



ADVISORY No. 21

Series of 2020

Deployment of Returning Workers/ Balik Manggagawa Bound for Mainland China excluding Hubei Province


Consistent with the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) contained in IATF Resolution No. 11, Series of 2020 dated 12 March 2020, the public is hereby advised that Balik-Manggagawa Overseas Filipino Workers (BM-OFWs) shall be allowed to travel to mainland China, excluding the Hubei Province provided that such BM-OFWs are able to secure exemption certificates from their BM Online accounts. Such BMs are further advised that in compliance with the enhanced community quarantine being currently implemented, over-the-counter BM transactions at POEA offices are suspended.

Upon receipt of OEC exemption certificates from their BM Online accounts, the BM-OFWs are required to execute a Declaration (copy hereto attached) signifying their knowledge and understanding of the risks involved in the current health developments caused by the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The signed Declaration, along with a confirmed international itinerary of the BM-OFW shall be made readily available for presentation to community border authorities on duty.

A copy of the COVID-19 frequently asked questions (FAQs) is also attached hereto for printing and ready reference of the BM-OFW.

This Advisory may be superseded by subsequent government directives that may be contrary hereto.

For the information and guidance of all concerned.


BERNARD P. OLALIA
Administrator

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF _____) S.S.

DECLARATION

I, _____, of legal age, Filipino, single/married and a resident of _____, after having sworn to in accordance with law do hereby depose and state that:

1. I am a returning worker employed as (occupation/job) _____ in (country/territory) _____ for my employer _____ and I have been working for this employer since _____;
2. I went to the Philippines for vacation on _____ and I was scheduled to return to my employer on _____ to resume my employment;
3. I am fully informed by government authorities of the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in (country/territory) _____ by reporting to my workplace;
4. I shall comply with medical and health protocols in the Philippines and in (country/territory) _____ during my travel and stay in said country.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this _____.

Affiant

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this _____ day of _____ in the City/Municipality of _____.

ADMINISTERING OFFICER

What are coronaviruses?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses causing a range of illnesses, from the common cold to more serious infections such as those caused by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-related Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome-related coronavirus (SARS-CoV). Coronavirus can also cause a variety of diseases in farm animals and domesticated pets.

What is novel coronavirus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019-nCoV ARD)?

2019-nCoV ARD is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

Last, January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization recommended that the interim name of the disease causing the current outbreak should be "2019-nCoV Acute Respiratory Disease".

What are the symptoms and possible complications of a coronavirus infection?

Common signs of coronavirus infection include flu-like and respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath, and breathing difficulties. In severe cases, it can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death.



Where did the 2019-nCoV ARD originate?

On 31 December 2019, a clustering of pneumonia cases of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan, China. The outbreak was later determined to be caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV ARD), a new coronavirus strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

5. How is the 2019-nCoV ARD transmitted?

- The mode of transmission of 2019-nCoV ARD is not yet well established. Many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan City were reportedly linked to a large animal market, suggesting animal-to-human spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had any recent exposure to animal markets, showing that human-to-human transmission could be possible.
- Health experts are accelerating research to study the origins of the virus and how it is spreading. The virus has been differentiated from SARS and MERS, but its contagiousness and virulence is still being studied.

6. Is there a treatment for the 2019-nCoV ARD?

- There is no specific treatment for any coronavirus including the 2019-nCoV ARD. However, many of the symptoms can be treated based on the patient's clinical conditions. Supportive care for infected persons can also be highly effective.

7. What should you do if you traveled recently to Wuhan, China and is experiencing symptoms of the 2019-nCoV ARD?

- Patients, particularly travelers from affected areas, who show symptoms of severe respiratory illness and other signs of the 2019-nCoV ARD should seek medical attention immediately and have themselves screened for common causes of respiratory illness.

8. What should you do if you are experiencing mild flu-like symptoms, but have not traveled to China recently or have not been in close contact with anyone who traveled to China?

- In this case, there is no need to be tested for 2019-nCoV ARD. Please consult at your nearest health facility to seek immediate medical advice and care.

9. What should hospitals with suspected case/s of the 2019-nCoV ARD do?

- The designated infection control committee (ICC) of the hospital shall be responsible for the preliminary investigation of suspected cases. Once the case is classified as a person under investigation (PU), he/she should be quarantined. The ICC should then notify the DOH Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Units (RESU), who shall then report to the DOH Epidemiology Bureau. Hospitals with PUIs in quarantine will also send the collected specimens (oropharyngeal and nasal swabs) to Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM) for screening.

- The DOH also encourages health workers to be vigilant and take extra precautionary measures when in contact with patients with acute respiratory infection, especially those with travel history to China.

- Finally, all health facilities must enhance their standard infection prevention and control practices, especially in their emergency departments.

10. What can the public do to prevent the spread of 2019-nCoV ARD?

- The DOH advises the public to:



Practice frequent and proper handwashing.

Practice Proper cough etiquette

- i. Always bring a handkerchief/tissue
- ii. Cover mouth and nose using handkerchief/tissue (sleeves or crook of the elbow may also be used to cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing)
- iii. Move away from people when coughing
- iv. Do not spit
- v. Throw away used tissues properly
- vi. Always wash your hands after sneezing or coughing
- vii. Use alcohol/sanitizer
- c. Avoid unprotected contact with farm or wild animals

Ensure that food is well-cooked

Maintain a healthy lifestyle to mount up immunity

1. Who should be immediately investigated and tested for the 2019-nCoV infection?

A person with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI), fever and cough, and with history of travel to or lived in Wuhan in the 10-14 days prior to symptom onset;

A health worker who has been working in an environment where patients with severe acute respiratory infections are being cared for, without regard to place of residence or history of travel;

2. A person with acute respiratory infection (ARI) and fulfilling at least one of the following criteria within the 14 days prior to onset of illness:

- a) Close contact with a confirmed or probable case
- b) visit/work in a live animal market in Wuhan
- c) Work/attend a health facility where patients with HAI-associated 2019-nCoV reported.

12. Are there any travel restrictions to be observed?

- Currently, outgoing travelers are advised to avoid traveling in places with known novel coronavirus cases. Travelers are advised to follow advisories and public health plans of the country you are going to visit or stay; know the health facility/ies nearest to your location; and keep yourself updated with the latest information about the disease.

13. Are Overseas Filipinos from countries with confirmed 2019 nCoV ARD cases allowed to return home?

- Yes, they are. DOH will take care of them if they return home. Upon return, they will be taken cared of in a health facility for monitoring and further medical management upon arrival for 14 days. If you have fever and/or cough upon arrival, immediately inform the quarantine medical officer/s on duty at the airport or seaport.

14. Where can the public get information about the 2019-nCoV ARD?

- The public can get information about the 2019-nCoV from the DOH's official press releases, website, and official social media platforms. Please be wary of fake news and reports circulating online, and always verify the sources of your information.

2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Acute Respiratory Disease (2019-nCoV ARD)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE
PROGRESS THROUGH PROTECTION

Practice frequent and proper handwashing.

Practice Proper cough etiquette

- i. Always bring a handkerchief/tissue
- ii. Cover mouth and nose using handkerchief/tissue (sleeves or crook of the elbow may also be used to cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing)
- iii. Move away from people when coughing
- iv. Do not spit
- v. Throw away used tissues properly
- vi. Always wash your hands after sneezing or coughing
- vii. Use alcohol/sanitizer
- c. Avoid unprotected contact with farm or wild animals

Ensure that food is well-cooked

Maintain a healthy lifestyle to mount up immunity

1. Who should be immediately investigated and tested for the 2019-nCoV infection?

A person with severe acute respiratory infection (SARI), fever and cough, and with history of travel to or lived in Wuhan in the 10-14 days prior to symptom onset;

A health worker who has been working in an environment where patients with severe acute respiratory infections are being cared for, without regard to place of residence or history of travel;



Department of Health

San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila, 1003



www.doh.gov.ph

OfficialDOHgov

visit: <https://www.doh.gov.ph/2019-nCoV>