

Good News
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
30 August 2020

DOLE briefs public in Laging Handa Public Briefing on DTI-DOLE Supplemental Guidelines



On 26 August 2020, Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH hosted by Presidential Communications Operations Office Undersecretary (USec) Rocky Ignacio and Mr. Aljo Bendijo interviewed Assistant Secretary (ASec) Ma. Teresita Cucuenco, on behalf of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), on workers' safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

USec Ignacio said that at this time of pandemic, not only health workers may get infected of the virus from their patients but also workers in their respective workplace. In this note, she asked, what are the steps being undertaken by the DOLE to prevent the spread of the virus in workplaces in the country.

ASec Cucuenco replied that since the onset of the COVID-19, the Inter-Agency Task Force tasked the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the DOLE to formulate appropriate guidelines on prevention and control of COVID-19 in workplaces.

She also cited that on April 30, the DTI and DOLE already issued an interim guidelines on how minimum public health standards and strategies, as outlined by the Department of Health (DOH), may be applied in a workplace setting.

Because of the reported confirmed cases from workplaces, the DTI and DOLE issued last week Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 20-04-A entitled *DTI and DOLE*

Supplemental Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 and Clarificatory Advisory No. 01 following the issuance of the former, she said.

As discussed, the salient features of the supplemental guidelines are the inclusion of the contact details of the National Center for Mental Health, use of face shield as additional layer of protection, more detailed disinfection protocol, policy on shuttle service, and policy on managing cases such as contact tracing, provision of telemedicine, reporting, and testing.

ASec Cucueco stresses, “*once na may sintomas sinasabi pa rin ho namin, inuulit namin huwag muna ho kayong mag-report para sa trabaho.*” (once there is already a symptom, we still say, we repeat, do not report for work first)

She added that the supplemental guidelines is for companies to comply with but it is also really looking at minimum public health standards detailing the course of action employers must undertake in preventing COVID and managing isolation and referral of workers having symptoms of the virus and disinfection protocol in cases where there is a confirmed case.

When asked whether there is sanction for non-compliance of the supplemental guidelines, ASec Cucueco said that they may be penalized under Republic Act No. 11058 (OSH Law) and its implementing rules and regulations for their willful violation of workplace safety and health measure.

Full video and transcript of the 26 August 2020 Laging Handa Public Briefing is available at <https://cutt.ly/WfjIzoC>.

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