

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 20-21
Series of 2020

SUBJECT : GUIDELINES ON THE OPERATIONS OF MALLS AND SHOPPING CENTERS IN AREAS DECLARED UNDER GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE (GCQ)

WHEREAS, Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) in Resolution No. 28 and 29 dated 23 April 2020 and 27 April 2020, respectively, approved the implementation of the General Community Quarantine (GCQ) starting May 1, 2020 for low-risk or moderate-risk administrative regions, provinces, or areas; *Provided*, that as a precondition, minimum health standards as defined by the Department of Health (DOH) are achieved and continually observed;

WHEREAS, the Department of Health (DOH) issued Administrative Order No. 2020-0015 dated 27 April 2020 or the "Guidelines on the Risk-Based Public Health Standards for COVID-19 Mitigation" and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) issued Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, under the Omnibus Guidelines on Community Quarantine issued by the IATF dated 29 April 2020, limited operations in malls and shopping centers are allowed except for leisure establishments and services which shall continue to be closed *Provided*, that establishments and services allowed to operate in malls and shopping centers may only operate at maximum of 50% work-on-site arrangement. *Provided, further*, those ages below 21 years old, and those 60 years old and above may not enter malls and shopping centers, except when indispensable under the circumstances for obtaining essential goods and services or for work in establishments located therein; *Provided, finally*, that DTI may issue guidelines to limit foot traffic in malls and shopping centers;


WHEREFORE, foregoing premises considered, the following measures are hereby prescribed for strict compliance by mall operators and commercial establishments allowed to operate located therein in order to discourage loitering and unnecessary foot traffic inside malls and shopping centers:

SECTION 1. Scope. These guidelines shall apply to mall and shopping centers and the establishments located therein that are allowed to operate under General Community Quarantine (GCQ).

SECTION 2. Controls. In addition to the minimum health standards prescribed by the DOH and the DTI-DOLE Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19, mall and shopping center operators in GCQ areas shall establish and maintain the following measures:

1. strictly monitoring foot traffic and enforcing safe distancing inside the shopping center or mall by:
 - a. limiting the number of people inside the mall or shopping center or inside an individual store, at any given time to a density of not more than one (1) person per two (2) square meters; entry of people shall be limited to the computed carrying capacity of the establishment. Carrying capacity is equal to the total square meters of vacant walkable space divided by two

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- (2); Thus, a 200 square meter vacant space can accommodate 100 people at any time;
- b. the number of open mall entrances may be reduced to better manage the foot traffic inside the mall;
 - c. senior citizens, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities (PWD) obtaining essential goods are allowed only one (1) companion;
 - d. ensuring social distancing of people (1 meter apart) at all times;
 - e. assigning personnel to regulate foot traffic in high-density areas, e.g., comfort rooms, supermarkets, etc.;
 - f. ensuring that customers stand on every other step of the escalator to maintain safe distancing;
 - g. limiting access to elevators to senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWD), and pregnant women and limiting passengers to only half of the original standard capacity of the unit;
 - h. marking or reducing the seats available for customers to use while waiting;
 - i. creating one-way flow, where possible, to decongest queues and facilitate movement; and
 - j. increasing police visibility, should there be a need to enforce strict physical distancing.
2. assigning a centralized pick up location for stores with delivery/pickup service where delivery service providers can pick up goods;
 3. regulating air conditioning inside the mall to 26 degrees centigrade;
 4. turning off free Wi-Fi for customers;
 5. suspending the conduct of sale events, marketing events, and other promotions which tend to attract large crowds; and
 6. implementing other measures that mall and shopping center operators may find necessary (e.g., express lanes)

SECTION 3. Separability Clause. If for any reason, any part or provision of this Circular be declared invalid, any part or provision not affected thereby, shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 4. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately upon publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and shall remain in effect until the state of public health emergency is lifted.

Issued on 04 May 2020.


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Secretary

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