

**Press Release**  
**Department of Labor and Employment**  
**Bureau of Working Conditions**  
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**DOLE readies workplaces to new normal**

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has undeniably changed standard work methods globally. Businesses that will reopen are expected to meet challenges; while workers are foreseen to respond differently on the new normal at workplaces.

On 30 April 2020, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) issued “DTI and DOLE Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 (Interim Guidelines).” It was issued to set strict precautionary measures as the country balances different facets of its recovery plan while it transitions to the new normal. As the world awaits for a vaccine against the disease, physical distancing, wearing of mask, constant handwashing and regular disinfection of workplaces, among others, are likely to stay.

The Interim Guidelines was aligned with the minimum health protocols and standards for COVID 19 set by the Department of Health. Among the requirements contained therein are the following: wearing of mask at all times of all employees and visitors; accomplishment of daily health symptoms questionnaire; checking and recording of temperature before entrance in the establishment; observance of physical distancing and proper cough etiquette; and practice of frequent handwashing and regular disinfection of the workplace. Additionally, protocol for management and referral of probable and COVID-19 suspects and reporting of cases were also outlined therein.

Under the same issuance, work from home arrangement is highly encouraged for most at risk workers and vulnerable groups. This refers to workers who are sixty (60) years old and above, with co-morbidities or pre-existing illness, and females with high risk pregnancy. It also encourages employers, if feasible, to provide shuttle services and/or decent accommodation on near-site locations to lessen travel and people movement.

The Interim Guidelines also clarified that provision of disinfecting foot bath and COVID-19 testing at workplaces are not mandatory. However, it is the duty of all employers to provide appropriate face mask to his/her workers.

For workplaces requiring assistance with the requirements of the Interim Guidelines, the DTI and DOLE undertake to extend technical support to all workplaces.

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