



JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2021- 001

**AMENDED GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF ESSENTIAL MEETINGS
AND SOCIAL EVENTS IN AREAS UNDER GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE**

WHEREAS, on 29 December 2020, the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) issued Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 2020-003 or the “*Guidelines Governing the Conduct of Essential Work Meetings and Events in Areas Under General Community Quarantine*” which provided guidelines for the conduct of Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE) in areas under a General Community Quarantine;

WHEREAS, on 11 February 2021, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), through IATF Resolution No. 99, approved the reopening and further expansion of industries including M.I.C.E. and Limited Social Events at accredited establishments of the DOT;

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, these Amended Guidelines on the Conduct of Essential Meetings and Social Events Under General Community Quarantine are hereby issued:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. – This Circular shall be known as “*Amended Guidelines for Essential Meetings and Social Events Under General Community Quarantine.*”

Section 2. Definition of Terms. For purposes of these Guidelines, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- (a) “Apartment Hotels” refer to serviced apartments that provide hotel-style accommodations for both transient guests and residents or tenants with long term leases.
- (b) “Board Meeting” shall refer to a business meeting of the board of directors of a company or organization at which organizational state of affairs, major policies, and courses of action are discussed and decided on.
- (c) “Colloquium” shall refer to an academic congregation at which various experts, lecturers, and specialists deliver informative discussions on particular topics relevant to the academic development of students.
- (d) “Conclave” shall refer to a meeting or assembly of a group of people in secrecy at which the topics discussed and agreed on are kept confidential to the public.
- (e) “Conference/Congress/Convention” shall refer to a multi-day formal congregation at which a number of organizations, entities, or state representatives discuss and agree on various inter-organizational affairs concerning common and individual interests
- (f) “Consumer trade show” shall refer to a business to consumer event showcasing various products, prototypes and inventions designed to attract potential buyers.

- (g) “Essential Meetings and Events” shall refer to a congregation of at least two (2) people, with or without external participants, vital to the sustenance of the operations and business interests of the organization and not for recreational or leisure purposes, such as workshops, trainings, seminars, congresses, conferences, conventions, board meetings, colloquia, conclaves, symposia, company/government recognitions, and press conferences.
- (h) “General Community Quarantine” or “GCQ” shall refer to the implementation of temporary measures limiting movement and transportation, regulation of operating industries, and presence of uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.
- (i) “Health Declaration Form” shall refer to a digital form that a person must fill-out 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.
- (j) “Hybrid Event” shall refer to a conference, seminar, workshop or any other meeting which combines a physical or live experience at an event venue with an online or virtual component to allow remote participation or reach a wider audience.
- (k) “Mall atria” shall refer to a part of a shopping mall, which extends up through several floors and often has a glass-roof.
- (l) “Maximum Venue Capacity” shall refer to the maximum number of people that may be physically accommodated inside the premises of the venue or facility, which shall not be more than the limitations set forth under this Circular, the Fire Code of the Philippines and other limitations set by the Local Government Unit.
- (m) “MICE” shall refer to Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions and business events industry.
- (n) “Modified General Community Quarantine” or “MGCQ” shall refer to the transition phase between GCQ and the New Normal, when the following temporary measures are relaxed and become less necessary: limiting movement and transportation, the regulation of operating industries, and the presence of uniformed personnel to enforce community quarantine protocols.
- (o) “Non-Essential Events” shall refer to gatherings which are neither essential to business nor are private gatherings for special occasions, such as those which are by nature and purpose, political, cultural, or sports-related. Such events may include but are not limited to political campaigns, sports fests, tournaments, corporate celebrations, cultural festivities or festival gatherings, charitable auctions, music festivals, concerts, and beauty pageants.
- (p) “Quarantine Facilities” shall refer to Accommodation Establishments that have been inspected by the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and determined to be suitable for mandatory quarantine of guests, or establishments who are accommodating guests for quarantine purposes, or establishments accepting other permitted guests except leisure guests. Unless otherwise proven, an Accommodation Establishment that is included in the list of Quarantine Facilities published by the DOH or BOQ shall be deemed a Quarantine Facility.
- (q) “Seminar” shall refer to an educational program at which an expert or resource speaker and a group of people convene to study, discuss, and exchange information about a particular subject.
- (r) “Social Events” shall refer to private gatherings to celebrate special occasions such as, but not limited to, wedding ceremonies and receptions, engagement parties, wedding anniversaries, debut and birthday parties, family reunions, and bridal or baby showers.

- (s) “Standalone Venue” shall refer to a venue operating primarily for the staging of events and is independent of, or is physically separate from, another structure or establishment. It may be in an open setting or within a building structure, and may include function halls or areas operating within the vicinity of a hotel, but is physically separate from and not connected to the main hotel building, and is accessible through separate entrances and exits.
- (t) “Symposium” shall refer to an open-public assembly at which speakers and experts discuss an important topic concerning the audience and the participating public may also make presentations and deliver its opinions and ideas.
- (u) “Training” shall refer to an educational program aimed to help participants acquire certain job-specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary to meet the competencies demanded by a particular job or organization.
- (v) “Workshop” shall refer to an educational program intended to develop the skills and aptitude of a group of people in a particular field or subject through oral discussions, practical exercises, and sharing of participants’ knowledge and experiences

Section 3. Scope and Coverage. This Circular shall apply to areas under General Community Quarantine.

II. CONDUCT OF ESSENTIAL MEETINGS AND SOCIAL EVENTS IN AREAS UNDER GENERAL COMMUNITY QUARANTINE

Section 4. Permitted Venues. The conduct of Essential Meetings and Social Events shall be allowed in the following venues in areas under GCQ:

- a. Restaurants, in general;
- b. Restaurants within DOT-Accredited accommodation establishments
- c. Ballrooms, function halls, and other venues within DOT-Accredited accommodation establishments;
- d. Mall atria; and
- e. DOT-Accredited Standalone Venues.

DOT-Accredited Apartment Hotels may be allowed to hold or accept bookings for Essential Meetings and Social Events; provided, that such events are held in ballrooms, function halls, and other areas that are located in a separate wing or facility, and which are accessible through entrances and exits separate from those used by residents.

Section 5. Essential Meetings and Social Events in Quarantine Facilities. Hotels or venues that are concurrently being used as Quarantine Facilities may only accept bookings for Essential Meetings and Social Events under relevant guidelines to be separately issued by the DOT and DOH.

Section 6. Permitted Essential Meetings and Social Events. Subject to the minimum public health and safety standards and protocols set under relevant issuances, such as DOH Administrative Order No. 2020-0015, Series of 2020 dated 27 April 2020, DTI-DOLE JMC No. 20-04, Series of 2020 on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19, and applicable Local Government Unit (LGU) requirements, the permitted venues under Section 4 shall be allowed to hold Essential Meetings and Social Events.

Such Essential Meetings and Events shall include:

- a. Workshops;
- b. Trainings;
- c. Seminars;

- d. Congresses;
- e. Conferences;
- f. Conventions;
- g. Board meetings;
- h. Colloquia;
- i. Conclaves,
- j. Symposia;
- k. Company/government recognitions; and
- l. Press conferences.

Such Social Events shall include:

- a. Debut and birthday parties;
- b. Wedding ceremonies and receptions;
- c. Engagement parties;
- d. Wedding anniversaries;
- e. Family reunions; and
- f. Bridal or baby showers.

Non-Essential Events shall be strictly prohibited.

Section 6-a. Maximum Venue Capacity and Duration. The Maximum Venue Capacity and duration for Essential Meetings and Social Events shall be as follows:

Type of Event	Max Venue Capacity	Duration
Essential Meetings	50%	Up to eight (8) hours, provided, that disinfection protocols shall be implemented during breaks
Social Events	30%	Up to three (3) hours

In the computation of the venue capacity, the venue operator or employees, organizers, and suppliers shall be included.

Section 7. Permitted Attendees. Unless revised by subsequent IATF-EID and LGU rules and regulations, only individuals with ages fifteen (15) years old and above, except those with immunodeficiency, comorbidities, or are pregnant, shall be permitted to participate in Essential Meetings and Social Events.

Section 8. Interzonal and Intrazonal Movement. The rules on interzonal and intrazonal movement under pertinent IATF Guidelines shall be observed. For this purpose, only attendees from areas placed under GCQ and MGCQ shall be allowed to attend Essential Meetings and Social Events. Individuals from areas under stricter forms of Community Quarantine shall not be allowed to attend.

Section 9. Local Government Unit Concurrence. Notwithstanding compliance with the foregoing requirements, the conduct of Essential Meetings and Social Events shall be subject to applicable stricter restrictions, rules, or ordinances of the LGU where the eligible venues are located; Provided, that such rules or ordinances shall not disregard the minimum restrictions and minimum public health standards imposed under these Guidelines or by the IATF-EID and DOH.

III. HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Section 10. Management of Participants or Event Attendees, Employees and Service Providers. Participants or event attendees, employees, service providers, and other visitors shall comply with the following protocols:

- a) The use of face masks and face shields for staff, participants or event attendees, suppliers and other visitors shall be mandatory. The use of reusable facemasks is encouraged, while ensuring the proper washing, sanitation and handling procedures. Other personal protective equipment (PPE) such as hairnet, disposable gloves, eye protector, apron, etc. may also be worn by staff and suppliers as necessary depending on the scope of work;
- b) There shall be body temperature checks for staff, participants or event attendees and suppliers. Those with body temperature exceeding 37.5 degrees Celsius or those exhibiting flu-like symptoms shall be directed to see a doctor or to stay home;
- c) All participants or event attendees, employees, and suppliers shall be required to register or log in the StaySafe.Ph App or other contact tracing applications prior to entry to the venue.
- d) As far as practicable, registration, payment, and other transactions shall be contactless;
- e) One (1)-meter distance between participants or event attendees, employees, and suppliers shall be observed at all times;
- f) Loitering around the public areas of the venue shall not be allowed;
- g) Group activities or presentations that involve close contact such as dancing and sports shall be prohibited;
- h) A “no talking while eating policy” is encouraged;
- i) Taking out of unconsumed food is prohibited;
- j) Staff training on health and emergency protocols and provision of integrated health plans; and
- k) Use of contactless greetings such as the Filipino Brand of Service “*Mabuhay Gesture.*”

Section 11. Venue Set-Up. In the conduct of Essential Meetings and Social Events, the following standards shall be observed:

- a) Sanitation and hygiene kits for staff, participants, or event attendees and suppliers shall be made available in accessible areas;
- b) Movement of participants or guests shall be limited to their assigned seats, meal tables or food stations and use of restrooms. Switching of seats is strictly prohibited;
- c) Live entertainment shall be strictly prohibited;
- d) Hybrid Events are encouraged;
- e) Buffet set up shall be strictly prohibited. Plated meals shall be the standard means of food service or guests are served where they are seated;
- f) Self-service and condiment stations are prohibited. Service of food, beverages, and utensils shall be done by service staff to minimize contact;
- g) Meal tables shall be set at a distance of two (2) meters apart;
- h) Chairs shall be distanced at least one (1) meter on all sides;

- i) Aisles shall be set at a minimum of two (2) meters;
- j) In waiting areas and lounges, a distance of at least one (1) meter between tables, seats, and seat rows shall be maintained. If seats are fixed, alternate seats shall be marked out;
- k) Room Seating Arrangement shall be as follows:
 1. For Conference and breakout rooms, a distance of one (1) to two (2) meters between seats;
 2. For theatre-style set-up, a checkerboard set-up shall be used, removing every other chair and arranging it so that no one is seated behind someone else;
 3. For U-shaped conference set up, a maximum of two (2) people at each 6-ft. table, instead of the usual standard for three (3) people per 6-ft. table; and
 4. For Hollow square conference set up, a maximum of two (2) people at each 6-ft table, instead of the usual standard of three (3) people per 6-ft. table.
- l) One-way entrance and exit guest flow shall be implemented;
- m) There shall be separate loading and unloading bays for suppliers;
- n) Roving personnel shall be deployed to monitor the compliance of visitors with physical distancing and other health and safety protocols while inside the premises;
- o) Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials on health and safety protocols shall be posted in conspicuous areas of the venue
- p) Use of shared equipment shall be limited. Disinfection shall be done prior to transfer to other users;
- q) Photo opportunities and exhibit displays shall adhere to physical distancing guidelines;
- r) The use of separate function halls or rooms shall be strictly implemented for simultaneous events. Co-mingling with participants or attendees of other events is strictly prohibited;
- s) Sealed water bottles may be set-up on tables prior the entry of participants or event attendees but beverage refill is not allowed. Serving and consumption of alcoholic beverages shall follow government restrictions;
- t) Barriers and markers shall be installed to ensure physical distancing;
- u) Elevators shall be operated by the venue personnel or MICE organizer. It shall be provided with floor markers and shall not accommodate passengers exceeding fifty percent (50%) of the maximum elevator capacity; and
- v) An isolation room or area shall be designated where persons who feel unwell while at the event may remain prior to referral 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 protocols.

Section 12. Venue Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation. The venue shall adhere to the following cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation measures:

- a) Regular cleaning and disinfection schedule of the premises shall be implemented.
- b) The Guidelines in the Workplace and Public Transport Ventilation to be issued by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), where applicable, shall be complied with; and
- c) There shall be preventive maintenance of ventilating equipment and monitoring of sufficient air exchange and dehumidification at least three (3) times a week;

IV. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 13. Compliance with Other Issuances. Venues catering to Essential Meetings and Social Events shall comply with other relevant IATF-EID, DOT, DTI, DOH, and DOLE issuances on health and safety standards, as well as rules and regulations imposed by the LGU having jurisdiction over the venue.

Section 14. Compliance Monitoring and Penalties. DOT and DTI shall continue its strict compliance monitoring of the covered venues through its post-audit mechanism. Inspection by DOLE, DOH, and the LGU's Health Office, as applicable, may also be conducted at any time.

Any violation of this Circular may subject the venue to the appropriate fines and penalties, including but not limited to, prohibition against the further staging of events, temporary closure, and/or revocation of its DOT accreditation, in accordance with relevant laws, rules, and regulations.

Section 15. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Circular is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 16. Repealing Clause. This Circular supersedes or amends DOT Administrative Order No. 2020-003, DOT-DTI JMC No. 2020-003 and all other DOT and DTI issuances inconsistent herewith. All relevant provisions not inconsistent with this Circular shall remain effective and enforceable.

Section 17. This Circular shall take effect immediately upon publication in a newspaper of general circulation or the Official Gazette and upon filing with the University of the Philippines – Office of the National Administrative Register (UP-ONAR). This Circular shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.


For guidance and strict compliance.

20 February 2021


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Secretary
Department of Tourism






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CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

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