

Ms P Roberts
ACTING CHIEF MASTER

3. Any enquiries should be addressed in writing to the Office of the Chief Master.

Rest of the country: To be confirmed

Master Durban: 12 April 2023

Master Johannesburg: 30 March 2023

2. This Directive is effective as indicated below and should be implemented as such.

1. Your attention is drawn to the contents of the attached Directive with regards to implementing QR Coded appointments in deceased estates

CHIEF MASTER DIRECTIVE 1 OF 2023 – Implementation of a QR Code on Deceased Estate Appointments

(HEAD OFFICE FILE 12/7/P)

CIRCULAR 11 OF 2023

30 March 2023

Sub Office File: 7/1/1

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Justice and Constitutional Development
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

the doj & cd





CHIEF MASTER'S DIRECTIVE 1 OF 2023

DECEASED ESTATES: IMPLEMENTING QR CODE ON MASTER'S APPOINTMENT LETTERS

1) PURPOSE OF THIS DIRECTIVE

The purpose of this Directive is to direct all Masters in the performance of their functions regarding issuing of letters of appointment in deceased estates.

This Directive is issued in terms of:

1.1. Section 3 of the Judicial Matters Amendment Act, 2005 which requires the Chief Master to "exercise control, direction and supervision over all the Masters".

1.2. Section 2(1) of the Administration of Estates Act 66 of 1965.

2) BACKGROUND

a) It is becoming more and more prevalent that the appointment letters issued by Master's Offices in deceased estates are being fraudulently manipulated in order to commit fraud in deceased estates. Consequently, the Master is also inundated with requests from the banking and financial industry to confirm letters of appointment prior to them being willing to accept the letters lodged with them by appointees.

b) Further, the process of recalling/amending an appointment letter issued by the Master involves the previous appointee returning the original appointment letter to the Master, after which the Master then can proceed to issue a new appointment letter. However, as this request for the returning of the appointment letter is not always adhered to, there is a real risk that the previous appointment letter may still be used fraudulently.

3.1) All appointment letters issued in deceased estates, will (see attached Annexure A, B and C as examples) :

i. Carry a system generated QR Code in the right top corner of the document and when scanned, the QR code will reflect the following:

- (a) The type of letter (Letter of Authority / Letter of Executor) and
- (b) Whether the QR code is valid or not and
- (c) Whether the appointment letter is the latest appointment letter issued and
- (d) The details of the estate and the appointee and
- (e) The date issued and by whom
- (f) If a valid QR code - a PDF copy of the actual letter as on the Master's system

3) THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN DECIDED:

2.5 As part of the Chief Master's statutory obligations, a decision has been made to implement the following amendment to the format of the appointment letter to ensure uniformity in all Master's Offices:

c) The deceased estate industry has also complained to the Office of the Chief Master that they are not receiving the issued appointment letters timely, for various reasons, including the post office being slow (or losing the document), officials delaying in putting the appointment letters in the relevant MK boxes, long queues when trying to collect documents etc.

d) In order to curb the likelihood of fraud and to alleviate frustrations as well as to improve service delivery and accessibility of the Masters Office, the Master's Branch, together with ICT, have developed a new format of appointment letter which will carry a Quick Response (QR) code. The QR code is linked to the Master's system and can be used to verify and validate the appointment letter issued.

- ii. carry a system generated date stamp in the right bottom corner, indicating the date of approval of the appointment letter and the office where it was issued and indicate the name of the Assistant Master who approved the appointment letter.
- (1) The appointment letter will not be physically signed by any Master's officials anymore.

3.2) As soon as the letter of appointment is approved by the Master, the following will be sent to the appointee (when the functionality is activated):

- i. A text message (SMS) indicating that the appointment letter has been issued and providing a link where a copy can be viewed; and
- ii. An e-mail will be sent to the appointee to which the appointment letter would be attached for usage.
- iii. Alternatively, the client may visit the Master's Office to obtain a printed copy of the letter of appointment:

- 1. should they not be able to download it, or
- 2. when they are a walk-in client receiving the appointment letter directly from the office, or
- 3. when the system is unable to send the e-mail with the appointment letter, the normal process of placing the appointment letter in the MK Box, posting it or collecting it will still apply.

3.3) The QR coded appointment letters will only be issued as from the effective dates indicated below.

- i. Appointment letters previously issued in the old format will remain valid unless amended or recalled after the effective date, as all system generated appointment letters will be in the above format as from the effective dates.

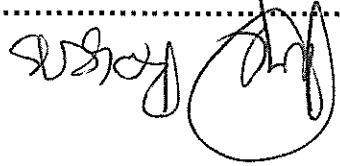
3.4) As from the effective dates no manual appointments may be issued by any office – all appointments must be approved and issued on the system. Non-adherence to this directive may lead to disciplinary procedures being implemented against the violating official.

4 EFFECTIVE DATE

This directive repeals prior Directives, Circulars or instructions regarding this subject, with effect from the effective dates listed below.

This Directive will come into effect as follows:
Master Johannesburg: 30 March 2023
Master Durban: 12 April 2023
Rest of the country: To be confirmed

Ms P Roberts
ACTING CHIEF MASTER



Date

30/03/2023