



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2020 - 007

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF ISLAND AND BEACH DESTINATIONS UNDER THE NEW NORMAL

WHEREAS, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593 or the Tourism Act of 2009, the DOT is mandated to promulgate rules and regulations governing the operation and activities of all tourism enterprises;

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases *Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines* defines the "New Normal" as emerging behaviors, situations, and minimum public health standards that will be institutionalized in common or routine practices and remain even after the pandemic while the disease is not totally eradicated through means such as widespread immunization;

WHEREAS, there is a need to provide guidelines to institutionalize the present health and safety protocols in the operations of Island and Beach Destinations under a New Normal scenario;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, these Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operation of Island and Beach Destinations under the New Normal are hereby issued:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. – This Circular shall be known as "*The New Normal Health and Safety Guidelines for Island and Beach Destinations*".

Section 2. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Circular, the term:

- a. "Accommodation Establishments" shall refer to establishments operating primarily for accommodation purposes including, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, apartment hotels, tourist inns, motels, pension houses, private homes used for homestay, ecolodges, serviced apartments, condotels, and bed and breakfast facilities.
- b. "ASEAN Public Toilet Standards" shall refer to a standard that can be implemented by ASEAN Member States to ensure the quality, comfort, safety, and proper waste management of public toilets, in general at touristic destinations within the ASEAN Region.
- c. "Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT)" shall refer to a team established by DILG MC No. 2020-023 to help implement local prevention and mitigation, preparedness, and response measures for COVID-19. (*DOH MC No. 2020-0020*)
- d. "Beach Destination" refers to any coastal lands composed of sand, pebbles or shell, formed into a continuous plane by action of tides or waves, which is marketed or markets itself as a tourist attraction.
- e. "Beach Marshal" refers to an officer responsible for the supervision of beach activities to ensure that certain protocols are being followed.

- f. "Community Quarantine" shall refer to the restriction of movement within, into, or out of the area of quarantine of individuals, large groups of people, or communities designed to reduce the likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 among persons in and to persons outside the affected area. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines*)
- g. "Day Tour" refers to a visit in the Island or Beach Destination for leisure purposes in which a person arrives and returns home on the same day.
- h. "Emergency Preparedness Plan" refers to the detailed strategy or procedure to be observed to address an emergency.
- i. "Health Declaration Form" shall refer to a form that a person must fill-up to declare his or her current health condition and travel history for the past fourteen (14) days.
- j. "Island Destination" refers to an island that is dependent to a significant extent on revenues from tourism, which is marketed or markets itself as a tourist attraction.
- k. "Lifeguard" refers to a person who supervises the safety and rescue of swimmers, surfers and other water sport participants such as in a swimming pool, water park, or beach. (*PCG Memorandum Circular No. 03-14 dated 16 April 2014*)
- l. "Mass Gathering" refers to an organized or unplanned event where the number of people attending is sufficient to strain the planning and response resources of the community, state or nation hosting the event. (*World Health Organization*)
- m. "Minimum Public Health Standards" refers to guidelines set by the Department of Health (DOH), as well as sector-relevant guidelines to aid all sectors in implementing non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), which refer to public health measures that do not involve vaccines, medications, or other pharmaceutical interventions, which individuals and communities can carry out in order to reduce transmission rates, contact rates, and the duration of infectiousness of individuals in the population to mitigate COVID-19. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines*)
- n. "New Normal" shall refer to the emerging behaviors, situations, and minimum public health standards that will be institutionalized in common or routine practices and remain even after the pandemic while the disease is not totally eradicated through means such as widespread immunization. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines*)
- o. "Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)" refers clothing and accessories worn to minimize exposure to health risks, such as protective clothing, masks, and goggles.
- p. "Philippine Coast Guard" shall refer to a government agency mandated and responsible to perform maritime search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, maritime safety, marine environmental protection, and maritime security.
- q. "Port of Entry" shall refer to the main entry point accessed by the public to arrive at the Island or Beach Destination. This may be an airport, harbor, jetty port, border, checkpoint, entryway of an Accommodation Establishment, or any other entry point of a similar nature and purpose.
- r. "Recreational Activity" refers to any lawful, leisure-time activity which is generally engaged in for recreational purposes, including but not limited to sports, games, hobbies, exercise, reading, and viewing of television or movies.

- s. "Tourism Enterprises" shall refer to facilities, services, and attractions involved in tourism, such as, but not limited to: travel and tour services; tourist transport services, whether for land, sea or air transportation; tour guides; adventure sports services involving such sports as mountaineering, spelunking, scuba diving, and other sports activities of significant tourism potential; convention organizers; Accommodation Establishments, including, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, apartelles, tourist inns, motels, pension houses, and home stay operators; tourism estate management services, restaurants, shops and department stores, sports and recreational centers, spas, museums and galleries, theme parks, convention centers, and zoos.

Section 3. Scope and Application. – This Circular shall apply to all Beach and Island Destinations in areas where a Community Quarantine is no longer in place.

II. PRE-ENTRY POLICY

Section 4. Prior Booking Requirement. All guests who intend to stay for at least one night in the Island or Beach Destination must present a confirmed booking at an Accommodation Establishment. A directory of DOT-Accredited Accommodation Establishments shall be made available at the Port of Entry for easy reference. No walk-in guest shall be allowed.

Section 5. Reservation and Payment Options. Accommodation Establishments and other Tourism Enterprises in Island or Beach Destinations shall utilize online modes of reservation and payment using online or mobile payment applications.

Section 6. Mandatory Screening. Guests must be screened at the Port of Entry prior to entry to the Island or Beach Destination through:

- A. Body temperature checking using a thermal scanner or thermometer gun; and
- B. Completion of Health Declaration Form, through a mobile application or other contactless means, prior to boarding any transport service going to the Island or Beach Destination.

Only guests who are cleared during temperature screening and have accomplished the Health Declaration Form shall be allowed to enter the Island or Beach Destination. Those with fever and flu-like symptoms shall not be allowed to enter, and will be referred to the doctor on duty, to the nearest hospital, or to the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) in accordance with the DOH prescribed protocol.

Section 7. Mandatory Dissemination of Rules and Regulations, Safety, and Health-Related Information. Guests must be provided with appropriate information on the rules and regulations enforced in the Island or Beach Destination, and other informative materials on Minimum Public Health Standards such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, proper use of facemasks, and a list of emergency contact numbers. These informative materials must be handed to the guests at the Port of Entry.

III. GUEST HANDLING POLICY

Section 8. Safety Protocols upon Arrival in the Island Destination. The following standards shall be complied with in handling guests upon arrival:

- a. Names of guests with confirmed bookings must be available at the Ports of Entry. Guests without confirmed bookings shall be allowed entry only if they are part of a Day Tour or can present an outbound or return ticket scheduled within the same day;
- b. A “*No face mask, no entry policy*” shall apply to all guests except for infants below two (2) years old. Children with ages between two (2) to eight (8) years old must use facemasks under adult supervision to ensure that they can breathe safely and avoid suffocation;
- c. Physical distancing shall be strictly observed by maintaining at least one (1) meter space between guests in queuing at the entry points; and
- d. The practice of Filipino Brand of Service (FBS) or the “*Mabuhay Gesture*” in greeting and receiving guests upon arrival in the island, as well as other forms of contactless greeting, is highly encouraged.

Section 9. Safety Protocols for Personnel. All personnel shall adhere to the following health and safety standards:

- a. All personnel attending to guests shall use proper PPE such as face masks and/or face shields and shall observe physical distancing at all times;
- b. All personnel extending assistance to guests that require physical contact (e.g. carrying of luggage) must also use gloves; and
- c. Precautionary measures, including frequent hand cleaning, and respiratory etiquette must be strictly observed.

Section 10. Entry and Exit Points. To properly monitor guests entering and exiting the Island Destination, in coordination with the local authorities, strategic entry and exit points may be provided.

IV. PUBLIC AREAS

Section 11. Protocols in Public Areas. The following are the standard protocols to be enforced in public areas:

- a. Beach
 - 1. Reminder signs shall be installed in strategic locations visible to all guests;
 - 2. Beach marshals may be designated by LGU concerned to ensure that guests observe physical distancing at all times;
 - 3. There shall be Lifeguards on duty during swimming hours following the guidelines under Memorandum Circular 03-14 dated 16 April 2014 issued by the Philippine Coast Guard;
 - 4. Concessions, shops, peddlers, ambulant vendors, and food vending are strictly prohibited. Chairs, canopies, grills, and other ancillary temporary structures are not allowed on the beach;

5. To ensure physical distancing, use of floor markers, flags, lines or other devices is highly encouraged;
6. Mass Gatherings and group events such as sports competition, youth camps and other beach activities that gather shall comply with relevant national and local government unit (LGU) issuances;
7. Sanitation stations and handwashing areas must be installed in strategic locations;
8. Frequent sanitation and disinfection of high-touch surfaces in the beach area must be conducted; and
9. Trash bins must be available and accessible. A separate trash bag or bin must be provided for used PPE, such as used facemasks, gloves and other sanitation waste materials.

b. Public Restrooms

1. Public Restrooms must meet the requirements and qualifications prescribed under the ASEAN Public Toilet Standards;
2. Public Restrooms must be operational at all times. It must be cleaned and sanitized regularly every after two (2) hours or as may be necessary;
3. Public restrooms must be supplied with the following facilities and amenities readily available and easily accessible to all the guests:
 - a. Regular supply of clean water;
 - b. Hand soaps;
 - c. 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based sanitizers; and
 - d. Tissue paper or paper towel;
4. Handwashing and toilet flushing facilities must be subject to regular maintenance;
5. Shower and showerheads must be cleaned and sanitized regularly; and
6. Trash bins must be cleaned and sanitized every after disposal or trash collection.

C. Recreational Activities

1. Outdoor non-contact sports and other forms of exercise such as swimming, surfing, running, and walking are allowed provided that Minimum Public Health Standards are observed; and
2. Biking may be allowed if bike paths are available.

Section 12. Emergency Response-Related Policies. The following emergency preparedness standards must be complied with to promote a safe and health-conscious tourist destination:

- a. There must be an Emergency Preparedness Plan to ensure the availability of an effective response mechanism to any emergency situation;

- b. Access to at least one (1) medical facility in the Island Destination, especially for emergency cases must be ensured;
- c. A well-trained and equipped emergency response team must be available to provide emergency assistance whenever necessary;
- d. There shall be a designated holding area for symptomatic guests while waiting for trained personnel to transport him or her to the nearest hospital or medical facility;
- e. In handling health emergency related incidents, constant coordination between the emergency response team and the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) is mandatory; and
- f. All related issuances from the Department of Health (DOH) on the proper handling of patient and the implementation of Minimum Public Health Standards shall be observed at all times.

V. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 13. Compliance with Other Relevant Issuances. Accommodation Establishments and other tourism enterprises in the Island or Beach Destination shall comply with DOT Memorandum Circular No. 2020-003 or the *Health and Safety Guidelines for Tourist Transport Services*, DOT Memorandum Circular No. 2020-002-A or the *New Normal Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operation of Accommodation Establishments*, and other relevant DOT issuances on health and safety standards for the New Normal, as well as rules and regulations imposed by the local government unit (LGU) having jurisdiction over the Beach or Island Destination, or in the case of Boracay Island, the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF).

Section 14. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Circular is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 15. Repeal. All issuances, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provision of this Circular are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 16. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

For guidance and strict compliance.

07 September 2020

BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary

