



MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR No. 11
Series of 2020

TO : ALL CONCERNED

SUBJECT : Guidelines for Pre-Employment Services at the POEA for Areas in the Country under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) and for the National Capital Region, Cebu, and the Province of Laguna under the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ)

Pursuant to the *Omnibus Guidelines on Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines* of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) revised on 15 May 2020; the Civil Service Commission Memorandum Circular (CSC-MC) No. 10 dated 07 May 2020 on *“Revised Interim Guidelines for Alternative Work Arrangements and Support Work Mechanisms for Workers in the Government During the Period of State of National Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic”*; Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Administrative Order on *“Guidelines on the Implementation of Alternative Work Arrangement (AWA) under the General Community Quarantine (GCQ)”* and other pertinent IATF Resolutions, the following guidelines for pre-employment services at the POEA are hereby set:

I. Operations at POEA Regional Offices and One Stop Service Center for OFWs (OSSCOs) Under GCQ

1. Regular office operations shall resume to the following regions under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) without prejudice to strict observance of minimum health standards and precautions such as wearing of masks, maintenance of social distancing measures or subject to the application of appropriate community quarantine measures prescribed by the respective local government units (LGUs):

- 1.1 Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)
- 1.2 Region II – Isabela, Santiago City
- 1.3 Region IV-A – Cavite City
- 1.4 Region IX – Zamboanga City
- 1.5 Region XI – Davao City

1.6 Region XIII (Caraga) – Butuan City

2. As offices in the above-enumerated regions may observe compressed work week and/or alternative work arrangement, the transacting public is advised to check in advance the operating schedules of the said offices.
3. For the safety of the POEA clients and employees, several or all of the following precautionary measures will be utilized by the offices under the GCQ and the refusal of the visitor/client to use or undergo such measures may mean denial of entry into the POEA premises:
 - 3.1 face mask/ face shield
 - 3.2 designated entry/exit
 - 3.3 sanitizing foot bath
 - 3.4 temperature check
 - 3.5 use of hand sanitizers/hand washing area
 - 3.6 security check
 - 3.7 designated waiting/sitting area
 - 3.8 drop box
 - 3.9 presentation of identification card bearing age of visitor/client
 - 3.10 appointment system
 - 3.11 queueing system
 - 3.12 one client out- one client in policy
 - 3.13 other similar health and safety measures
4. The following visitors/clients will be declined entry into the POEA premises:
 - 4.1 persons below 21 years of age
 - 4.2 persons 60 years old above
 - 4.3 pregnant women
 - 4.4 persons with visible symptoms of illness (cough, colds, fever)
 - 4.5 persons under the influence of intoxicating drinks/substances

II. Office Operations at POEA Main Office, the National Capital Region, Cebu, Laguna and other areas that may be designated under MECQ

1. ***Skeleton Workforce.*** Assigned skeleton workforce in POEA offices covered by the MECQ shall be enabled to report to work in order to ensure the continuity of services, subject to interzonal movement protocols from their residence to POEA offices, clearances in crossing community checkpoints placed by LGUs, and availability of public transport/shuttle services. Such personnel shall maximize the use of telephone and online means in the provision of their services to the clients.
2. ***Green Lanes for OFWs.*** In compliance with IATF Resolution No. 36 Series of 2020 and in consideration of the limits set by allowed interzonal and intrazonal

movements during MECQ, a part of the limited skeleton workforce providing pre-employment services at POEA shall serve as initial personnel for the Green Lane for OFWs.

3. ***Ingress and Egress into POEA Offices under MECQ.*** For the safety of the POEA clients and employees, several or all of the following precautionary measures may be utilized by the offices under the GCQ and the refusal of the visitor/client to use or undergo such measures may mean denial of entry into the POEA premises:

- 3.1 face mask/ face shield
- 3.2 designated entry/exit
- 3.3 sanitizing foot bath
- 3.4 temperature check
- 3.5 use of hand sanitizers/hand washing area
- 3.6 security check
- 3.7 designated waiting/sitting area
- 3.8 drop box
- 3.9 presentation of identification card bearing age of visitor/client
- 3.10 appointment system
- 3.11 queueing system
- 3.12 one client out- one client in policy
- 3.13 other similar health and safety measures

4. ***Denial of Entry.*** The following visitors/clients will be declined entry into the POEA premises:

- 4.1 persons below 21 years of age
- 4.2 persons 60 years old above
- 4.3 pregnant women
- 4.4 persons with visible symptoms of illness (cough, colds, fever)
- 4.5 persons under the influence of intoxicating drinks/ substances

III. Processing of Overseas Employment Certificates (OECs) for returning workers or Balik Manggagawa (BMs). During the MECQ, the following guidelines will be applied:

1. For their safety, returning OFWs/BMs are highly encouraged to secure OEC exemption certificates from their Balik Manggagawa Online (BMONline) account accessible at **<https://www.bmonline.ph>**
2. Over-the-counter transactions for Balik Manggagawa OECs under MECQ Green Lanes will strictly operate on a by-appointment system also through BMONline accessible at **<https://www.bmonline.ph>**

IV. Direct Hire Assistance. To ensure the safety and convenience of workers seeking exemption from the Direct Hire Assistance Division, the following are adopted during the MECQ:

1. *Appointment for Phase 1.* Direct hire assistance services will operate on a by-appointment system. Direct hire applicants shall make an online request for appointment through the email address **dhad_lbc@yahoo.com** . Only twenty (20) clients will be accommodated per day for the Phase 1 process. The twenty (20) applicants shall receive a reply confirming the appointment. Applicants must bring with them a copy of the email acknowledgment and the required documents for their requested transaction. Filing of requests shall be made only from Monday-Friday between 8AM-11AM.
2. Queuing numbers will be issued to direct hire applicants who have employment contracts for initial evaluation or for PDOS and OEC Issuance. A DHAD staff will be assigned to monitor the number of applicants inside the DHAD lobby as follows:

Direct Hire (DH) Phases	No. of Applicants in the Lobby
Phase 1 – Evaluation of DH Application	20
Phase 2 – OEC Issuance	25

3. *Phase 2.* Applicants for Phase 2 processing will be scheduled once their clearance from Phase 1 is issued. Their schedule of appointment shall be posted at the POEA website at twenty-five (25) clearances per schedule, accessible at **www.poea.gov.ph** .
4. *Online Information for Direct Hire Applicants.* Documentary requirements for qualified direct hire applicants can be accessed at the POEA website **www.poea.gov.ph** under Our Services : Documentation of Direct Hire Professionals
or Our Services : Documentation of Direct Hire Household Service Workers .

V. Landbased Center (LBC) Interim Guidelines During the MECQ

The Landbased Center shall adopt the online appointment system in the submission of request for accreditation/renewal/additional and other transactions.

1. Accreditation of Principals

1.1 Private recruitment agencies (PRAs) are required to send their requests to file for principal accreditation (initial, renewal, additional, revalidation, etc.) through:

amerasiad_lbc@yahoo.com for AMERASIA accounts and

meaad_lbc@yahoo.com for Middle East and African Affairs accounts

The following information must be included in the request for appointment:

- a. Name of PRA and authorized signatory
- b. Name of principal
- c. Nature of accreditation transaction
- d. Details of manpower request
- e. Name of the authorized representative submitting to POEA

1.2 A maximum of two (2) transactions per PRA shall be accommodated for ten (10) PRAs. Awardee PRAs may file through the same emails and will not be subject to the limit set for regular PRAs.

1.3 LBC shall, through the said emails, reply with a Notice to the ten (10) PRAs to submit the documentary requirements for their transaction at a designated date.

1.4 A list of PRAs approved to submit their requirements shall be posted at conspicuous places at the LBC.

1.5 Drop boxes at the LBC shall be placed and a designated LBC officer shall supervise the drop box submission between 8am – 10am daily.

1.6 Submitted transactions shall be assigned to evaluators who shall notify the PRA concerned of this fact through the emails provided. The evaluators through the email shall inform the PRA of the status of their request i.e. recommended for approval, to comply with requirement(s) for deficiency(ies) noted, or when necessary, request conference with a PRA representative.

1.7 Follow – ups shall be coursed through email only. LBC evaluators shall view and provide response to such follow-ups between 3PM – 4PM daily.

1.8 LBC shall notify the PRA of the approval of their request through the same emails after it has been encoded and the documents shall be available for release

after a notice has been sent to them, a record of the release shall be made at the LBC releasing counter.

1.9 Foreign principals writing to the POEA shall be directed to course all their communications and concerns through their counterpart PRA with the latter submitting the concerns of the former.

1.10 Letters of appeal, requests for reconsideration that require legal opinion or management decision in POEA shall be responded through via email.

2. *Evaluation of Employment Contracts and Validation(Processing) for HSW, LSFW, OPAs, Drivers for Middle East and Request for Cancel, Reinstatement of Job Orders and OEC*

2.1 The above processes shall likewise pass through **meaad_lbc@yahoo.com** with the same system of follow-up and provision of information from the evaluator on deficiencies.

2.2 The following information must be included in the request for evaluation/validation of documents:

- a. Name of PRA and authorized signatory
- b. Name of principal
- c. Name employer
- d. Name of the worker
- e. Position of the worker
- f. Jobsite
- g. Nature of request
- h. Name of the authorized representative to submit the documents

2.3 The PRAs are allowed to submit only ten (10) requests for evaluation per day.

2.4 Once received, the PRA may verify from the system current status of receipt i.e., for evaluation, for compliance or approved.

2.5 The submitted evaluation request will be assigned to an evaluator who shall work on the transaction and within the system. Submissions that require further compliance shall be released to the PRA through the LBC Counter.

2.6 When necessary, the evaluator may ask for a meeting with a PRA representative indicating specific concerns that need to be clarified, the time, and date of the meeting.

2.7 PRA with released documents for compliance may re-file the request with complied requirements by accessing to the online appointment, to be processed as a new transaction.

2.8 Upon completion of the evaluation process and approval of the transaction, the LBC designated officer shall grant access to the system, and release the signed documents to the PRA.

VI. Seabased Employment Accreditation and Processing Center (SBC) Interim Guidelines During the MECQ.

1. ***Appointment System.*** In order to ensure continuous service without compromising the health and safety of the transacting public and POEA personnel, the following procedures at the SBC shall be implemented during the MECQ:

1.1 An appointment system is adopted for Licensed Manning Agencies (LMAs) for their submission of applications. A maximum of ten (10) clients shall be accommodated per day to comply with social distancing measures.

1.2 LMAs may forward their requests indicating the purpose of the appointment (i.e. processing of fisher's contract) through the center's official email account: **sbcenter@poea.gov.ph**. A reply / acknowledgment will be provided to the LMA confirming the request for appointment at the SBC counter is granted and indicating the schedule of the appointment.

1.3 Only those LMA representatives with approved appointment will be allowed entry at the center.

2. *Interim Procedure for Accreditation during MECQ*

2.1 The Center shall adopt the dropbox system on applications of LMAs for renewal and new accreditation of principal. A designated box will be placed outside the center where the liaison officers of the agencies will put their application folder.

2.2 A notification letter will be sent through email that the center receives the agencies application within 24 hours. The process cycle time is seven (7) to ten (10) days including the submission of deficiencies, if any.

2.3 Once approved, the accreditation certificate will be sent to the agency's official email address.

2.4 The following schedule shall be strictly observed for the agency's release of the original copy of the accreditation certificate.

2.4.1 Monday and Wednesday - For agency's name starting with A to K

2.4.2 Tuesday and Thursday - L to Z and numbers (i.e. 88 Aces, 2 Queens)

2.5 LMAs may submit online, 24/7, on their application for the following transactions: enrollment of vessel/s, amendment of vessel details, inclusion of shipowner in the contract, change address of principal, cancellation of principal/vessel and enrolment of additional position/s.

- 2.6 The manning agencies may forward the request letter together with the soft copies of the required documents to the official email address of the Seabased Employment Accreditation Division (SEAD): sbreg@poea.gov.ph. The process cycle time is five (5) to seven (7) days including the submission of deficiencies, if any.
- 2.7 To ensure data authenticity and security considerations, the agency shall only be allowed to use one official email account which shall be submitted to the center on or before 20 May 2020 through the email address of SEAD as indicated above together with the undertaking that all documents that will be submitted online are true and correct and that the original documents shall be submitted to the center a week after the approval of application.
- 2.8 Follow-up Time. Follow-ups may be done through the messenger facility. A special messenger group for liaison officers has been created for this purpose: POEA Seabased. A designated staff will regularly check inquiries or messages during office hours.

3. ***Contract Processing.***

3.1 *Request for Overseas Employment Certificate (pre-purchased OECs)*

All manning agencies shall submit their requests through dropbox system. A box will be designated for this purpose to be stationed outside the center. The process time is seven (7) days upon receipt of complete requirements. As soon as the purchased order is approved for payment, the agency will be properly advised as to the date of payment and obtaining the purchased OECs through the agency's email address or to the liaison officer's messenger account.

3.2 *In House Processing Facility*

Manning agencies are required to make use of the in-house online processing facility or the POEA Online Processing System (POPS) in processing, paying the required fees and obtaining the OEC of the seafarer prior to deployment. Thus, agencies are advised to make sure that they have sufficient Landbank fund balance.

3.3 *Processing for Watchlisted Seafarer and Fisher*

The existing procedure in processing for fisher and watchlisted seafarer shall be adopted. The Process Cycle Time is three (3) to five (5) days. LMAs are advised to secure an appointment prior to these transactions as they require physical presence at the Center.

If seafarer is watchlisted, the agency shall secure first the needed clearance from the POEA Adjudication Office before submitting the documents to SECPD.

3.4 Onboard Processing

Prior to the launch of the online onboard processing system, the dropbox system shall be adopted where a special box will be placed outside the center. The schedule to be adopted in dropping application for onboard processing will be the same as the number/letter coding scheme as mentioned in VI. 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 above. The Process Cycle Time for the process is five (5) to seven (7) days upon receipt of complete documents. SECPD shall advise concerned agency if request is ready for release.

The corresponding processing fee/s may be paid at the POEA Cashier located at 6th Floor, BFO Building , Ortigas Avenue corner EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

3.5 Cancellation of Employment Contract

Request for cancellation of a seafarer's employment contract shall be done online. The agency will submit soft copies of the required documents in accordance with Memorandum Circular No. 4, Series of 2017 to **mberiber@poea.gov.ph** . The process cycle time is three (3) days upon receipt of complete documents.

VII. Renewal, Upgrading and Extension of Principal Accreditation during MECQ

The principal accreditation of LRAs and LMAs whose expiration fall during the period covered by POEA Memorandum Circular No. 7-A Series of 2020 and the MECQ shall be given an automatic extension valid until 15 June 2020. PRAs and LMAs shall be allowed to file their application at POEA for renewal, upgrading or extension upon the lifting of the MECQ.

This Circular amends previous POEA issuances contrary hereto.

This Circular shall be subject to amendments upon the issuance of further directives.

This Circular shall take effect immediately.

For strict compliance.


BERNARD P. OLALIA
Administrator

15 May 2020