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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021 - 004**HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE OPERATION OF SURFING CAMPS AND CONDUCT OF SURFING LESSONS 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;

WHEREAS, on 20 January 2020, DOT issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-01 or the *Rules and Regulations to Govern the Accreditation of Surfing Camps and Filipino Surfing Instructors*;

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 Surfing Camps and conduct of surfing lessons under a New Normal scenario;

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing, these Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operation Surfing Camps and Conduct of Surfing Lessons 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 Surfing Camps and Conduct of Surfing Lessons*".

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. "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 an infectious disease among persons in and to persons outside the affected area. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines with Amendments as of 11 February 2021*)
- c. "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*)
- d. "Contact Tracing Form" refers to the form a person must fill out to provide contact information through a mobile application such as the StaySafe.Ph App, substantially following the template in Annex A-2 of the DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A.
- e. "Emergency Preparedness Plan" refers to the detailed strategy or procedure to be observed to address an emergency, which shall include, but is not limited to, surfing accident and potential COVID-19 infection of any guest or staff, and the corresponding transporting, reporting, and disinfection protocols.

- f. "Disinfection" refers to the use of chemicals to kill microbes on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove microbes, but by killing microbes on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of infection. (*DOH DM No. 2020-0157*)
- g. "Guest" refers to a visitor of the Surfing Camp or an individual checked-in at the resort or the hotel where the Surfing Camp is located.
- h. "Health Declaration Form" refers to a form that a person must fill-up through a mobile application, 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. "Management" refers to the owner, proprietor, manager, supervisor, administrator, or other officer with control and supervision of the operations of the Surfing Camp.
- j. "Minimum Public Health Standards" refers to guidelines set by the Department of Health (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. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines with Amendments as of 11 February 2021*)
- k. "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. This includes 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. (*IATF Omnibus Guidelines with Amendments as of 11 February 2021*)
- l. "Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)" refers clothing and accessories worn to minimize exposure to health risks, such as protective clothing, masks, and goggles.
- m. "Physical Distancing" or "Social Distancing" refers to the strict maintenance of a distance of at least one (1) meter radius between persons. (*Memorandum from the Executive Secretary dated 13 March 2020*)
- n. "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*.
- o. "Student" refers to an individual that has availed of a Surfing Lesson Package.
- p. "Surfing" refers to a sport and recreational activity of riding on the crest or along the tunnel of a wave while standing on a surfboard.
- q. "Surfing Camp" refers to an enterprise offering professional surfing lessons or programs from beginner to advanced level, and which has facilities, equipment, and instructional staff available for the execution of the program or lesson. A surfing camp may either be a stand-alone facility or an extension or part of a resort or a hotel.

- r. "Surfing Instructor" refers to an individual who provides professional knowledge and assistance on proper and safe surfing, for a fee, commission or any form of lawful remuneration and certified by any recognized international surfing organization.
- s. "Surfing Lesson Package" refers to the detailed description of the surfing lesson options indicating the number of hours, types of lesson (beginner, intermediate, or professional) and cost.

Section 3. Scope and Application. – This Circular shall apply to DOT-Accredited Surfing Camps and DOT-Accredited Surfing Instructors conducting surfing lessons in areas where a Community Quarantine is no longer in place.

II. HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR SURFING CAMPS

Section 4. Employee Management

- a. The Management 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.
- b. Employees shall be required to fill out a Health Declaration Form (HDF) or any digital iteration thereof, prior to or 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:
 - 1. Employee is experiencing fever, cough and/or colds, body pains, or sore throat;
 - 2. 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;
 - 3. Employee provided direct care for a patient with Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 case without using PPE in the past 14 days; or
 - 4. Employee travelled outside the Philippines in the last 14 days (*DTI- DOLE JMC 20- 04-A*).
- c. The Management shall provide employees with their respective PPE, to be worn when necessary, while on duty, such as:
 - 1. Facemask;
 - 2. Face shield; and
 - 3. 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based sanitizer.
- d. Employees shall wear proper PPE and disinfect their hands before and after touching any equipment to be handed to or from guests or students.
- e. Employees shall limit physical contact with guests and students.
- f. The Management shall adhere with the COVID-19 testing protocols for employees, as may be required or recommended under applicable issuances of the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), or the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

Section 5. Facility and Equipment-related Policies

- a. As far as practicable, foot or sanitizing baths shall be made available at entrances and exits of the Surfing Camps;

- b. In areas where guests are expected to queue or gather, floor markers allowing one (1) meter distance between guests shall be in place to ensure Physical Distancing;
- c. The following shall be readily available at the reception counter or desk of Surfing Camps:
 - 1. Germicidal disinfectant/wipes for surface cleaning;
 - 2. Face mask or face shield;
 - 3. Biohazard disposable waste bag;
 - 4. 70% solution alcohol or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
 - 5. Tissue paper, napkin, or paper towel; and
 - 6. Disposable gloves.
- d. Disinfection of high-touch surfaces shall be conducted frequently;
- e. Trash bins must be provided, and a separate trash bin or bag must be provided for the disposal of used PPE such as used face masks and gloves;
- f. Surfing equipment including surf boards and leashes must be cleaned and disinfected regularly and after every use, and before handing over the same to Guests and Students;
- g. Toilets and restrooms must be cleaned and disinfected regularly;
- h. Toilet facilities must be functional and properly maintained with adequate supply of clean water; and
- i. Toilets and restrooms must be provided with soap, alcohol, and tissue paper or napkin.
- j. Signages or posters must be installed to remind Guests about the following:
 - 1. No sharing of food or any personal or non-personal belongings;
 - 2. Proper disposal of used PPE;
 - 3. Strict observance of physical distancing; and
 - 4. Strict observance of the minimum health and safety protocols.

Section 6. Reservation and Booking

- a. Surfing Camps shall require prior booking or reservation of the desired Surfing Lesson Package through online or other digital means to control the number of Guests and Students to be accommodated. No walk-in Guests or Students shall be allowed.
- b. Cashless modes of payment using digital payment platforms or application shall be utilized. If online payment is not available, the Surfing Camp shall device a method to promote no-contact transactions such as receiving cash on a small tray or leather bill folder.

Section 7. Guest and Student Handling

- a. *“No facemask, No face shield, No entry”* Policy shall be in place. Face masks and face shields must be worn properly at all times except when eating and drinking, and during the conduct of surfing lessons;
- b. Guests and Students must be screened prior entry to the Surf Camp through:
 - 1. Body temperature check using a thermal scanner or a thermometer gun; and

2. Completion of Health Declaration Form and Contact Tracing Form using a mobile application such as the StaySafe.Ph App.

Only Guests and Students cleared during screening shall be allowed to enter the perimeter. Those with fever and flu-like symptoms will not be allowed to enter the establishment 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.

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.

- c. The practice of Filipino Brand of Service or the “*Mabuhay Gesture*” in greeting and receiving Guests and Students, as well as other forms of contactless greetings, is highly encouraged.
- d. Physical distancing measures, respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and other minimum public health standards must be strictly observed at all times.
- e. Students shall be encouraged to bring their own surf boards to be used during surfing lessons.

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF SURFING LESSONS

Section 8. On-land Safety Briefing

- a. On-land safety briefing shall be conducted outdoors to allow proper ventilation;
- b. Only one (1) Student is allowed per Surfing Instructor;
- c. At least two (2)-meter physical distancing must be maintained between the Surfing Instructor and the Student during the briefing session;
- d. Face masks must be properly worn during the conduct of safety briefing; and
- e. The Surfing Instructor must use separate surfboards when doing a demonstration.

Section 9. Conduct of Surfing Lessons on Water

- a. Face masks shall not be used during surfing lessons in the water;
- b. Physical distancing must be properly observed while in the water. As far as practicable, Surfing Instructor must guide the Student from a safe distance of at least two (2) meters;
- c. For students who are considered beginners or those surfing for the first time, the Surfing Instructor may guide or support him or her by holding only the tail of the surf board maintaining, as far as practicable, at least one (1) meter distance from the head of the student;
- d. As far as practicable, surfing Instructors and Students must wear face masks when no longer in the water.

Section 10. Emergency Response-Related Policies. The following emergency preparedness standards must be complied with:

- a. Surfing Camps must have an Emergency Preparedness Plan to ensure the availability of an effective response mechanism to any emergency situation;
- b. A well-trained and equipped emergency response team must be available to provide emergency assistance whenever necessary;
- c. There shall be a designated holding area for Guests and Students showing COVID-19 symptoms while waiting for trained personnel to transport him or her to the nearest hospital or medical facility;
- d. In case employees test positive for COVID-19, the protocols under DTI-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A shall be observed; and
- e. In handling health emergency related incidents, constant coordination between the emergency response team and the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) is mandatory.

IV. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 11. Reportorial Requirements. Surfing Camps shall report to the DOT Regional Office with jurisdiction over their area the following information:

- (a) Number of Guests, Students, or employees who have developed COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive, if any; and
- (b) Number of Guests, Students, or employees who were transferred to the appropriate health facility, if any.

Section 12. Compliance with other relevant issuances. Surfing Camps and Surfing Instructors shall comply with other relevant IATF-EID, 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 surf camps and surfing instructors, which are deemed to apply to these Guidelines in suppletory manner or by analogy.

Section 13. Penalties. Any violation of this Circular may subject the Surfing Camps and the Surfing Instructors to the appropriate fines and penalties, including the revocation of its DOT Accreditation in accordance with relevant rules and regulations.

Section 14. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Circular is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 15. Repealing Clause. 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 16. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately upon filing with the University of the Philippines – Office of the National Administrative Register (UP-ONAR) and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

For guidance and strict compliance.

12 March 2021


BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
 Secretary

