TESDA CIRCULAR

SUBJECT: TESDA Workplace Guidelines for the New Normal		Page 1 of 6 page/s Number 055 Series of 2020
Date Issued: May 11, 2020	**Effectivity:** Immediately	**Supersedes:**

In the interest of the service and to guide TESDA employees in working under the new normal environment where COVID-19 will continue to exist in the surroundings until a vaccine has been discovered and approved for use, the following guidelines are hereby issued:

1. ENTRANCE TO TESDA FACILITIES/BUILDING

1.1 TESDA implements a "No Mask, No Entry" policy. All officials, employees, trainees, security and housekeeping personnel and visitors/stakeholders must wear mask upon entry and at all times during stay in all TESDA facilities; and

1.2 Everyone entering the TESDA facilities and premises shall be subjected to a no-contact thermal scanning. Person/s whose temperature reading is 37.5 degrees and above and those suffering from fever, flu, cough and colds shall not be allowed to enter. All operating units in the ROPOTI are required to purchase thermal scanners.

2. DISINFECTION/SANITATION

2.1 All TESDA facilities/buildings must be disinfected regularly especially in areas frequently occupied by staff and visited by clients;

2.2 Common areas, including frequently touched fixtures (bundy machines, ATM machines, door knobs, door handles, hand rails, elevator buttons, telephone) must be disinfected as frequently as possible using the proper disinfectants;

2.3 All officials, employees and guests must disinfect their shoes and hands with proper disinfectant and/or sanitizer. An improvised foot bath is recommended to be installed at the entrance of buildings;

2.4 Hand sanitizers must always be made available at the entrance of buildings. Employees are encouraged to maintain their own sanitizers to be used during travel to and from respective homes; and

2.5 The Administrative Service (for Central Office) and the Regional and Provincial Directors and Administrators concerned must ensure sufficient supply of disinfectants.

3. WORK/OFFICE SPACE

3.1 Working desk/table of employee must be at least one (1) meter apart from the next employee's table (left and right; font and back). No side table shall be allowed except for a computer table where the computer is located;

3.2 Place a resistant barrier between employees, especially if they are not able to keep a three (3) feet distance from each other.

3.3 Barriers can be purpose-made or improvised using items such as plastic sheeting, partitions, mobile drawers, storage units or tall cabinets.

3.4 If a barrier cannot be used, additional space between employees should be created. For example, ensuring they have at least two empty desks either side of them.

3.5 For those under the set-up of a cubicle or modular partition, employees concerned must ensure that the most possible measure of distance is adopted;

3.6 Install visual instructions on walls, lanes, corridors and circles around desks to guide employees and clients.

3.7 Eating or staying together are not allowed except when social distancing is applicable. The use of the pantry shall be on an alternate schedule.

3.8 Transaction windows shall be installed for all offices whenever possible to reduce contact time between employees.

4. SMOKING AREAS

Smoking shall be done alternately in the designated areas and shall be strictly monitored by security guards and CCTV cameras.

5. MULTI-PURPOSE GYM AND TESDA FITNESS CENTER IN THE CENTRAL OFFICE

Sports activities shall not be allowed in the Multi-Purpose Gym. The TESDA Fitness Center shall likewise be closed to avoid contamination either by the users or with the equipment.

6. PERSONAL PROTECTION, RESPIRATORY HYGIENE & COUGH ETIQUETTE

6.1 Supply soap and water or appropriate hand sanitizer at convenient places and advise employees to wash their hands frequently. Make sure these dispensers are regularly refilled.

6.2 Perform regular and thorough handwashing with soap and water. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 70% ethanol or isopropanol when soap and water are not available.

6.3 Make sure that personnel, and clients/customers have access to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water.

6.4 Display posters promoting proper handwashing.

6.5 Ensure that surgical face masks and / or paper tissues are available at your workplaces, for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienic disposal.

6.6 Cough or sneeze into tissue or shirt sleeve if tissue is not available.

6.7 Dispose used tissues properly and disinfect hands immediately after a cough or sneeze.

6.8 Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth to help slow the spread of the virus.

6.9 Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by workers.

6.10 **Guidance on facemasks**:

a. Face masks should be mandatory when outside the home in addition to the other established preventive practices, such as physical distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene.
b. It is essential that workers use face masks properly so that they are effective and safe.
c. It should fit properly, completely covering the face from bridge of nose to chin.
d. Clean hands properly before putting the face mask on or taking it off.
e. Only touch the cord or elastic band at the back of the face mask when removing it, not the front.
f. If the mask is disposable, be sure to dispose it safely in proper container.
g. If reusable, wash the face mask as soon as possible with detergent.

6.11 Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to the workplace and in other areas where they will be seen.

7. *SPECIFIC STEPS TO AVOID THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 FROM WORK TO HOME*

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

- Refrain from putting on all below-elbow hand and arm wear, watches, jewelry etc. since it is hard to deal with crevices in these items when washing.
- Wear short sleeves so that washing of hands can easily be done.
- Refrain from bringing unnecessary items to the office.
- Wear shoes that can be left outside the door. Choose enclosed shoes, not open toed, to keep feet virus-free.
- Make sure there is an easily cleanable reasonable-sized plastic box (home box) at the door of your home for use later upon returning home.

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WHILE AT THE WORKPLACE

- In greetings, handshakes, hugging, and kissing are not allowed to ensure social distancing.
- Do not touch face with unwashed or non-sanitized hands.
- Assume items people may have touched recently are contaminated so ensure care in handling. Some of these include:
    - Handrails
    - Doorknobs
    - Paper documents
    - Elevator lift buttons
    - Car door handles
    - Steering wheels and gear shifts
    - Flat door surfaces at chest height
    - Any item that can be lifted and moved.

- Push doors with feet preferably or shoulder/elbow if possible.
- For facial itch, rub face with upper arm. Practice it regularly to get used to it.
- Contact rate between employees and clients should be minimized.
- Video conferencing should be utilized for lengthy discussions.

UPON ARRIVING HOME

- No hugs or close greetings to household members yet. Remove shoes and leave at the door.
- Remove disposable mask and dispose properly in the garbage bin.
- Remove all clothing worn. Soak clothing in soapy water before washing or if no time yet to wash, make sure that the worn clothes are separated in personal laundry hamper.
- Empty items brought from the office to the home box.
- Now clean the items in the home box one at a time – phone, cards etc. Use liberal soap and water when applicable or disinfectant or sanitizer gel. Have a sanitized spot to place each one after cleaning.

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- Finally clean the home box.
- Go back inside and take a shower ensuring that face, hair, arms, hands and other exposed areas are washed thoroughly.

8. PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AND REPORTING PROTOCOLS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AT THE WORKPLACE

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting employees, customers, visitors, and others at a worksite. To this effect, employees shall inform their supervisors if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 while at the workplace. The potentially sick person shall immediately be brought to an isolation room until he/she can be removed from the workplace, limiting the number of people that will have contact with the him/her, while calling the local health authority.

This Circular shall take effect immediately and shall be adopted for the duration of the State of Public Health Emergency.

SEC. ISIDRO S LAPEÑA, PhD, CSEE
Director General