

Press Release
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
04 March 2021

DOLE issues Department Order No. 224, Series of 2021

On 03 March 2021, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III, signed the Department Order No. 224, Series of 2021, entitled *Guidelines on Ventilation for Workplaces and Public Transport to Prevent and Control the Spread of COVID-19*.

The Department Order was issued pursuant to Republic Act No. 11058, DOLE Department Order No. 198-18 and OSHS of the Philippines, Section II-B (5) of DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A and DOH DM 2020-0429 to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 virus at the workplace and cognizant of a large amount of working time indoors and in poorly ventilated spaces.

In DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A, Section II-B #5, it states that adequate ventilation should be strictly enforced inside the workplace. Natural air flow exchange is highly encouraged. If possible, the installation of exhaust fans, installation of air filtration devices with High-Efficiency Particulate Air filters or the recalibration of building heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems should be explored.

The Guidelines covers all commercial and industrial establishments, projects, sites, and all other places, where work is being undertaken indoors except cover healthcare facilities requiring special considerations in the control of COVID-19.

The salient provisions of the Department Order are the maximization of natural ventilation through the use of doors, windows and other openings, if possible and safe to do. Frequently open the windows, doors, and other openings to supplement the mechanical ventilation systems to achieve dilution. All installed local exhaust ventilation shall be equipped with a proper air cleaning device to treat, filter and minimize airborne contaminants being exhausted to the atmosphere. For restrooms and water closets, ensure that exhaust fans are functional and operational at full capacity whenever the building is occupied. For the ventilation in public transport, it is advised to provide natural ventilation and access to open air, ensure adequate ventilation, if possible, by opening windows by at least three (3) inches while in transit, provided that it is safe to do and ensure regular and proper maintenance of filters of the vehicle's air-conditioning units and ensure that the minimum public health standards are being followed.

In complying with this Guidelines, the Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Health, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Interior and Local Government, Department of Transportation and Department of Tourism shall extend technical assistance and support to employers and workers, and in all workplaces.

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