

ADDENDUM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
DTI and DOLE Interim Guidelines on Prevention
and Workplace Control of COVID-19

- **Are all workers required to accomplish the Health Symptom Questionnaire daily?**

As a general precautionary measure, YES, all workers are required to answer the daily questionnaire. The daily questionnaire is not limited to questions on travel history alone but also on symptoms.

- **Accomplishing the daily health questionnaire may result to long queue lines, what interventions can be done to avoid this?**

The health condition of all individuals varies daily. This is the very reason why the questionnaire needs to be accomplished daily. For companies wishing to avoid long queue lines, they may implement gliding schedule, work from home when possible, and other work arrangements which may limit the number of workers at a particular time.

- **Are workers, who are provided accommodations by the employer still required to accomplish the Health Symptom Questionnaire daily?**

To facilitate faster access, companies may opt to use a modified checklist which is limited to questions on signs and symptoms only, for their stay-in workers.

For instances wherein workers will be allowed to go home from time to time as part of their work-arrangements, upon their return to work, they shall be required to accomplish the complete prescribed checklist.

- **Are all visitors of an establishment required to accomplish the prescribed Health Symptom Questionnaire?**

As a general rule, YES. All persons, whether or not they are workers, client and visitors are all required to accomplish the daily questionnaires.

- **Are clients of malls, groceries and similar establishments, also required to accomplish Health Symptom Questionnaire?**

For malls, groceries and other public establishments, since a huge volume of clients is expected, establishment/s may just perform temperature check using a non-contact thermometer. In addition, other new normal interventions such as physical distancing, mandatory wearing of face masks and provision of washing facilities shall remain. These establishments are also

encouraged to post an advisory to the public to refrain from going inside if a shopper has COVID19- like symptoms.

- **For buildings with multiple tenants, who shall perform temperature checks and assessment on whether or not employees and clients will be allowed to go inside?**

For buildings with multiple tenants, the joint safety and health committee shall be in-charge of the implementation of this DTI-DOLE Interim Guidelines. The Committee shall be headed by the building owner or his/her representative with the safety officers of the building's tenants as members. The tenants may opt to share resources and coordinate their safety and health measures to ensure the successful implementation of this guideline.

- **What are the requirements for an isolation area?**

Isolation area refers to a holding area situated near the entrance of an establishment. To limit the movement of COVID-19 suspect or probable cases, isolation area must be situated at the ground floor, near the entrance. It must be well ventilated and provided with enough chairs. There must be a provision for washing facilities or at least 70% alcohol or hand sanitizers. It must be large enough to observe physical distancing and manned by "trained" personnel to handle cases like whether or not to send a client home or refer him/her to the nearest health facility. Contact details of the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) or referral hospitals must be posted in the area. Appropriate PPEs must also be provided for these trained personnel. Regular disinfection activities shall be performed in the area.

- **In case it is physically impossible for an establishment to construct an isolation area within its premises because of space requirements, what can an establishment do to address this?**

For establishments with difficulties in allocating the necessary space for an isolation area, open tents may be provided for this purpose. However, the requirements mentioned above must still be strictly observed. The establishment is also advised to coordinate this matter with the LGU or the Barangay having jurisdiction over the workplace.

Clinics of establishments shall be separate and distinct from the isolation area.

- **What are the requirements for trained personnel in the isolation area? Is it necessary that he/she must have medical background?**

Ideally, trained personnel must have a medical background such as physicians, nurses or at least a first aider. However, in the absence of the above, any worker will do provided that he/she has BOSH training or at least a

background on safety and health and knowledgeable on the mechanism of referral or coordination of action with government authorities.

- **How does the DOLE address non-compliance?**

The DOLE shall ensure compliance thru technical assistance and coordination with other regulatory agencies. Administrative fines may be imposed pursuant to DOLE DO 198, Series of 2018 for any willful failure to comply with this Interim Guidelines. This is without prejudice to civil and criminal cases may be filed by other government authorities in violation of RA 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act as well as other existing laws, rules and regulations.

- **Workers who come in close contact with a co-worker who is a suspect/probable/confirmed COVID-19 case shall go on 14 days home quarantine. How does the company treat the leave imposed upon the workers?**

Generally speaking, unless employers have a more favorable policy on this, leaves incurred by the worker because of this are chargeable against the worker's leave credits which are still available. However, the DOLE appeals to employers to be more compassionate towards their employees by letting them earn leave credits while allowing them to work on WFH arrangements.

Employers may opt to use the WFH scheme for their workers who shall go on home quarantine. Employers who have adopted FWA for their workers are tasked to report this to DOLE as stipulated in DOLE Advisory 02-09 (Guidelines in the Adoption of Flexible Work Arrangements) http://bwc.dole.gov.ph/images/Issuances/DepartmentAdvisory/DA_02_09_2.pdf

- **Is the enhancement of health insurance mandatory?**

This provision of the interim guidelines is specific for companies which are already providing this benefit to their workers. What this provision is asking for is only enhancement of this benefit to include coverage for COVID- 19.

- **For companies with large floor space, which can accommodate the whole 100% of its workforce without violating the prescribed physical distancing, can they exceed the 50% workforce requirement?**

The prescribed 50% workforce requirement shall not be viewed at company level alone but from a bigger perspective. The government wants to limit the number of people in the streets, those who are commuting and those inside the workplaces. Thus, the work from home scheme shall still be the default. Skeleton workforce shall only be complementary to the WFH arrangement.

- **Is it legal for an employer to place his/her workers under 14-day quarantine in company premises without pay as condition for their return to employment?**

Initially, the employer may be just exercising his/her management prerogative. However, the exercise is not absolute; it should be used without abuse of discretion. This should likewise be done in good faith and with due regard to the rights of labor.

The health checklist and its thorough assessment may suffice in determining who among these workers are eligible to report back to work. While the DTI-DOLE Interim Guidelines' intent is to prevent further transmission in the workplace, we cannot disregard the worker's inherent rights as embodied in the Labor Code of the Philippines.

- **Is there an approved COVID-19 testing for use? How often should it be done?**

May we refer you to the DOH Memorandum No. 2020-0180 Revised Interim Guidelines on Expanded Testing for COVID-19. The real time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is the gold standard for testing. Rapid antibody-based test kits shall not be used as a stand-alone test. This must be used in conjunction with the RT-PCR.

For the COVID-19 testing program to be effective for workers to be effective, it is recommended that testing should be done every 14 days to cover possible exposure after each testing. Because of the huge amount an employer may appropriate for testing, the Interim Guidelines does not compel employers to require COVID-19 testing and just made this item recommendatory.

- **Can workers refuse to work if companies do not provide transportation or accommodation facility?**

The provision for transportation and accommodation facility as enshrined in the DTI-DOLE Interim Guidelines is NOT mandatory but an option for the employer to limit the exposure of his/her workers to COVID-19 virus. As long as public transportation is not available, employers cannot fault their workers from not reporting for work.

Workers refusing to work despite of availability of ways and means of reporting to work shall be subject to management action based an existing company policy on this.

- **Will the workers be compensated during the 24 hour waiting time right after decontamination/disinfection process?**

Consistent with the previous DOLE issuance on work suspension, unless it is part of the company's policy or collective bargaining agreement, a

no work no pay policy shall prevail during the 24 hour waiting time after the disinfection process.

- **Can a worker report—his/her company for non-compliance with the requirements of this Guidelines? If so, where should he/she report?**

Workers of non-compliant companies are encouraged to report all company actions inconsistent with the provisions of the Guideline to the DOLE Regional, Provincial and Field Offices having jurisdiction over the establishment.

- **Are companies required to submit monthly WAIR report form even without cases of illnesses/diseases/injuries?**

Submission of report even without cases would make the DOLE aware that the company has a functional COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines. Hence, a monthly submission at this time is required whether or not there are cases.