



UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES MANILA
The Health Sciences Center

SAFE AND EFFICIENT WORK ENVIRONMENT GUIDELINES

I. BACKGROUND

On 08 March 2020, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed Proclamation 922 declaring the Philippines under the state of public health emergency. This was followed by a declaration on 16 March placing Luzon under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and Proclamation 929 declaring the whole Philippines under a state of calamity for the next six (6) months. All these measures are directed towards preventing the spread of COVID-19. Non-essential businesses, including universities, were closed.

University of the Philippines (UP) Manila is uniquely situated in the scheme of events. As the National Health Sciences Center, it is central to the continuing function of two (2) major institutions critical to solving the COVID-19 crisis: the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), which has been designated a COVID-19 referral center, and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which has developed a low-cost RNA-based testing kit and spearheads several scientific projects. Both are dependent on UP Manila for administrative support. This is especially important in following the provision of Bayanihan to Heal as One Act (Republic Act No. 11469) that allows procurement of medical goods, equipment and supplies to be allocated and distributed to public health facilities that are designated as COVID-19 referral hospitals in the most expeditious manner through exemptions from Republic Act No. 9184 or the "Government Procurement Reform Act" and other relevant laws.

On 27 March 2020, the UP System, through Administrative Order No. PDLC 20-12, ordered the UP Manila Office of the Chancellor to create and implement the UP-PGH COVID-19 Bayanihan Na! Operations Center. It is to continue operations until such time that the circumstances warranting its existence no longer subsist and upon the determination of the Office of the President of the University. This center necessitated the call for volunteers from all units of the campus to supplement the services of PGH in ensuring the continuous provision of healthcare services to the people, and to coordinate efforts during this state of national health emergency.

Thus, as the entire Luzon is placed in ECQ¹, UP Manila remains open to serve the nation.

II. OBJECTIVE

These guidelines are issued to enable the University to carry out essential work and, thus, ensure the delivery of services to the country during the period of ECQ and General Community Quarantine (GCQ) without exposing its personnel and constituents to undue hazards.

III. COVERAGE

These guidelines shall apply to all areas of the campus. The PGH shall issue supplementary guidelines, especially fit for its designation as a COVID-19 referral center, and in compliance with the Department of Health's (DOH) Department Memorandum No. 2020-0178: Interim Guidelines on Health Care Provider Networks during the COVID-19 Pandemic.²

IV. WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH

The continuing operations of UP Manila during the quarantine period shall be guided by the following safety and health standards aligned with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19.³

A. Mitigating risk of transmission

1. Minimizing Social Gathering

- a. All division chiefs shall submit the names, corresponding tasks, and schedules of staff who should be required to work at the office.
- b. Staff who can perform their work at home shall be allowed to do so subject to the provisions of Civil Service Commission Memorandum Circular 10, s 2020⁴ and appropriate checks and balances to ensure accomplishment of tasks. Safe and feasible work arrangements shall be provided for senior citizen employees with high risk health conditions, allowing them to do work from home arrangements without diminution in wages or benefits.
- c. Accomplishments will be evaluated using the Daily Time Record System (DTRS) outlined below.

2. Minimizing Risk of Exposure for Employees in the Workplace

Consistent with the recommendations of the PGH Hospital Infection Control Unit (HICU), the University shall ensure the following measures are followed:

- a. Wearing a mask shall be mandatory even when a personnel is alone in his/her office to comply with the recommended proper use/reuse/disinfection of masks;
- b. Central administration offices shall be temporarily transferred to the UP Manila Dormitory and Joaquin Gonzales Hall;
- c. An inventory of all office furnitures and equipment transferred to the temporary offices shall be submitted to the Property and Supply Office;
- d. All office furnitures shall be rearranged to enable 1-meter physical distancing among office staff and to promote unidirectional movement;
- e. UP Manila personnel reporting in campus shall conduct daily self-assessment using the DTI-DOLE checklist³, and are advised to not report for work and to immediately consult a physician or report to PGH Health Service if any of the following COVID-19-related symptoms, such as fever, cough, colds, sore throat or difficulty of breathing, is experienced;
- f. Workers shall observe proper respiratory/coughing etiquette and disposal of used tissues and hygiene materials;
- g. Personnel are required to disinfect their footwear using the footbaths installed at the entrances of all buildings. Personal hygiene, particularly frequent disinfecting of hands using soap and water shall be observed in all work areas;
- h. Congregations that prevent at least 1-meter physical distance among participants shall be prohibited;
- i. Eating in a communal area is discouraged;
- j. Visitors shall undergo mandatory temperature scanning and health checklist prior to entry into any UP Manila building;
- k. Decontamination of the workplace shall follow updated DOH-mandated guidelines. The janitorial staff shall regularly disinfect the offices, especially the commonly-touched surfaces (e.g., door knobs, counter/table tops, light switches, handles, faucets, etc.) and floor;
- l. Workers present in the work area with a suspect COVID-19 personnel shall go on mandatory home quarantine, subject to monitoring of symptoms, and may continue to work from home, if the situation permits. If the suspect COVID-19 personnel tests negative, asymptomatic workers placed on home quarantine shall be allowed to report back to work.

V. ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS THRU ELECTRONIC APPROVAL PATHWAYS

- A. UIS online-approval pathways shall be used for financial, personnel, and procurement transactions.
- B. Documents needing signatures should be signed electronically using Adobe Sign. Offices shall print out these documents after the ECQ and require actual signatures of appropriate officers.
- C. All offices shall create a list of documents that require original signatures, such as transfer orders and delivery acceptance.
- D. An Integrated Attendance and Accomplishment Monitoring System shall be implemented as follows:
 - 1. All employees shall register and use the electronic Daily Time Record System (DTRS); and
 - 2. All employees shall submit daily accomplishments through DTRS subject to weekly validation by the respective heads of office.

E. Document Submission System

Editable downloadable forms at the UP Manila website must be used.

F. Payment of salaries, benefits, and suppliers

Units shall submit online the required documents for processing of salaries and benefits of regular and non-regular staff to the Accounting Office to ensure timely payment through their bank accounts.

Units shall submit required documents for processing of payment to suppliers, which is now done electronically through bank-to-bank transfer (through our cashless/checkless system).

G. Procurement of Essential Items

End users who need to procure essential items, whether related or not to COVID-19, shall seek the guidance of the Procurement Office, through email, on the most appropriate method of procurement in accordance with RA 9184, and subject to the exemptions provided for in the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act^{5,6} that aims to facilitate the procurement of items related to COVID-19 response.

H. Document Tracking

All transactions are to be properly recorded by the respective office/unit until such time that the IMS has developed and deployed an electronic DATS.

I. Meeting and Collaborative Works

All personnel are encouraged to use the ZOOM through *up.edu* for meetings and other collaborative works.

J. Unit-Specific Measures

Deans, Directors, and Heads of Units may issue supplementary measures consistent and aligned with the aforementioned guidelines.

K. Effectivity

These guidelines shall take effect immediately and may be amended depending on the circumstances prevailing at the University, local and national levels.

REFERENCES:

1. Executive Order No. 112, 3 (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2020/04/30/executive-order-no-112-s-2020/>
2. Department of Health (2020). Interim Guidelines on Health Care Provider Networks during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.doh.gov.ph/node/21259>
3. Department of Labor and Employment (2020). DTI and DOLE Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dti-and-dole-interim-guidelines-on-workplace-prevention-and-control-of-covid-19/>
4. Civil Service Commission (2020). Memorandum Circular No. 10, s. 2020 - Revised Interim Guidelines for Alternative Work Arrangements and Support Mechanisms for Workers in the Government During the Period of State of National Emergency Due to COVID-19 Pandemic. Retrieved from <http://www.csc.gov.ph/2014-02-21-08-28-23/pdf-files/category/1686-mc2020.html>
5. Bayanihan to Heal As One Act S. No. 1418, H. No. 6616 (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2020/03/24/republic-act-no-11469/>
6. Commission on Audit and Government Procurement Policy Board (2020). Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 – Emergency Procurement by the Government during a State of Public Health Emergency Arising from the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19). Retrieved from <https://www.gppb.gov.ph/jointMemorandumCircularGPPB-COA.php>

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