

Good News
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
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BWC, heeded unfair labor practices concerning COVID-19 protocols via radio interview

On April 29, 2021, DZBB Super Radyo's Serbisyo on the Spot segment invited DOLE through Mr. Nicanor Bon, Chief of Policy and Program Development Division, BWC-DOLE, to discuss labor practices and employee rights as an act of service and real-time interaction in the said segment.

Safety Health Protocols on workplaces and how the guidelines of IATF, DTI and DOLE are being implemented by the companies are most tackled in the interview. Mr. Bon highlighted that when it comes to COVID-19 protocol management, DOLE has routines that are being followed; (1) Complaints are priority, it is either Labor inspector will visit the establishment or the employer/worker will be called upon by DOLE Field Offices; (2) There are Labor Inspectors checking different establishments to monitor if they are following the guidelines and protocols; Lastly, (3) DOLE can also conduct Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Investigation for accidents or illnesses that are reported. Establishments that have failed to follow or comply with the regulations will be penalized and will undergo due process, he also added.

During the interview, a caller aka Tony shared his employer's negligence of the quarantine (period) rules when one of his officemates tested positive for COVID-19. Mr. Bon advised (a) caller to send complaint to the appropriate regional office so that an inspection may be conducted and look into the proper implementation of protocols and guidelines. Close contacts should be quarantined for 14 days to monitor if symptoms will occur. For COVID cases, if asymptomatic a barangay clearance should be obtained prior to resumption to work. Mr. Bon added that Tony can contact the Community Health Office (CHO) to help him assess him/her and the situation on the grounds whether the company might have violations with regard to health and safety. He also mentioned that he cannot make any conclusion yet on the situation, as due process requires that both sides of the parties should be heard.

There were also questions from text messages concerning retirement pay. Mr. Nick Bon expounded that according to the Labor Code, the optional retirement age is 60 years old while the mandatory retirement age is 65 years old. Furthermore, at least 5 years of service at the age of 60 is eligible, and it is within worker's choice to retire at age 60. Nevertheless, employees under retail, service and agriculture establishments employing 10 years and below, are not entitled to retirement benefits.

All of the questions with respect to labor rights were answered and explained by Chief Bon, he reminded workers with complaints and concerns to assert their rights, and report to matter as soon as possible, so the entitlement for the benefits, if there is any, will be addressed within the prescriptive period. The DOLE Hotline 1349 is always open and free of charge anywhere in the Philippines for any inquiries, the Chief concluded.

Replay of the radio interview may be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/BWConDZBBSOS>.

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