



Mandate

The Bureau of Quarantine (BoQ) under the Department of Health (DOH), with the category of a first-class line bureau, shall have a nationwide scope of function and international commitment in accord with the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Jurisdiction and Functions of the Bureau

The examination at ports of entry and exit in the Philippines of incoming and outgoing vessels and aircraft,

The necessary surveillance over their sanitary conditions, as well as over their cargoes, passengers, crews, and all personal effects, and

The issuance of quarantine certificates, bills of health, or other equivalent documents shall be vested in and be conducted by the Bureau.

This Bureau shall have authority over incoming and outgoing vessels both domestic and foreign, including those of the army and navy, their wharfage and anchorage, and over aircraft and airports, insofar as it is necessary for the proper enforcement of the provisions of this Act.

Republic of the Philippines
Bureau of Quarantine
Department of Health

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

NO: 2020-29

TO: ALL QUARANTINE STATION CHIEFS WITH PORTS AUTHORIZED TO CONDUCT CREW CHANGE, OTHER CONCERNED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, PORT OPERATORS, LICENSED MANNING AGENCIES, AND LOCAL PORT AGENCIES.

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR THE EMBARKATION OF ONSIGNING SEAFARERS AT ALL PHILIPPINE PORTS

DATE: 26 OCTOBER 2020

WHEREAS, the Joint Circular No. 1, known as the Guidelines for the Establishment of the Philippine Green Lane to Facilitate the Speedy and Safe Travel of Seafarers, including their Safe and Swift Disembarkation, and Crew Change During the Covid-19 Pandemic, states the obligations of government and non-government agencies for the safe disembarkation and crew change of Filipino and Foreign Seafarers.

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) is mandated by Republic Act 9271, known as the Quarantine Act of 2004, to have nationwide scope of function and international commitment in accord with the International Health Regulation (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO); thus, regulate the entry and exit of Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases as one of its international commitment.

WHEREAS, there were numerous reports involving vessels, which had crew change at Philippine Ports, turned out to be Covid-infected upon their arrival at the port of destination. These incidents have derogatory effects on the Philippines and the National Government's effort to promote and assist the Filipino seafarers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that the Bureau of Quarantine, under the Department of Health (DOH), is exercising its legal mandate to regulate the exit of seafarers and vessels to ensure they are not Covid-infected. With this, the Bureau is enjoining the Department of Transportation (DOTr), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine Port Authority, (PPA), Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), and the Office of Transport Security (OSS); the Department of Justice



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(DOJ) and Bureau of Immigration (BI); and, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) to ensure safe departure and voyage of seafarers and vessels by strong implementation of your legal mandate related hereto.

GUIDELINES FOR THE EMBARKATION OF ONSIGNING SEAFARERS

1. The Licensed Manning Agency (LMA) will provide accommodation in a DOH-Licensed Quarantine Facility and daily health monitoring for the onsigning crew for five (5) days prior to Reverse Transcriptase – Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test.
2. The onsigning crew are not allowed to leave their holding facility and must observe minimum health standards at all times.
3. The minimum health standards must include wearing of face mask and face shield, maintain physical distancing, frequent hand washing and avoid touching the face, and observance of cough etiquette.
4. On the day of RT-PCR testing, the onsigners must be transported using a sanitized vehicle to the DOH-Licensed Covid Testing Laboratory. The National Government may indicate a dedicated laboratory for such to ensure accountability for the test results.
5. Immediately after Swab Collection, the onsigning crew must go straight to the quarantine facility. He/she will stay alone in his/her room and wait until the Covid-negative crew is ready for transport to the vessel. The National Government is dedicating the quarantine facilities for this purpose. To ensure safeguarding of health protocols are observed, it is compulsory for all onsigning crew to stay in Government Quarantine Facilities while waiting for their RT-PCR Test Results and until prior to embarking the vessel.
6. Once their test results are negative, onsigning crew are considered sanitized and will be issued outgoing Quarantine Medical Certificate by the BOQ Medical Officer.
7. To ensure their sanitary condition during embarkation period, the crew must wear complete medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This consists of face mask, face shield, coverall with hood, and gloves. Shoe covers are removed from the requirement for the safety of the crew; provided, their footwear will be disinfected every time they board a conveyance.



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8. All operator/driver/crew of transport conveyances must wear complete medical PPEs at all times when onboarding crew are with them. They must maintain proper physical distancing or provided a non-permeable barrier between him/her and the onboarding crew. Proper zoning of conveyances must be implemented and monitored to ensure low to no risk of exposure.
9. It is recommended that operator/driver/crew of these conveyances to undergo RT-PCR regularly provided by conveyance owner. Transport conveyances must have health certificates, such as the Ship Sanitation Certificate and RT-PCR Negative Results of Crew, ready for inspection by competent authorities.
10. Ship Service Providers, such as boarding agents and surveyors, must present recent proofs of being Covid-free or Medical wellness prior to boarding the ship.

For strict compliance.

FERDINAND S. SALCEDO, MD, MPH, CESO IV
Director IV