

**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR No. 07  
Series of 2020**

TO : ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Guidelines on POEA Transactions and OFW Arrivals and Departures during the Enhanced Community Quarantine and National State of Calamity brought about by Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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Pursuant to Proclamation Nos. 929 and 922 (Series 2020) and Republic Act No. 11332 following the sharp increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, the entire country is declared under a state of calamity for a period of six (6) months, and an enhanced community quarantine is imposed over Luzon until 12 April 2020 unless earlier lifted or extended as circumstances may warrant.

Pursuant further to the Memorandum of the Executive Secretary dated 16 March 2020, the following guidelines to ensure compliance with strict social distancing measures are hereby provided:

**I. Skeletal Workforce**

Assigned skeletal workforce in POEA offices covered by the enhanced community quarantine shall be enabled to report to work in order to ensure the continuity of services, subject to clearances in crossing community checkpoints and availability of public transport. Such personnel shall maximize the use of telephone and online means in the provision of their services to the clients.

**II. Pre-Employment Services**

*1. Accreditation and Contract Processing.*

- a. New applications for principal accreditation with the Landbased Center and the Seabased Contract Processing and Accreditation Branch (Seabased Center) are hereby suspended until further notice.

- b. All manual contract processing with the Landbased Center and the Seabased Contract Processing and Accreditation Branch (Seabased Center) are also suspended until further notice.
  - c. Contract processing for both landbased and seabased workers shall only be allowed through the POEA Online Processing System- Landbased (POPS-LaB) and POEA Online Processing System- Seabased (POPS-Sea).
  - d. New application from agencies to deploy their in-house processing through the POPS-LaB or POPS-Sea are suspended until such time that a feasible skeletal workforce are put in place considering the absence of public transport.
2. Processing of Overseas Employment Certificates (OECs) for returning workers or *Balik Manggagawa* (BMs)
- a. Over-the-counter transactions for Balik Manggagawa OECs with the POEA main office and POEA regional offices and extension units where enhanced community quarantine are in place are hereby suspended until further notice.
  - b. The issuance of BM OECs are temporarily limited only to OEC exemptions to be generated from the respective accounts of returning workers through the Balik Manggagawa Online system at <https://www.bmonline.ph>
  - c. Should other areas outside Luzon be hereafter covered by enhanced community quarantine, over-the-counter transactions to POEA regional offices or extension units therein shall likewise be automatically suspended.
3. ***Direct Hire Assistance.*** Over-the-counter transactions for exemptions from the direct hire prohibition provided by the Labor Code with the POEA main office and its regional offices and extension units covered by the enhanced community quarantine are hereby suspended until further notice.

### III. OFW Arrivals, Repatriation and Departures

4. ***OFW Return and Repatriation.*** OFWs who are returning or being repatriated to the country shall be subjected to the social distancing measures, quarantine procedures at national and local government unit (LGU) levels, as well as immigration procedures that are currently in place.

Assistance and services for the said workers shall be provided by government agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the Bureau of Quarantine, or the Philippine Ports Authority, as appropriate.

The government, the stakeholders in the Philippine recruitment and manning industry, as well as foreign principals shall work in close coordination through tripartite consultations in upholding the provisions contained in the standard employment contracts signed by the workers.

5. *Local Travel for OFWs with OECs and Confirmed International Itinerary.* Pursuant to relevant Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) Resolution(s), outbound passengers intending to depart from the Philippines from any of the international airports in Luzon shall be allowed to travel *provided*, that on top of existing POEA processes in the issuance of OECs, travelling OFWs shall be further subjected to comply with social distancing measures, quarantine procedures at national and local government unit (LGU) levels, as well as immigration procedures that are currently in place.

Proof of confirmed international itinerary of the travelling OFW should be readily presented at checkpoints.

The aforementioned provision shall not be interpreted to allow outbound travel to countries where travel restrictions are in place.

#### **IV. Local Movement of Recruitment and Manning Agency Personnel**

6. Subject to the approval of the IATF-EID and in coordination with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and check point authorities, and subject further to stringent social distancing measures and enhanced community quarantine protocols, the workers of private recruitment agencies and manning agencies may be allowed local travel to their offices to enable them to process OFW documents, transact with banks, and prepare OFW payrolls for salaries/ allotments.

Proof of employment should be readily presented to authorities at the checkpoints.

#### **V. Licensing and Regulation Services**

7. *Applications for Issuance of License and Establishment of Branch Authorities.* Applications for the Issuance of License and Establishment of Branch Authority shall resume on the next working day following the lifting of the Total Lockdown and Enhanced Community Quarantine orders.
8. *Panel Interviews and PLOS.* All Panel Interviews and Pre-Licensing Orientation Seminar (PLOS) scheduled during the period of the total lockdown and enhanced community quarantine are suspended until further notice.
9. *Applications for Renewal, Upgrading and Extension of License and Branch Authorities.* Agencies affected by the enhanced community quarantine orders whose license expiration fall during the covered period from March 15, 2020 to April 14, 2020,

shall be automatically given an extension of thirty (30) days from the lifting of the total lockdown and enhanced community quarantine orders to file their applications.

10. *Applications for Renewal, Upgrading and Extension of License and Renewal of Branch Authority* already received but pending evaluation, review and approval will be acted upon on the next working day following the lifting of the total lockdown and enhanced community quarantine orders.

## **VI. Legal Assistance, Conciliation and Mediation, and Adjudication Services**

11. The provision of legal assistance, conciliation and mediation, as well as adjudication services which are inherently person-to-person transactions are temporarily suspended until further notice, subject to the issuance of appropriate guidelines and/or deployment of feasible means to hear cases through teleconferencing and other remote means.

## **VII. OFW Monitoring by the POEA and Deploying Agencies**

12. Pursuant to pertinent rules and regulations on the reporting of significant events/ status of workers deployed by agencies including, among others, *POEA Memorandum Circular No. 09 Series of 2019*, all recruitment and manning agencies are directed to regularly monitor and report to the Administration the status of their deployed workers through the online OFW Welfare Monitoring System (OWMS). Further coordination can be made through telephone and electronic means with the POEA Workers Education and Welfare Monitoring Division (WEWMD).

This Circular amends previous POEA issuances contrary hereto.

This Circular shall be subject to amendments upon the issuance of further directives.

This Circular shall take effect immediately.

For strict compliance.



**BERNARD P. OLALIA**  
*Administrator*

18 March 2020