

**MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2020 - 009****HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE OPERATIONS OF
DOT-ACCREDITED SPA ESTABLISHMENTS UNDER THE NEW NORMAL**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Republic Act No. 9593 or the *Tourism Act of 2009*, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is mandated to promulgate rules and regulations governing the operation and activities of all tourism enterprises, which include Spa Establishments;

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) *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 DOT-Accredited Spa Establishments in the New Normal scenario;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, the Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operations of Spa Establishments 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 Spa Establishments*".

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

- a. "Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT)" refers 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*).
- b. "Cleaning" refers to the removal of microbes, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It is the physical removal of contaminants such as dirt, and organic material such as blood and secretions from surfaces, using cleaning agents such as soap and water, among others, as first step in preparation for disinfection and sterilization.
- c. "Client" refers to a person who needs or requests spa services.
- d. "Confirmed COVID-19 Case" refers to an individual with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection, irrespective of clinical signs and symptoms (*DOH DM No. 2020-0439*).
- e. "Contact Tracing" refers to the identification, listing, assessment, and monitoring of persons who may have come into close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case. Contract tracing is an important component in containing outbreaks of infectious diseases.

- 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, following the template in Annex A-2 of the DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A.
- g. "Community Quarantine" refers 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*).
- h. "Disinfection" refers to the process of reducing the number of viable microorganisms on a surface to a less harmful level. It involves use of chemicals including but not limited to a bleach solution, and is more effective if done after cleaning (which is the physical removal of contaminants such as dirt, and organic material such as blood and secretions from surfaces, using cleaning agents such as soap and water, among others, as first step in preparation for disinfection and sterilization)
- i. "Full body Massage" refers to a spa service where a therapist massages all major areas of the body like back, shoulders, legs, feet, arms, hands and neck of a client.
- j. "Health Declaration Form" shall refer 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 DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A.
- k. "Management" shall refer to the owner, proprietor, manager, supervisor, administrator or other officer with control and supervision of operations of Spa Establishments.
- l. "Minimum Public Health Standards" refers to guidelines set by the DOH under Administrative Order No. 2020-0015, as well as sector-relevant guidelines issued by national government agencies as authorized by the IATF, to aid all sectors in all settings to implement 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. For this purpose, the Department of Tourism and Department of Public Works and Highways are recognized as the sector-relevant agencies with respect to tourism and construction, respectively.
- m. "New Normal" refers 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. These include actions that will become second nature to the general public as well as policies such as bans on large gatherings that will continue to remain in force.
- n. "Personal Protective Equipment" or PPE refers to protective garments or equipment worn by individuals to increase personal safety from infectious agent.
- o. "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.

- p. "Probable COVID-19 Case" refers to an individual that meets the clinical criteria provided under DOH DM No. 2020-0439 or the *Omnibus Interim Guidelines on Prevention, Detection, Isolation, Treatment, and Reintegration Strategies for COVID-19*.
- q. "Service Areas" refers to the area where spa services such as massage treatments, steam, sauna, exercise, nutritional and herbal therapy, or other professional services are conducted;
- r. "Spa Establishments" shall refer to establishments offering massage treatments, steam, sauna, exercise, nutritional and herbal therapy, dietary program, yoga, meditation or other professional services aimed at renewing the body, mind & spirit.
- s. "Therapist" refers to trained and certified worker in the spa industry that performs spa treatments or spa services for clients.

Section 3. Scope and Application. This Circular shall apply to all DOT-Accredited Spa Establishments, and Spa Establishments in DOT-Accredited Accommodation Establishments.

II. EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

Section 4. Health Declaration Form. All employees of a Spa Establishment are required to fill out a Health Declaration Form (HDF) upon entering the building premises or workplace. 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 one (1) meter and for more than fifteen (15) minutes for the past fourteen (14) days;
- c. Employee provided direct care for a patient with Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 case without using PPE for the past fourteen (14) days; or
- d. Employee travelled outside the Philippines in the last 14 days; (*DTI- DOLE JMC No. 20-04-A*)

Section 5. Body Temperature Check. The Management must ensure the monitoring of body temperature of all employees and Therapists every time they report to work. Unwell employees or those with mild-flu like symptoms shall be directed to consult a doctor or to stay at home.

Section 6. Personal Protective Equipment. The Management must provide all its employees their respective PPEs while they are on duty which shall be properly worn while on duty such as but not limited to the following:

- a. 70% solution alcohol/ alcohol based hand-sanitizer
- b. Disposable gowns;
- c. Face masks;
- d. Face shields;
- e. Hair caps/ hairnets;
- f. Shoe cover.

Section 7. Regular Briefing of Safety and Health-Related Information. The Management shall conduct regular briefings to all employees that will highlight the importance of personal hygiene, proper handwashing/hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, proper use of PPEs, strict

observance of physical distancing, use of contactless greeting, and other safety protocols while interacting with clients. Likewise, other related information shall be disseminated by installing a safety bulletin board or display of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in the working premises.

Section 8. Annual Medical Examination and Health Plan. The Management shall ensure that its employees undergo an annual medical examination. Apart from the mandatory coverage in PhilHealth, the Management is also encouraged to invest in health plans for its employees.

Section 9. Break and meal time schedule. Break and meal times of employees shall be done on shifting schedules. During their break or mealtime, employees shall dine at the designated area where physical distancing of at least one (1) meter apart shall be observed.

Section 10. Employee Testing. The Management shall ensure that its employees undergo a 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. PHYSICAL SET-UP AND CONFIGURATION

Section 11. Notices. Notices or reminders on the Spa Establishments health protocols shall be posted at the entrance and other conspicuous areas of the establishment:

- a. Completion of Forms;
- b. "No Mask, No Entry" policy;
- c. Physical Distancing protocols;
- d. Hand hygiene;
- e. Maximum number of allowable persons in each room;
- f. Cleaning schedule and procedures;
- g. Non-contact payment methods;
- h. Other protocols, including right to refuse service to client who fail to refuse or comply with protocols.

Section 12. Sanitizing Mats. Sanitizing mats and drying pads shall be installed at the entrance of the Spa Establishments, unless other entrances such as mall entrances, hotel entrances, etc. leading to Spa Establishment are installed.

Section 13. Shoe Storage and Shoe Changing Area. A different pair of disinfected foot wear or foot or shoe cover, to be provided by the Spa Establishments, shall be worn inside the establishment by employees and clients. A separate shoe storage and shoe changing area for the employees and clients shall likewise be provided.

Section 14. Floor and Seat Markers. One (1) meter floor markers shall be installed in all communal areas such as the waiting area, massage/treatment rooms, shower rooms, rest rooms, and break rooms. Directional floor markers to singularize the directional movement of people inside the establishment shall likewise be placed.

Section 15. Reception Area

- a. Tables or counters shall be clutter-free and transparent barrier shall be installed;
- b. 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer shall be readily available;
- c. Single-used or QR-based menus shall be provided;

- d. Clean pens shall be readily available when needed and shall be disinfected after every use; and
- e. Demarcated lines at the front of the counter should be placed three feet away from the counter.

Section 16. Massage and Service Areas

- a. Treatment beds and massage chairs must be positioned at least one (1) meter apart on all sides to ensure that Therapists can observe social distancing when performing services. In cases where visually impaired Therapists are employed, more than one (1) meter space shall be provided on all sides to ensure safe movement.
- b. The use of one (1) massage or treatment room per Client is highly encouraged.
- c. Signage limiting the maximum capacity shall be visibly posted in other treatment rooms such as but not limited to sauna, jacuzzi, and indoor pools.
- d. Treatment tables or massage beds (or the warmer and padding on the massage beds) shall be covered with a heavy-duty plastic sheet or table protector. In addition, massage or treatment chairs and beds shall be draped with towels or bed covers.
- e. A protective barrier with access holes, where applicable, shall be placed between Clients and Therapists.

IV. CLIENTS HANDLING POLICY

Section 17. Booking and Reservation. Walk-in clients are highly discouraged. Prior reservations through contactless methods are encouraged in order to limit the number of clients to be accommodated. Bringing of companion shall be prohibited except for clients needing assistance. Scheduled appointments shall be within a thirty-minute between Clients to allow ample time for cleaning and disinfection prior to the next massage session.

Section 18. No Mask, No Entry Policy. A “*No face mask, no entry policy*” shall apply to all clients. Face masks shall be worn properly at all times except when eating and drinking.

Section 19. Mandatory Screening. All clients must be screened prior to entry to the Spa Establishment 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 clients who are cleared during temperature screening and have accomplished the Health Declaration Form shall be allowed to enter a Spa Establishment. Those with fever and flu-like symptoms will not be allowed to enter, and will be referred to the doctor on duty, if any, to the nearest hospital, or to the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) in accordance with the DOH-prescribed protocol.

Section 20. Contactless Transactions. Cashless or online modes of payment using payment applications shall be utilized by the Spa Establishments. If online payment is not possible, the Spa Establishments shall create a method for no-contact payment schemes.

Section 21. Maximum Client Capacity. Maximum client capacity at a particular period shall be established to ensure physical distancing within the Spa Establishments.

Section 22. Physical Distancing. Strict observance of physical distancing by maintaining at least one (1) meter is mandatory. The Management shall deploy roving personnel to monitor the compliance of clients on physical distancing and other health policies while inside the facility.

Section 23. Duration of Treatment. As far as practicable, Spa Establishments are encouraged to limit massage or treatment sessions up to maximum of sixty (60) minutes per client.

V. CLEANING, DISINFECTION, SAFETY AND OTHER CONTROL MEASURES

Section 24. Cleaning, Disinfection, Safety and Control Measures under the New Normal. The following cleaning, disinfection, safety and other control measures must be observed:

A. Safety and other control measures. Spa Establishments must comply with the following safety and control measures:

1. Personal effects of clients such as bags and gadgets shall be disinfected and deposited in clean bags or boxes.
2. Torn masks shall be immediately replaced by the Management.
3. Therapists shall wear appropriate PPE during treatment, and shall observe proper washing of hands before and after every treatment. PPEs shall be changed every after client.
4. Grooming equipment, devices and paraphernalia for spa services shall be properly disinfected before and after service.
5. Functional hand washing stations, soap and sanitizers, and hand drying equipment or supplies, as applicable, must be installed in strategic locations. Toilet facilities must likewise be functional at all times.
6. Service areas or workstations shall be properly cleaned and disinfected after every service.
7. Each Therapist shall be provided of their own set of tools and containers for massage oil, lotion and other materials necessary in the performance of their work. No sharing of tools shall be allowed.
8. Proper disposal of single-use equipment (i.e. cotton balls, tissue, PPE) shall be observed. Covered trash bins dedicated for single use equipment shall likewise be provided.
9. Trash bins must be available and accessible in all areas of the establishment.
10. Disposal of trash shall be made every day, or whenever necessary. Trash bins shall be disinfected after every disposal.



B. Cleaning and Disinfection Measures. The following cleaning and disinfection measures must be complied with:

1. Regular cleaning and disinfection of office premises must be observed at all times.
2. 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers and handwashing stations must be installed in easily accessible locations, such as entrances, exits, and communal dining areas.
3. Linens, robes, and towels shall be changed with clean ones after each service. Used linens and fabrics shall be carefully removed without shaking to avoid dispersal of micro-droplets. These shall be kept in covered laundry bins and 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 and must ensure to wash their hands properly after handling the items.
4. Linens, robes, towels and other similar re-useable/washable items shall be washed using a disinfectant solution.
5. Frequent cleaning and disinfection shall be made on high-touch surfaces such as door knobs, deposit boxes, lockers, spa menu, spa equipment, tables, chairs, and restroom surfaces between clients such as door handles, chairs, stall doors, the toilet seat, restroom counters, light switches, toilet handle, faucet fixtures, toilet paper dispenser, and paper towel dispenser.
6. Gloves shall be used for cleaning and sanitizing surfaces. Used reusable gloves shall be properly brought to a laundering area for immediate washing.
7. Used disposable gloves, disinfecting wipes, and disposable facemasks, and disposable gowns shall be thrown in the designated container (with cover), and shall be disposed in accordance with the special instructions relating to the material concerned.
8. Toilets shall be cleaned and disinfected every two (2) hours or as may be necessary. Rest rooms shall be deeply cleaned every after use and shall be disinfected daily.
9. Porous pieces of furniture and surfaces, such as walls made of pumice stone, tables and chairs made of untreated wood, posters made of paper, etc., shall be covered with plastic sheets to enable ease of disinfection.
10. Deliveries, parcels, and other packages shall be disinfected outside the establishment.
11. If one confirmed case of COVID-19 is detected in the facility, the establishment shall be disinfected with an appropriate disinfectant solution (0.5% bleach solution). The conduct of a comprehensive disinfection by trained personnel is recommended. The establishment must be locked down for twenty-four (24) hours prior to disinfection to lessen transmission to personnel. During the disinfection process, all doors and windows should be opened to maximize ventilation. The venue/facility may only be opened twenty-four (24) hours after the disinfection process. (DTI-DOLE JMC No. 20-04-A).

Section 25. Ventilation and Exhaust. Spa Establishments shall enhance their exhaust system, ensure better airflow inside air-conditioned Spa Establishments, or install high-efficiency

particulate air (HEPA) filtration systems. Restroom doors and windows may be left open overnight to allow ventilation.

VI. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 26. Compliance with Other Relevant Issuances. Spa Establishments shall comply with other relevant DOT, DTI, DOLE, or DOH 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 Spa Establishments.

Section 27. Penalties. Any violation of the provisions of this Circular may subject the Management of the Spa Establishment to the appropriate fines and penalties, including the revocation of the Spa Establishment's DOT Accreditation, if any, in accordance with relevant laws, rules and regulations.

Section 28. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 29. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

For guidance and strict compliance.

06 December 2020


BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary 

