

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. _____

**PRESCRIBING IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES FOR IATF
RESOLUTION NO. 12 ISSUED BY THE INTER-AGENCY TASK
FORCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF EMERGING INFECTIOUS
DISEASES ON SOCIAL DISTANCING AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS**

WHEREAS, the President, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, upon the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) established under Executive Order No. 168 (s. 2014), raised the Code Alert Level to Code Red Sublevel Two and the imposition of stringent Distancing Measures in the National Capital Region (NCR) for thirty (30) days, effective March 15, 2020;

WHEREAS, Joint Resolution Nos. 11 and 12 (s. 2020) of the IATF for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (Task Force) were issued containing guidelines for the management of the COVID-19 situation and following the sharp increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country;

WHEREAS, on 14 March, the Office of the President issued a Memorandum directing all heads of departments to adopt, coordinate, and implement Stringent Social Distancing Measures for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation in the country;

WHEREAS, the imposition of stringent social distancing measures in the National Capital Region (NCR) shall be in effect for thirty (30) days starting 00:00 am of 15 March 2020 until 00:00 am of 14 April 2020;

WHEREAS, paragraph 2 of the Memorandum from the President states that *“Mass gatherings shall be prohibited. A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event where the number of people attending the event could strain the planning and response resources of the city or municipality where the event will be held. It includes movie screenings, concerts, sporting events, and other entertainment activities, community assemblies, and non-essential work-related gatherings. Essential work-related meetings and religious activities may continue so long as strict social distancing, defined as the strict maintenance of a distance of at least one-meter radius between and among those attending, is maintained during the entirety of the event. The Department of Trade and Industry shall ensure that private establishments in operation strictly maintain social distancing in their business (underscore supplied)”*.

WHEREAS, paragraph 3 of the same Memorandum states that a community quarantine is imposed over the entire NCR, classified as *“General Community quarantine – where movement of people shall be limited to **accessing basic necessities** and **work** (underscore supplied); and uniformed personnel and*

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quarantine officers shall be present at border patrol; and Enhanced community quarantine – where strict home quarantine shall be implemented in all households, transportation shall be suspended; provision for food and essential health services shall be regulated and heightened presence of uniformed personnel to enforce quarantine procedures will be implemented”

A. **SCOPE.** This Circular shall apply to all business establishments in the National Capital Region.

B. **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. All manufacturing, retail and service establishments shall remain in operation during the general community quarantine period subject to certain restrictions, social distancing, and other safety and health measures specified under this Circular.
2. Flexible work arrangements referred to under Labor Advisory No. 09, series of 2020, including, but not limited to, other work arrangements, such as telecommuting, work from home, reduction of workdays/hours, rotation of workers and forced leave, are hereby reiterated and highly encouraged in establishments that continue to operate.
3. All business establishments are restricted from mass gatherings such as but not limited to general assemblies, large meetings or conferences, outdoor events that attract large crowds and non-essential work-related gatherings.

C. **SPECIFIC GUIDELINES**

1. **Limited Mall Operations.**

With the declaration of General Community Quarantine, mall operations shall be limited to establishments offering basic necessities such as groceries and supermarkets, banks, pharmacies, health clinics, bookstores, hardware stores, food stalls (take out/delivery only). Business Process Outsourcing (BPOs) offices inside malls are likewise allowed to operate.

Lessors and owners of these business spaces shall share the responsibility by waiving the corresponding rental fees and charges of stores that were closed during the one-month period of General Community Quarantine, as a result of this Memorandum Circular.

2. **One Month Closure of Other Business Establishments.**

2.1. Businesses offering leisure and entertainment, gathering crowds confined in a specific area are prohibited from operating during the effectivity of the General Community Quarantine. These are:

- 2.1.1. Places of amusement that serve alcoholic beverages such as night clubs, bars, taverns, cocktail lounges, discotheques, beer parlors, and pubs.

2.1.2. Arts, entertainment and recreation activities/places such as live performances, events or exhibits intended for public viewing, art galleries, concerts, and opera or dance production, operation of concert and theatre halls and other arts.

2.1.3. Gambling facilities such as casinos, bingo halls, and video gaming terminals and the provision of gambling services such as lotteries and off-track betting.

2.2. Lessors and owners of these business spaces shall share the responsibility by waiving the corresponding rental fees and charges of stores that were closed during the one-month period of General Community Quarantine, as a result of this Memorandum Circular.

3. Social Distancing Measures for Establishments Engaged in Retail.

3.1. Retail establishments shall be allowed to operate, *provided* that the number of people at any given time inside the selling area shall have a density of one (1) person per square meter of unimpeded space. The entry of people should be limited to the computed carrying capacity of the establishment. Carrying capacity is equal to the total vacant space divided by one (1) person per square meter, thus a 200 square meter vacant space can accommodate 200 people at any time. The Department of Trade and Industry – Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau shall coordinate with the Local Government Units in the National Capital Region for the effective implementation of this Circular.

3.2. Retail establishments are directed to educate their employees/staff on the importance of social distancing; observe precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by strictly regulating the entry of people in accordance to the computed carrying capacity of the establishment; and to remind the buying public to observe social distancing through signages and public address systems.

3.3. Retail establishments are directed to implement strict sanitary measures including the use of sanitizing solutions in high-touch, high-traffic areas, elevators, shopping carts and baskets.

3.4. Retail establishments are directed to report or notify public health authorities of employees and/or staff who show signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

4. Social Distancing Measures for Non-Retail businesses

4.1. All business establishments in the agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors may remain in operation during the general community quarantine period provided that social distancing and other safety and health measures are strictly observed.

4.2. Businesses engaged in construction, manufacturing, and services companies are encouraged to provide temporary housing for its workers outside the National Capital Region (NCR)

5. Promotion of eCommerce

5.1. Retail establishments are encouraged to strengthen Internet retail or online commerce and to aggressively direct the buying public to procure services and buy goods online.

5.2. Delivery platforms shall be allowed only within the National Capital Region.

D. SAFETY AND HEALTH MEASURES

1. All business establishments in operation are urged to prepare an **infectious disease preparedness and response plan** to provide protective actions against COVID-19.

1.1. Plans should consider and address the level(s) of risk associated with various worksites and tasks that workers perform at those sites.

1.2. Business establishments whose workers have been exposed to COVID-19 must, pursuant to Sec 3.1.4, implement contact tracing in coordination with the Department of Health and the Local Government Unit (LGU) concerned.

2. All business establishments in operation shall Implement **Basic Infection Prevention Measures**. Employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices, including:

2.1. Promoting frequent and thorough hand washing by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands, among other measures. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 70% alcohol.

2.2. Encouraging workers to stay at home if they are sick.

2.3. Encouraging respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.

3. All business establishments in operation must prepare its workplace for COVID-19 as follows:

3.1. Provide customers and the public with tissue, alcohol and trash receptacles.

3.2. Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.

3.3. Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment, using FDA approved cleaning materials

4. All business establishments must conform to safety and precautionary guidelines issued by the Department of Health.

E. EFFECTIVITY

This guideline shall take effect immediately and shall be applicable for the duration of thirty (30) days, effective 15 March 2020 until 14 April 2020.

Approved:

RAMON M. LOPEZ
Secretary of Trade and Industry

Date: _____ March 2020