



## DTI and DOLE INTERIM GUIDELINES ON WORKPLACE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF COVID-19



### I. BACKGROUND

On March 8, 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte, recognizing that COVID-19 constitutes a threat to national security and prompting a whole-of-government approach in addressing the outbreak, declared a State of Public Health emergency throughout the entire Philippines through Proclamation No. 922.

On March 16, 2020, to prevent the sharp rise of COVID-19 cases in the country, the President placed the entire of Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) until April 14, 2020.

On April 7, 2020, upon the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), the President extended the implementation of the ECQ until April 30, 2020.

On April 23, 2020, the IATF recommended that guidelines be issued by the different government agencies to provide policy directions for the public and stakeholders in complying with Government regulations following the modification of ECQ.

### II. OBJECTIVE

The guidelines are issued to assist private institutions that are allowed to operate during the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in developing the minimum health protocols and standards in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### III. COVERAGE

The Guidelines shall apply to all workplaces, employers and workers in the private sector.

### IV. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH

The following safety and health standards shall be implemented in all workplaces aligned with the objectives of the minimum health standards of the Department of Health:

#### A. Increase physical and mental resilience

1. Emphasize to all workers the everyday actions to stay healthy such as:
  - a. Eat nutritious and well-cooked food;
  - b. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcoholic beverages;

- c. Increase the body's resistance by having adequate rest and at least eight (8) hours of sleep; and
  - d. Exercise regularly;
2. Enjoin companies to provide free medicines and vitamins; and
  3. Provide referral for workers needing counselling or presenting with mental health concerns

## **B. Reducing transmission of COVID-19**

1. Prior to entrance in buildings or workplaces
  - a. All employers and workers shall:
    - i. Wear face masks at all times and remove the same only when eating/drinking. Employers shall provide the appropriate face masks for workers. Should cloth masks be used, the washable type shall be worn but additional filter material such as tissue papers inside the masks may be added;
    - ii. Accomplish daily the health symptoms questionnaire and submit to the guard or designated safety officer prior to entry;
    - iii. Have their temperature checked and recorded in the health symptoms questionnaire. (refer to annex)  
For any personnel with temperature  $> 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ , even after a 5 minute rest, or if their response in the questionnaire needs further evaluation by the clinic staff, the person shall be isolated in an area identified by the company and not allowed to enter the premises. The isolation area should be well ventilated and must be disinfected frequently.  
Clinic staff assigned to assess the workers held in the isolation area shall be provided the appropriate medical grade PPEs by the establishment which shall include but not limited to, face masks, goggles/face shields, and/or gloves; and
    - iv. Spray alcohol/sanitizers to both hands; and provide disinfectant foot baths at the entrance if practicable.
  - b. Equipment or vehicle entering the hub operational area must go through a disinfection process; and
  - c. If there will be a long queue outside the office or store premises, roving officers should instill physical distancing of one meter.
2. Inside the workplace
  - a. All work areas and frequently handled objects such as door knobs and handles, shall be cleaned and disinfected regularly, at least once every two (2) hours;
  - b. All washrooms and toilets shall have sufficient clean water and soap, workers are encouraged to wash their hands frequently and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth;
  - c. Sanitizers shall be made available in corridors, conference areas, elevators, stairways and areas where workers pass;

- d. Workers, whether in office workstations or in operations area, shall always practice physical distancing meaning at the minimum one (1) meter radius space (side, back and front) between workers;
- e. Eating in communal areas is discouraged. It is best to eat in individual work area and all wastes shall be disposed properly.  
If eating in individual work areas is not possible, the employer shall ensure that physical distancing is maintained in dining areas with one worker per table and 1 meter distance per worker. It is discouraged that workers engage in conversation with masks off during meal times. Tables and chairs shall be cleaned or disinfected after every use of the area, and before as well as at the end of the work day; and
- f. Canteens and kitchens should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

### **C. Minimize contact rate**

- 1. Alternative work arrangements, such as working-hour shifts, work from home (WFH), where feasible and on rotation basis;
- 2. Prolonged face-to-face interaction between workers and with clients are discouraged and masks shall be worn at all times and not removed. Meetings needing physical presence shall be kept to a minimum number of participants and with short duration. Videoconferencing shall be utilized for lengthy discussions among workers;
- 3. Office tables should be arranged in order to maintain proper physical distancing. Barriers may be provided between tables;
- 4. Workstation layout should be designed to allow for unidirectional movement in aisles, corridors or walkways;
- 5. To maintain physical distancing, number of people inside an enclosed space such as a room, store or hall shall be limited. Elevator use should consider physical distancing and limit the number of persons in order to observe the 1-meter physical distancing;
- 6. Use of stairs should be encouraged subject to physical distancing requirements. If more than 2 stairways are accessible, one stairway may be used exclusively for going up and another for going down;
- 7. Online system shall be highly encouraged to be utilized for clients needing assistance from offices including the use of videoconferencing; and
- 8. Roving officers shall always ensure physical distancing and observance of minimum health protocols.

### **D. On Reducing the risk of infection from COVID-19**

- 1. In the event that a worker is suspected as having COVID-19:
  - a. The worker shall immediately proceed to the isolation area designated in the workplace and never remove his/her mask;

- b. Clinic personnel attending to the workers should wear appropriate PPEs and if needed should require the transport of the affected worker to the nearest hospital. Company protocols for transport for suspect COVID-19 cases and for **PCR testing**, should be in place including providing for ambulance conduction. Hospitals will report to the DOH for COVID-19 suspect; and
  - c. Decontamination of workplace
    - i. Workplace shall be decontaminated with appropriate disinfectant (e.g. chlorine bleaching solution and 1:100 phenol based disinfectant);
    - ii. After decontamination of the work area, work can resume after 24 hours; and
    - iii. Workers present in the work area with the suspect COVID-19 worker shall go on 14 days home quarantine with specific instructions from the clinic staff on monitoring of symptoms and possible next steps. If suspect COVID-19 worker has negative result, co-workers may be allowed to report back to work.
2. In the event that a worker is sick or has fever but is not suspected to have COVID-19 (ex., urinary infection, wound infection or any diseases not related to lungs or respiratory tract) the employer must advise the worker to take prudent measures to limit the spread of communicable diseases, as follows:
- i. Stay at home and keep away from work or crowds;
  - ii. Take adequate rest and take plenty of fluids;
  - iii. Practice personal hygiene to prevent spread of disease; and
  - iv. Seek appropriate medical care if there is persistent fever, when difficulty of breathing has started, or when he/she becomes weak.

## **V. DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS**

Employers shall:

1. Provide the necessary company policies for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in consultation with workers. Advocacy and IEC programs should be taken from DOH, WHO and reliable sources of information on COVID-19;
2. Provide resources and materials needed to keep the workers healthy and the workplace safe, e.g., masks, soap, sanitizer, disinfectant, PPEs, including COVID-19 testing kits, etc;
3. Designate the safety officer to monitor COVID-19 prevention and control measures such as physical distancing, wearing of masks, regular disinfection, compliance to thermal scanning and accomplishing health symptoms questionnaire;
4. Enhance health insurance provision for workers;
5. Where feasible, provide shuttle services and/or decent accommodation on near-site location to lessen travel and people movement;
6. Enjoin the hiring from the local community; and
7. Put up a COVID-19 Hotline and Call Center for employees to report if symptomatic, and daily monitoring scheme of our “suspect” employee condition.

Workers shall:

1. Comply with all workplace measures in place for the prevention and control of COVID-19, such as, frequent hand washing, wearing of masks, observe physical distancing always, etc;
2. Observe proper respiratory etiquette;
3. Coughing and sneezing into tissue or into shirt sleeve if tissue is not available.
4. Disposing used tissues properly; and
5. Disinfecting hands immediately through proper washing with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer immediately after a cough or sneeze.

## **VI. WORKPLACE WITH IMMINENT DANGER SITUATIONS**

In workplaces where workers are evidently at risk of infection as in health-care and other frontline services, the employer shall comply with the DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0178: Interim Guidelines on Health Care Provider Networks during the COVID-19 Pandemic, 11 April 2020.

Workers in said workplaces must take extra precautionary measures which include strict hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Employers shall ensure that PPE (*e.g.* respirators such as N95, gowns, gloves) is properly worn by the workers while at work and disposed of accordingly after use.

## **VII. COVID-19 TESTING**

Employers may test workers for COVID-19. Testing kits used and procured shall be the responsibility of the employer. DOH Protocols shall be followed for the testing of workers and interpretation of results in accordance with DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0180: Revised Interim Guidelines on Expanded Testing for COVID-19, 16 April 2020 and DOH Administrative Order No. 2020-0014: Guidelines in Securing a License to Operate a COVID-19 Testing Laboratory in the Philippines, 07 April 2020. Company policy on COVID-19 testing shall be formulated and agreed upon by employers and workers in conformity with the DOH protocols.

Workers with a negative test shall continue to work. They should be given appropriate advise and instructions once they develop any health complaints or symptoms. The company OSH personnel shall continue to monitor all workers.

## **VIII. MOST AT RISK WORKERS<sup>1</sup> AND VULNERABLE GROUPS**

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<sup>1</sup> (> 60 Y.O, or, of any age with co-morbidities or pre-existing illness, i.e., hypertension, diabetes, cancer, or with immunocompromised health status; or with high risk pregnancy).

Employers are highly encouraged to allow these workers to do work from home arrangement. Work Agreements should be developed to detail the deliverables from these employees and there shall be no diminution in wages or benefits.

#### **IX. ASSISTANCE BY THE DTI AND DOLE**

DTI and DOLE shall extend assistance and technical support to all workplaces, employers and workers in complying with the Guidelines.

#### **X . REPORTING OF ILLNESSES/ DISEASES/INJURIES**

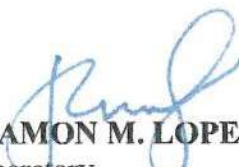
The employer shall provide the DOLE through its Regional Office copy furnished DOH, monthly reporting of illness, diseases and injuries utilizing the DOLE Work Accident/Illness Report Form (WAIR)


#### **XI . EFFECT OF FUTURE GUIDELINES**

This Interim Guidelines may be amended or superseded by later guidelines

#### **XII . EFFECTIVITY**

This Interim Guidelines shall take effect immediately.

  
**RAMON M. LOPEZ**  
Secretary  
Department of Trade and Industry

  
**SILVESTRE H. BELLO III**  
Secretary  
Department of Labor and Employment

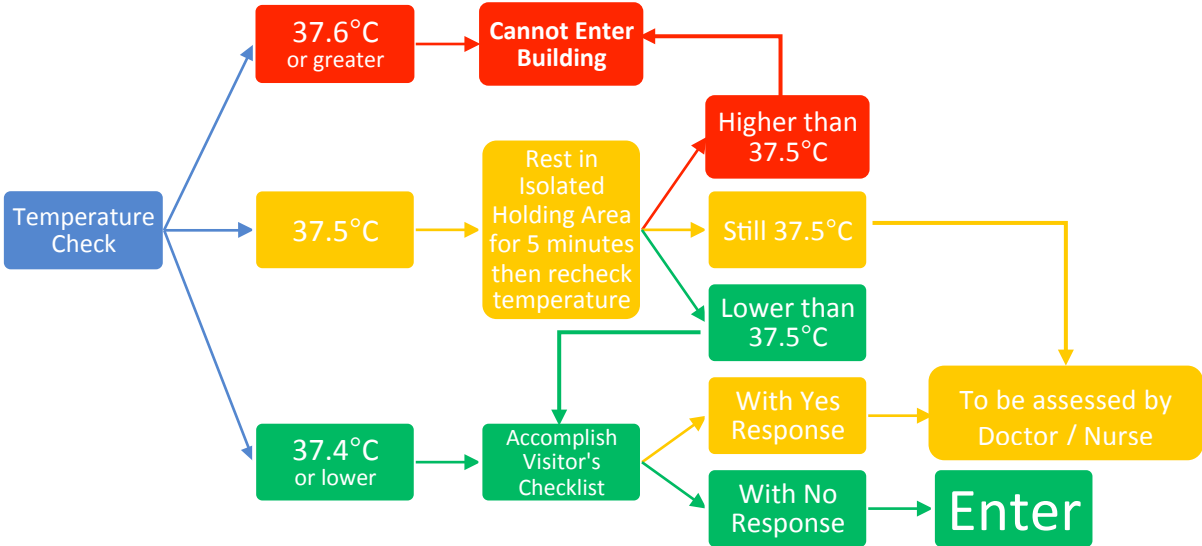
30 April 2020

ANNEX

Sample Protocol for Screening Employees and Visitors

Employers may adapt this sample protocol in toto or in portions, as applicable in their work environment. This sample protocol does not prevent employers from developing their own screening protocols compliant to the latest local or international occupational safety and health guidelines.

- 1. All workers, regardless of status, and visitors shall be subjected to a no-contact temperature scan.



2. All visitors shall accomplish the visitor's checklist  
**Health Checklist**

|                     |
|---------------------|
| <b>Temperature:</b> |
|---------------------|

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Visit: Official:  **If official, fill-in company details below**  
 Please check one Personal:

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Address: \_\_\_\_\_

|   | Yes  | No                       |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are you experiencing:<br>( <i>nakakaranas ka ba ng:</i> )  | a. Sore throat<br>( <i>pananakit ng lalamunan / masakit lumunok</i> )        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   | b. Body pains<br>( <i>pananakit ng katawan</i> )                             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   | c. Headache<br>( <i>pananakit ng ulo</i> )                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   | d. Fever for the past few days<br>( <i>Lagnat sa nakalipas na mga araw</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Have you worked together or stayed in the same close environment of a confirmed COVID-19 case? ( <i>May nakasama ka ba o nakatrabahong tao na kumpirmadong may COVID-19 / may impeksyon ng coronavirus?</i> )              | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| 3. Have you had any contact with anyone with fever, cough, colds, and sore throat in the past 2 weeks? ( <i>Mayroon ka bang nakasama na may lagnat, ubo, sipon o sakit ng lalamunan sa nakalipas ng dalawang (2) lingo?</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| 4. Have you travelled outside of the Philippines in the last 14 days? ( <i>Ikaw ba ay nagbyahe sa labas ng Pilipinas sa nakalipas na 14 na araw?</i> )  | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |
| 5. Have you travelled to any area in NCR aside from your home? ( <i>Ikaw ba ay nagpunta sa iba pang parte ng NCR o Metro Manila bukod sa iyong bahay?</i> ) Specify( <i>Sabihin kung saan</i> ): _____                        | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                          |

I hereby authorize [name of establishment], to collect and process the data indicated herein for the purpose of effecting control of the COVID-19 infection. I understand that my personal information is protected by RA 10173, Data Privacy Act of 2012, and that I am required by RA 11469, Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, to provide truthful information.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_