

NEWS RELEASE

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POEA issues guidelines on deployment, repatriation of Pinoy seafarers

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) has issued the implementing guidelines on the deployment and repatriation of all Filipino seafarers who will board all types of vessels for overseas employment, including fishing vessels to further ensure their protection and benefits during the national state of emergency brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Memorandum Circular No. 28, Series of 2020, pertinent provisions of the *Revised Rules and Regulations Governing the Recruitment and Employment of Seafarers of 2016* are temporarily held in abeyance in favour of the seafarer.

A seafarer who already signed an employment contract but cannot be deployed from the point of hire due to COVID-19 related reasons not attributable to the seafarer shall be provided with accommodation and food at the principal or employer's cost, unless provided by the government, until the seafarer is deployed or returned home, and even until the contract cancellation.

Also, a seafarer who was deployed but becomes stranded during his transit shall be paid basic pay, accommodation, food, and medical benefits at principal/employer's cost until the seafarer joins the vessel.

Likewise, the principal/employer shall provide the same assistance and benefits to the seafarers who already signed a contract and deployed but unable to join the ship and is repatriated back home, as well as to the seafarers who cannot be repatriated for some COVID-19 related reasons.

Furthermore, seafarers who completed his period of contractual service onboard, and who is ashore but cannot be repatriated shall still be provided with basic pay, accommodation, food, and medical benefits.

The principal/employers of the seafarer shall also provide all the cost on the accommodation and food of the seafarer during his quarantine period, unless otherwise provided by the government.

Meanwhile, the principal/employers will be allowed to recover any associated cost on the said provision of assistance and benefits in accordance with the employment contract or the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The implementation of the guidelines will be supervised by the POEA Pre-Employment Services Office through its Seabased Employment Accreditation Processing Center, including the further authorization to require documentary requirements that corresponds to the obligations of the concerned manning agencies.

The POEA Welfare and Employment Office through its Welfare Service Branch, on the other hand, will be in charged in the monitoring, conciliation, and repatriation assistance services. ###