

Service of Form TM 11 (Notice of Opposition), Form TM 28 (Application for Revocation / Declaration of Invalidity / Rectification) and Notice Required under Rule 29(5) where there is no Address for Service (HMD Circular No. 4/2011, dated 26 August 2011)

In an opposition / invalidation / revocation / rectification proceeding before the Registrar, the Initiating Party has to file his action with the Registrar and serve the relevant documents on the Opposite Party at the same time. HMD Circular 4/2009 details the matters which the Registrar will be looking out for in determining whether this requirement has been met. HMD Circular 4/2009 applies in a situation where the Opposite Party has an address for service ("AFS") in accordance with rule 9 of the Trade Marks Rules (Cap 332, 2008 Rev Ed), which includes a trade or business address in Singapore under rule 9(9)(b).

This Circular supplements HMD Circular 4/2009 and caters for the situation where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9.

Rule 9(1) provides that for the purposes of any proceedings before the Registrar, an AFS in Singapore shall be filed accordingly. In particular, rule 9(1)(a) and rule 9(1)(e) provide that an AFS shall be filed by every applicant for a registration of a trade mark and every proprietor of a registered trade mark which is the subject of an opposition / invalidation / revocation / rectification. The consequences of a failure to provide an AFS are provided in Rule 9(6).¹

In the case of oppositions to international registrations, rule 14(1) of the Trade Marks (International Registration) Rules (Cap 332, 2002 Rev Ed) ("TMIRR") requires the holder of an international registration to file an AFS within 4 months from the Registrar's notification of refusal based on opposition. The consequence of a failure to provide an AFS is provided in Rule 14(10).²

A. SERVICE OF FORM TM 11 (NATIONAL APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION)

Where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9, the Initiating Party should, when filing the opposition action with the Registrar, send a copy of Form TM 11 to the Opposite Party's address indicated on the Register at the same time and indicate to the Registrar accordingly (rule 29(2)).

Upon receipt of Form TM 11 from the Initiating Party, the Registrar will notify the Opposite Party to file a Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time

¹ In the case of an applicant for a registration of a trade mark, the application shall be treated as withdrawn. In the case of a proprietor of a registered trade mark, he shall not be permitted to take part in the proceedings in question.

² The holder's request for protection in Singapore shall be treated as withdrawn.

to file Counter-Statement). Where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9, the Registrar will also notify the Opposite Party to file Form TM 1 at the same time as he files his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement).

For avoidance of doubt, the Registrar will rely on the date of receipt by the Registrar of Form TM 11 for the purposes of compliance with rules 29(1) and (2) and for the purposes of calculating the due date for filing the Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) in accordance with rule 31, save under the circumstances below.

Opposite Party did not receive Form TM 11

If the Opposite Party clearly indicates that he did not receive Form TM 11, the Initiating Party is required to show Proof of Service. For proof, either a courier receipt or invoice or if by normal post, a Statutory Declaration that the Notice of Opposition (Form TM 11) has been posted will suffice. The Opposite Party will be directed to file an AFS and thereafter, the Initiating Party will be directed to re-serve the documents on the Opposite Party at the AFS. The deadline for the Opposite Party to file his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) is 2 months from the date of receipt by the Opposite Party of Form TM 11 that was re-served.

Opposite Party receives Form TM 11 after the date of receipt by Registrar

If the Opposite Party receives Form TM 11 after the date that the Registrar receives the same, the Opposite Party should promptly inform the Registrar and the Initiating Party in writing of the actual date of receipt of Form TM 11. The deadline for the Opposite Party to file his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) is taken to be 2 months from the actual date of receipt by the Opposite Party of Form TM 11.

Service which is effected in accordance with this HMD Circular is deemed to be in compliance with rule 29(2).

B. FILING OF FORM TM 11 (INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION DESIGNATING SINGAPORE)

Rule 13 of the TMIRR governs the process for the filing of Form TM 11 in relation to an international registration.

In relation to an international registration, there is no issue of "service" of Form TM 11. The opponent is only required to file Form TM 11 with the Registrar.

C. SERVICE OF FORM TM 28 (NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION DESIGNATING SINGAPORE)

Where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9, the Initiating Party should, when filing the relevant action with the Registrar, send a copy of Form TM 28 to the Opposite Party's address indicated on the Register at the same time (rule 57(3)).

Upon receipt of Form TM 28 from the Initiating Party, the Registrar will notify the Opposite Party to file a Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement). Where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9, the Registrar will also notify the Opposite Party to file Form TM 1 at the same time as he files his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement).

For avoidance of doubt, the Registrar will rely on the date of receipt by the Registrar of Form TM 28 for the purposes of calculating the due date for filing the Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) in accordance with rule 58, save under the circumstances below.

Opposite Party did not receive Form TM 28

If the Opposite Party clearly indicates that he did not receive Form TM 28 at all, subject to proof that the Initiating Party has sent Form TM 28 by post to the Opposite Party, the Opposite Party will be directed to file an AFS and thereafter, the Initiating Party will be directed to re-serve the documents on the Opposite Party at the AFS. The deadline for the Opposite Party to file his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) is 2 months from the date of receipt by the Opposite Party of Form TM 28 that was re-served.

Opposite Party receives Form TM 28 after the date of receipt by Registrar

If the Opposite Party receives Form TM 28 after the date that the Registrar receives the same, the Opposite Party should promptly inform the Registrar and the Initiating Party in writing of the actual date of receipt of Form TM 28. The deadline for the Opposite Party to file his Counter-Statement (or a request for an extension of time to file Counter-Statement) is 2 months from the actual date of receipt by the Opposite Party of Form TM 28.

Service which is effected in accordance with this HMD Circular is deemed to be in compliance with rule 57(3).

D. SERVICE OF NOTICE REQUIRED UNDER RULE 29(5) (NATIONAL APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AND INTERNATIONAL REGISTRATION DESIGNATING SINGAPORE)

Where there is no AFS filed nor any trade or business address in Singapore to be treated as the AFS in accordance with rule 9, the Initiating Party should send the notice required under rule 29(5)³ to the Opposite Party's address indicated on the Register.

For avoidance of doubt, the Registrar will take the date of receipt by the Registrar of Form TM 48 together with the notice required under rule 29(5) as the date for the purposes of compliance with rules 29(3) and (6).

Separately, the Registrar will take the date stated on the face of the notice required under rule 29(5) as the date for the purposes of compliance with rule 29(5), unless the Opposite Party clearly indicates otherwise, e.g. the Opposite Party notifies the Registrar in writing that the notice required under rule 29(5) was not received by the date the Registrar receives Form TM 48. In cases of irregularity, the Registrar will exercise her discretion under rule 29(7) and/or rule 83 on the facts of each case and may grant an extension of time (for more details see below).

Service which is effected in accordance with this HMD Circular is deemed to be in compliance with rule 29(5).

E. REGISTRAR'S DISCRETION UNDER RULE 29

Rule 29(7) provides that the Registrar may refuse to grant the extension of time if:

- (i) the person requesting for the extension fails to provide a good and sufficient reason for the extension; or
- (ii) if the person fails to show to the Registrar's satisfaction that a notice referred in rule 29(5) has been served on the applicant and every person likely to be effected by the extension.

Where a person on whom a notice referred to in rule 29(5) is served fails or refuses to give his consent within 2 weeks from the date of the notice, the Registrar may, if he is satisfied that a good and sufficient reason has been shown, grant the extension and the Registrar may do so without having to conduct a hearing in accordance with rule 67 – see rule 29(8). The Registrar's

³ The notice shall contain (i) a statement of the opponent's intention to request for an extension; (ii) the extension requested for; (iii) the reason for the extension; and (iv) a request for the consent of the applicant or other person to the extension.

discretion is not constrained by whether or not the Opposite Party gives his consent to an extension of time.

While the effect of rule 29(7) and rule 29(8) is such that the Registrar has the discretion to grant an extension of time to file Form TM 11, the total extension of time which can be granted is 4 months from the publication date of the national application for registration or international registration designating Singapore (r29(4)).