665-3530
Supreme Court Gun Court & Revenue Court Public Buildings East & North King Street, Kingston Email: info@supremecourt.gov.jm	(876)922-8300-4 (876) 665-2100 948-7405 967-2719
Corporate Area Parish Court Criminal Division (Half – Way Tree) 144 Maxfield Ave, Kingston 10 Email: corporatearea.criminalcourt@rmc.gov.jm Outstation: Gordon Town	(876)926-3750
Corporate Area Parish Court Civil Division Sutton Street, Kingston Email: corporatearea.civilcourt@rmc.gov.jm	(876)922-8290-2
The Special Coroner’s Court 119A Maxfield Avenue, Kingston Email: specialcoronerscourt@rmc.gov.jm	(876)922-8290-2
Kingston and St. Andrew Family Court 55A Duke Street, Kingston Attendance Centre- 79 Duke Street, Kingston Email: kingston.familycourt@rmc.gov.jm	(876)922-0001
The Coroner’s Court 119A Maxfield Avenue, Kingston Email: coroners.court@rmc.gov.jm	(876)922-8290-2
The Traffic Court 36 Camp Road, Kingston 5 Email: corporatearea.trafficcourt.rmc.gov.jm	(876)922-8097

COURTS - RURAL

COURT	TELEPHONE
St. Ann Parish Court St. Ann's Bay Outstations: Brown's Town, Claremont Email: stann.rmc@rmc.gov.jm; stann_bt.rmc.gov.jm	(876)972-2303 /794-9964
Hanover Parish Court Haughton Court, Lucea Outstations: Green Island, Sandy Bay, Ramble Email: hanover.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)956-2280
Hanover Family Court Watson Taylor Drive, Hanover Email: hanover.familycourt.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)956-2576
Westmoreland Parish Court Great Georges Street Westmoreland Outstations: Whithorn, Hendon Email: westmoreland.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)955-2544
Westmoreland Family Court 26 Rose Street, Westmoreland Email: westmoreland.family@rmc.gov.jm	(876) 918-1934
St. Catherine Parish Court 151/2 White Church Street, Spanish Town Outstations: Linstead, Old Harbour, Greater Portmore Email: st.catherine.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)984-3037
St Mary Parish Court Main Street Port Maria Outstations: Annotto Bay, Richmond, Gayle Email: stmary.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)994-2532
St. Thomas Parish Court Church Street, Morant Bay Outstations: Yallahs Email: stthomas.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)982-1711

COURTS - RURAL

COURT	TELEPHONE
Trelawny Parish Court Duncans, Outstations: Falmouth, Ulster Spring, Clarke's Town. Email: trelawny.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)954-2136
St James Parish Court Meager Road, Montego Bay. Outstations: Adelphi Cambridge Email: stjames.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)952-3332-3
St James Family Court 4 Kerr Crescent, Montego Bay, St James Email: stjames.familycourt.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)952-2062
Manchester Parish Court Park Crescent Mandeville Outstations: Porous, Cross Keys, Spalding Christina, Mile Gully Email: manchester.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)962-2191
Clarendon Parish Court Sevens Road, May Pen Outstation: Lionel Town, Frankfeild, Chapleton Email: clarendon.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)986-2336
St. Elizabeth Parish Court Black River Outstations: Balaclava, Malvern, Santa Cruz Email: st.elizabeth.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)965-2259
Portland Parish Court Harbour Street , Port Antonio Outstation: Machioneal, Buff Bay Email: portland.rmc@rmc.gov.jm	(876)993-2549

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