



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2020-004-A

**AMENDED HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE OPERATIONS OF
DOT-ACCREDITED RESTAURANTS UNDER THE NEW NORMAL**

WHEREAS, on 07 June 2020, the Department of Tourism (DOT) issued Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 2020-004 or the *Guidelines Governing the Operations of DOT-Accredited Restaurants Under the New Normal*;

WHEREAS, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and the Department of Health (DOH) subsequently issued various guidelines on workplace health and safety measures, employee testing, and other protocols applicable to restaurants;

WHEREAS, there is a need to amend DOT MC No. 2020-004 to clarify certain provisions therein, harmonize its provisions with the existing policies set by sector-relevant agencies, and ensure more adequate health and safety guidelines;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, these Amended Guidelines Governing the Operations of Restaurants Under the New Normal is hereby issued:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. – This Circular shall be known as “The Amended New Normal Health and Safety Guidelines for DOT- Accredited Restaurants”.

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) “Accreditation” refers to a Certification issued by the Department of Tourism (DOT) to a tourism enterprise that officially recognizes it as having complied with the minimum standards for the operation of tourism facilities and services.
- (c) “Buffet Service” refers to a system of serving meals where the diners serve themselves, with or without assistance from a waiter, from a food selection placed on a table in a public and accessible area.
- (d) “Confirmed COVID-19 case” refers to any individual who tested positive for COVID-19 through laboratory confirmation at the national reference laboratory, subnational reference laboratory, or a DOH-certified laboratory testing facility (DOH DM No. 2020-0189).
- (e) “Contact Tracing” refers to the identification, listing, and follow-up of persons who may have come into close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case (DOH DM No. 2020-0189).

- (f) “Contact Tracing Form” refers to the form a person must fill out to provide contact information whether through physical means or a mobile application, substantially following the template in Annex A-2 of the DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A.
- (g) “Disinfection” shall refer to the total kill of vegetative microorganism (log 6 reduction) normally applied on non-food contact surfaces.
- (h) “Health Declaration Form” refers to a form that a person must fill out to declare his or her current health condition and travel history for the past fourteen (14) days, substantially following the template in Annex A-1 of the DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A
- (i) “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.
- (j) “Personal Protective Equipment” or PPE refers to clothing and accessories worn to minimize exposure to health and safety risks, such as protective clothing, masks, face shield, and goggles.
- (k) “Physical distancing” or “Social Distancing” refers to the strict maintenance of a distance of at least one (1) meter radius between persons in a public setting.
- (l) “Probable COVID-19 case” refers to a suspect case who fulfills anyone of the following:
 - a) Suspect case whose testing for COVID-19 is inconclusive; or
 - b) Suspect who tested positive for COVID-19 but whose test was not conducted in a national or subnational reference laboratory, or a DOH-certified laboratory testing facility;
 - c) Suspect case who died without undergoing confirmatory testing (DOH DM No. 2020-0189).
- (m) “Restaurant” refers to any establishment that prepares and serves meals or refreshments to the public for a fee.
- (n) “Sanitizing” refers to a reduction of microorganism to safe level (log 5 reduction for food contact surfaces, log 3 on non-food contact surfaces), wherein no rinse on food contact surfaces including dishes, flatware is possible.
- (o) “Salad Bar” refers to a buffet-style table or counter at a restaurant on which salad components are provided for customers to assemble their own salad plates.
- (p) “Self-Service” shall refer to a type of service wherein customers select food items from a display, pay for the same to a cashier, and bring the food to a seating place.
- (q) “Suppliers” refer to persons or businesses that supply goods for the Restaurant, such as food and beverage items, cleaning equipment and supplies, and other restaurant essentials.
- (r) “Thermal Scanner” refers to devices meant to detect high body temperatures as a clue for infectious diseases.
- (s) “Thermometer Gun” shall refer to a thermometer which infers temperature from a portion of the thermal radiation sometimes called black-body radiation emitted by the object being measured.

Section 3. Coverage. This Memorandum Circular shall apply to all DOT-Accredited restaurants and restaurants in DOT-Accredited Accommodation Establishments.

II. RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT

Section 4. Health Declaration Form. All employees of the Restaurant are required to fill out a Health Declaration Form (HDF) upon entering the premises. If based on the HDF, the employee meets any of the following conditions, he/she shall be denied entry and shall be directed to consult a doctor or stay at home:

- a) Employee is experiencing fever, cough and/or colds, body pains, or sore throat;
- b) Employee had a face-to-face contact with a Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes for the past 14 days;
- c) Employee provided direct care for a patient with Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 case without using PPE for the past 14 days; or
- d) Employee travelled outside the Philippines in the last 14 days (DTI- DOLE JMC 20-04-A).

Section 5. Monitoring of Body Temperature of All Employees. The restaurant proprietor must ensure the monitoring of body temperature of all employees every time they report to work. Those with body temperature exceeding 37.5 degrees Celsius or those exhibiting flu-like symptoms shall be directed to see a doctor and to stay at home.

Section 6. Personal Protective Equipment and Sanitation Materials. The restaurant proprietor must provide employees with their respective PPEs, to be worn, when necessary while on duty, such as:

- a) Facemasks;
- b) Face shield;
- c) Alcohol (70% solution alcohol) / alcohol-based hand sanitizer; and
- d) Such other equipment/apparel that will ensure and promote the safety of the employees.

Section 7. Cleanliness within the Premises. The restaurant proprietor must ensure cleanliness within all its premises, including the kitchen, storage, back areas, and parking.

Section 8. Annual Health Check-up. The restaurant proprietor must ensure that all employees undergo annual health check up.

Section 9. Employee Testing. The restaurant proprietor shall ensure that its employees undergo an RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction) test, as may be required under applicable issuances of the DOH, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), or the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). (DTI-DOLE JMC No. 20-04-A).

III. RESTAURANT CONFIGURATION AND SET-UP

Section 10. Notices. Notices or reminders on the restaurant health protocols shall be posted at the entrance and other conspicuous areas of the restaurant:

- a) Completion of Contact Tracing Forms;
- b) "No mask, No Entry" policy;
- c) Physical Distancing protocols;
- d) Maximum number of allowable persons;

- e) Sanitation schedule and procedures;
- f) Alternative methods of payment;
- g) No customer-personnel contact protocols”
- h) Other protocols, including the right to refuse service to customers who fail or refuse to comply with protocols.

Section 11. Sanitizing Mats. Sanitizing mats and drying pads shall be installed at the entrance of the restaurant, unless other entrances such as mall entrances, hotel entrances, etc. leading to the dine-in restaurants have already provided this.

Section 12. Tables and Seating Arrangement.

- a) The restaurant seating capacity should allow at least one (1) meter spacing between customers. Chairs and tables shall be distanced at least one meter on all sides.
- b) Tables shall be arranged such that the distance from the back of one chair to the back of another chair shall be more than one (1) meter apart. If seats are fixed, alternate seats shall be marked out.
- c) Face-to-face seating in tables shall only be permissible when transparent dividers (e.g. acrylic plastic, plexiglass, sneeze guards, etc.) are installed.

Section 13. Menus. As far as practicable, a menu shall be displayed on the counter or other conspicuous area, or a single menu, QR code-based or any other touchless menu shall be placed on the customer’s table.

Section 14. Signage. Signage or notices must be installed in conspicuous areas reminding customers to wash their hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds or disinfect with 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer upon entering and leaving the restaurant.

Section 15. Self-Service and Condiment Stations. Self-service stations like do-it-yourself customer refill and condiment stations shall be prohibited until further notice.

Section 16. Buffet and Salad Bars. Buffet service and salad bars shall be allowed only when:

- a) Food servers are provided, and
- b) All food trays are with covers. (DTI MC No. 2020-39)

Section 17. Pick-up or takeaway zones. As far as practicable, there shall be designated pick-up or take away zones for customers whose orders are for take-out.

Section 18. Queuing System. Queue lines shall be provided with floor markers, demarcations, stanchions, signage, or ushers to ensure one (1) meter distance between customers on all sides.

Section 19. Leisure Facilities. The operation of ancillary leisure facilities and amenities, such as in-house play areas, libraries, karaoke machines, etc., if any, shall be temporarily suspended.

Section 20. Alarm System for Employee Hand Washing. An alarm system may be installed in a strategic location to remind employees to wash their hands rigorously with soap and warm water for at least twenty (20) seconds at least once every hour. If soap and water are not readily available, 70% solution alcohol/alcohol-based hand sanitizer shall be used as an alternative.

Section 21. Loud or Ambient Music. The use of loud or ambient music shall be kept to a minimum to discourage loud talking, which increases the likelihood of droplet transmission. (DTI MC 2020-39)

IV. EMPLOYEES

Section 22. Hygiene, Grooming, and Other Conduct. Employees must observe personal hygiene, good grooming and other proper conduct while on duty, such as the following:

- a) Wearing of clean clothes or uniform, and closed shoes;
- b) Wearing of appropriate PPE while on duty;
- c) Refraining from wearing jewelry such as rings, bracelets, watches, and earrings;
- d) Practicing proper respiratory etiquette, such as covering of nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing;
- e) Avoiding physical contact with customers;
- f) Strictly observing of physical distancing in the working areas (e.g. kitchen, cashier, food storage areas, etc.);
- g) Washing of hands for 20 seconds before and after handling food, or at least once every hour or after close contact with customers;
- h) Not loitering in other areas outside of work stations and not engaging in close interactions not necessary for work;
- i) Not spitting on any surface in the restaurant.

Section 23. Contact with Food Products. Employees shall avoid touching with their bare hands ready-to-eat food. Instead, they shall use appropriate utensils such as tongs, single use-gloves, or dispensing equipment. If the task requires direct contact with ready-to-eat food, employees shall wash their hands and the exposed portions of the arms for 20 seconds prior to donning gloves and before touching food or food-contact surfaces. Hands shall be washed immediately after removing gloves.

Section 24. Clean as You Go Policy. Employees must emulate the “Clean As You Go” policy by keeping the work area clean and tidy throughout the working day.

Section 25. Employee Meal Times. Staff break and meal times shall be done on shifting schedules. During their break or meal time, employees shall dine at the designated discreet areas where physical distancing shall be observed.

V. CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS

Section 26. No mask, No Entry Policy. Customers and Suppliers not wearing masks shall not be allowed to enter the restaurant. Face masks shall be worn properly at all times except when eating and drinking.

Section 27. Mandatory Screening. Customers and Suppliers must be screened prior to entry in the Restaurant through:

- a. Body temperature check using a Thermal Scanner or Thermometer Gun;
- b. Completion of Health Declaration and Contact Tracing Form using a mobile application or other contactless means.

Only those who are cleared during screening shall be allowed to enter. Those with body temperature exceeding 37.5 degrees Celsius or those exhibiting flu-like symptoms shall be refused entry.

Accomplished Health Declaration and Contact Tracing Forms shall be handled and processed with confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Privacy Act, and shall be disposed of after thirty (30) days from the date of accomplishment.

Section 28. Physical Distancing. Customers shall observe physical distancing of at least one (1) meter from one another in communal areas, such as dining areas, toilets, and queueing areas.

Section 29. Sanitizing Mats. Customers shall sanitize their footwear using sanitizing mats and drying pads installed at the entrance of the restaurant before entering the establishment.

VI. SERVICE AND OTHER PROCEDURE

Section 30. Food Covering. Food shall be properly covered before it is served to the customer.

Section 31. Contactless Transactions. Cashless or online modes of payment using payment applications shall be utilized by the Restaurants both for dine-in and delivery. If online or mobile payment is not possible, Restaurants shall create a method for no-contact payment schemes, such as receiving cash on a small tray or leather bill folder to avoid mutual hand contact with customers.

VII. DELIVERY

Section 32. Delivery Personnel. Delivery personnel shall ensure proper sanitation of vehicle, wear face masks properly, and frequently wash or sanitize their hands with 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer while conducting deliveries.

Section 33. Designated Pick-Up Areas. Pick-up areas should be designated and properly marked.

Section 34. Physical Distancing. Physical distancing of at least one (1) meter between the delivery personnel and the customer must be observed at all times.

Section 35. Food Packaging. Hot and cold foods shall be delivered through properly functioning insulated cases, storage boxes, or appropriate transport vessels. Raw foods shall be separated from cooked and ready-to-eat foods at all times. Any wrapping and packaging used for food transport shall be done properly to prevent food contamination.

Section 36. Sanitation of Delivery Boxes. Coolers, insulation cases, and other delivery boxes used to deliver foods shall be cleaned and sanitized frequently.

Section 37. Online Delivery Services. Tie-ups or partnerships with online platforms that provide delivery service is encouraged.

VIII. SANITATION, DISINFECTION, SAFETY MEASURE AND OTHERS

Section 38. Disinfection and Sanitation Protocols. The restaurant owner must ensure compliance with the following standards:

- a. Deep cleaning, proper disinfection, and sanitation within the restaurant's premises shall be done regularly;

- b. Frequent sanitation and disinfection of high-touch surfaces such as bars, kitchen and counter tops, cashiers, menu, tables, chairs, condiment containers, toilet fixtures, etc., shall be conducted at all times;
- c. Food contact surfaces, dishware, utensils, and beverage equipment shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized before and after use;
- d. All dishes, silverware, and glassware shall be washed and sanitized including items that have not been used. Restaurants are encouraged to invest in modern equipment to enhance the washing and disinfection of dishes, silverwares, and glassware;
- e. Toilets shall be cleaned and sanitized every two (2) hours or as may be necessary.
- f. Gloves shall be used for cleaning and sanitizing surfaces;
- g. Instructions on the proper use of disinfectant wipes shall be strictly followed. It shall not be reused to wipe down multiple surfaces;
- h. Used reusable gloves shall be properly brought to a laundering area for immediate washing;
- i. Used disposable gloves, disinfecting wipes, and disposable facemasks shall be thrown in the designated container (with cover), and shall be disposed in accordance with the special instructions relating to the material concerned;
- j. All used linens and fabrics shall be bagged or properly contained when transported to a laundering area, if applicable. Staff shall be equipped with masks and disposable gloves or tongs to pick up soiled laundry;
- k. Regular pest control activities in the restaurant shall be implemented;
- l. If one confirmed case of COVID-19 is detected in the Restaurant, it shall be disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant solution (0.5% bleach solution). The conduct of a comprehensive disinfection by trained personnel is recommended. The Restaurant must be locked down for 24 hours prior to disinfection to lessen transmission to sanitation personnel. During the disinfection process, all doors and windows should be opened to maximize ventilation. The building may only be opened 24 hours after the disinfection process (DTI- DOLE JMC No. 20-04-A).

Section 39. Safety Measures. The restaurant owner must ensure compliance with the following health and safety measures:

- a. Availability of 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer and tissue paper or table napkins in close proximity with high-touch areas and in prominent areas.
- b. Availability of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on proper handwashing, respiratory etiquette, proper use of facemask and Physical Distancing shall be displayed in conspicuous areas of the restaurant. The location of handwashing areas shall likewise be posted.
- c. Hand-washing sinks and toilet flushing facilities must be functional at all times. It shall be adequately supplied with soap and toilet paper or paper towels.

- d. A designated handwashing basin for kitchen staff separate from the dishwashing sink shall be provided.
- e. Kitchen floors shall be installed with directional arrows or floor markers according to flow of work processes to facilitate crowd control and physical distancing.
- f. Food preparation areas shall be strictly off-limits to all other restaurant employees whose work has no relevance to food preparation.

Section 40. Ventilation and Exhaust. Proprietors of Dine-In establishments shall enhance their exhaust system, ensure better airflow inside air-conditioned restaurants, or install high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration systems. Outdoor dining (i.e. al fresco dining) is highly encouraged. (DTI MC No. 2020-39)

Section 41. Waste Management. Restaurant wastes including used disposable equipment, utensils, and plates shall be properly segregated and disposed of regularly.

IX. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 42. Suppletory Application of DOT Administrative Order No. 2020 - 005. For Restaurants in areas declared to be under a Community Quarantine, DOT Administrative Order No. 2020-005 shall apply in suppletory character.

Section 43. Compliance with Other Relevant Issuances. Restaurants shall comply with other relevant DOT, DTI, DOLE, or DOH issuances on health and safety standards, as well as rules and regulations imposed by the local government unit (LGU) having jurisdiction over the Restaurants, which are deemed to apply to these Guidelines suppletorily or by analogy.

Section 44. Penalties. Any violation of these Guidelines may subject the tourism enterprise to the appropriate fines and penalties, including revocation of its DOT Accreditation, in accordance with relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

Section 45. Separability. If any provision of this Circular is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 46. 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 47. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

For guidance and strict compliance.

13 September 2020.



Bernadette Romulo-Puyat
 BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
 Secretary

