



ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 2021-007

GUIDELINES ON STAYCATION UNDER THE COVID-19 PILOT ALERT LEVELS SYSTEM

WHEREAS, on 03 September 2021, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) issued Resolution No. 136-A, shifting from a community quarantine classification framework to a policy focusing on the imposition of granular lockdowns and adopting an Alert Level System for COVID-19 Response ("Alert Levels System") under a pilot implementation, with each alert level limiting restrictions only to identified high-risk activities;

WHEREAS, on 13 October 2021, the IATF issued the *Guidelines on the Implementation of Alert Level System for COVID-19 Response in Pilot Areas*, which allows under Alert Level 4 the operations of specialized markets of the Department of Tourism, such as Staycation, subject to restrictions as may be imposed by the DOT;

WHEREAS, with the pilot implementation of the Alert Levels System, some areas in the Philippines have been placed under an Alert Level status, while the rest remains under a Community Quarantine Classification system;

WHEREAS, to spur economic recovery in the tourism sector, promote the vaccination of individuals, and ensure that health and safety protocols are complied with, there is a need to issue updated guidelines on Staycation to cover areas placed under the Alert Level System and under the Community Quarantine Classification System;

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, these *Guidelines on Staycation Under the COVID-19 Pilot Alert Levels System* are hereby issued as follows:

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Short Title. This Order shall be known as the "*Guidelines on Staycation Under the COVID-19 Pilot Alert Levels System*."

Section 2. Definition of Terms. For purposes of these Guidelines, the term:

- (a) "Accommodation Establishments" shall refer to establishments operating primarily for accommodation purposes including, but not limited to, hotels, resorts, apartment hotels, mabuhay accommodation establishments (tourist inns, motels, pension houses, bed and breakfast, vacation homes), private homes used for homestay, ecolodges, serviced apartments and condotels. In these Guidelines, "Accommodation Establishments" shall be interchangeable with "Hotels."
- (b) "Certificate of Authority to Operate for Staycation" refers to a certification issued by the DOT that an Accommodation Establishment in an area placed under General Community Quarantine (GCQ), GCQ with Heightened Restrictions (GCQ-HR), or Alert Levels 4 and 3 has fulfilled all requirements for operation for Staycation purposes.
- (c) "COVID-19 Alert Levels System" refers to the new Community Quarantine Classifications for dealing with COVID-19 covering entire cities and/or municipalities; aimed to manage and minimize the risk of the disease through System Indicators, Triggers and Thresholds determined by the IATF Sub-Technical Working Group on Data Analytics to specify the public health and social measures to be taken in relation to the COVID-19 response, as may be

updated based on new scientific knowledge, information about the effectiveness of control measures in the country and overseas, and its application.

1. Alert Level 1 - refers to areas wherein case transmission is low and decreasing, total bed utilization rate, and intensive care unit utilization rate is low.
 2. Alert Level 2 - refers to areas wherein case transmission is low and decreasing, healthcare utilization is low, or case counts are low but increasing, or case counts are low and decreasing but total bed utilization rate and intensive care unit utilization rate is increasing.
 3. Alert Level 3 - refers to areas wherein case counts are high and/or increasing, with total bed utilization rate and intensive care unit utilization rate at increasing utilization.
 4. Alert Level 4 - refers to areas wherein case counts are high and/or increasing, with total bed utilization rate and intensive care unit utilization rate at high utilization.
 5. Alert Level 5 - refers to areas wherein case counts are alarming, with total bed utilization rate and intensive care unit utilization rate at critical utilization.
- (d) "COVID-19 Vaccination Card" refers to a vaccination card issued by a legitimate vaccinating establishment or authority, whether local or foreign, as a proof of COVID-19 vaccination.
- (e) "Fully Vaccinated Individual" shall refer to an individual who has been fully vaccinated for COVID-19. An individual shall be considered as having been fully vaccinated for COVID-19:
1. More than or equal to 2 weeks after having received the second dose in a 2-dose series, or
 2. More than or equal to 2 weeks after having received a single-dose vaccine.
 3. The vaccines administered to the individual are included in any of the following:
 - i. Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) List or Compassionate Special Permit (CSP) issued by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration; or
 - ii. Emergency Use Listing of the World Health Organization.
- (f) "Granular Lockdown" shall refer to a micro-level quarantine for areas identified as "critical zones" by the local government unit (LGU) which may be declared regardless of Alert Level.
- (g) "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. (*IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines Updated as of 19 August 2021*)
- (h) "Isolation Facilities" shall refer to Accommodation Establishments that have been inspected by the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and determined to be suitable for isolation of guests who are COVID-19 positive. These include Accommodation Establishments in the list of Facilities Suitable for Stringent Quarantine published by the Department of Health (DOH) or BOQ as well as facilities under the Oplan Kalinga Program, that accommodate COVID-19 positive guests.
- (i) "Minimum Public Health Standards (MPHS)" refers to the national, local, sector-specific guide lines on mitigation measures for its COVID-19 response across all settings by implementing non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs), consistent with the Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order No. 2021-0043 or the Omnibus Guidelines on the Minimum Public Health Standards for the Safe Reopening of Institutions. This terms shall also encompass specific NPIs of community mitigation strategies of public health measures that do not involve vaccines, medications, or other pharmaceutical interventions, that individuals and communities can carry out in order to reduce transmission rates, contact rates, and the duration of infectiousness of individuals in the population.

- (j) “Modified General Community Quarantine” or “MGCQ” shall refer to the transition phase between GCQ and 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. *(IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines Updated as of 19 August 2021)*
- (k) “Multiple-Use Hotels” refer to Accommodation Establishments that have been inspected by a team composed of personnel from DOT and BOQ and determined to be suitable for the accommodation of both quarantine and non-quarantine guests by reason of compliance with standards for physical separation of guests.
- (l) “On-Site Capacity” refers to such number of employees or workers who can be permitted or required to be physically present at their designated workplace outside their residences. *(IATF-EID Omnibus Guidelines as of 20 May 2021)*
- (m) “Point-to-Point Travel” shall mean travel where transfers, as well as pit stops or stopovers for eating and personal necessities, are allowed, but no side trips to other tourism destinations shall be permitted.
- (n) “Quarantine Hotels” refer to Accommodation Establishments that have been inspected by the BOQ and determined to be suitable for Quarantine of guests who may have been exposed to COVID-19. These are establishments included in the list of Facilities Suitable Only for Mandatory Quarantine and Facilities Suitable for Stringent Quarantine published by the DOH or BOQ, provided these establishments do not accommodate COVID-19 positive guests.
- (o) “Regular Hotels” refer to Accommodation Establishments that are neither Isolation Facilities, Quarantine Hotels, nor Multiple-Use Hotels, and may accommodate leisure guests in areas under GCQ with Heightened Restrictions, GCQ and MGCQ or Alert Levels 3, 2 and 1.
- (p) “Star Rating” refers to the star bands for Hotels, Resorts, and Apartment Hotels, following the Star Grading System of the DOT under DOT Memorandum Circular No. 2012-02.
- (q) “Staycation” refers to an activity involving a minimum of an overnight stay for leisure purposes in a Staycation Hotel within one’s area or region.
- (r) “Staycation Hotels” refer to Accommodation Establishments in areas under Alert Levels 4 and 3 or GCQ and GCQ with Heightened Restrictions that have been granted Certificates of Authority to Operate for Staycation.
- (s) “Venue Capacity” refers to the total number of rooms in the entire establishment for Regular Hotels, and the total number of rooms in the entire building, wing, or floor for non-Quarantine guests for Multiple-Use Hotels.

Section 3. Scope and Application. This Order shall apply to all Regular and Multiple-Use Hotels in areas under Alert Levels 4 and 3, or GCQ and GCQ with Heightened Restrictions.

II. ELIGIBLE ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS

Section 4. Areas where Staycation is Permitted. Staycation shall be permitted only in areas under Alert Level 4, Alert Level 3, GCQ, and GCQ with Heightened Restrictions.

For avoidance of doubt, leisure stay in eligible accommodation establishments in areas under Alert Levels 2 and 1, and MGCQ is permitted, and the same shall not be considered staycation under these Guidelines.

Section 5. Eligible Accommodation Establishments. Only Regular and Multiple-Use Hotels may accommodate guests for Staycation, subject to compliance with all the conditions stated below:

- a. These Accommodation Establishments must neither be used as Isolation Facilities nor Quarantine Hotels for repatriated OFWs or returning overseas Filipinos or as quarters for health workers. If the Accommodation Establishment was previously utilized for these purposes or has previously accommodated guests who are COVID-19 positive, proof of sanitation and disinfection shall be submitted to the Regional Office concerned.
- b. Multiple-Use hotels must have been approved by both DOT and BOQ/DOH as compliant with the physical standards for the separation of quarantine and non-quarantine guests.
- c. Have been granted:
 - i. at least a four (4) Star Rating by the DOT for Accommodation Establishments in Metro Manila;
 - ii. at least a two (2) Star Rating for Accommodation Establishments outside Metro Manila; and
- d. Have been granted by the DOT the following certificates:
 - i. Certificate of Authority to Operate for Staycations (CAOS); and
 - ii. Safety Seal Certificate under the Safety Seal Certification Program.

Regular and Multiple-Use Hotels that have been granted CAOS prior to the issuance of these Guidelines are encouraged to apply.

Section 6. On-Site Capacity. Eligible Accommodation Establishments may operate at up to One Hundred Percent (100%) On-Site Capacity to accommodate bookings of Staycation guests; provided, that the level of On-Site Capacity to be adopted by an Accommodation Establishment shall ultimately be determined by its management; provided further, that employees physically reporting to work are fully vaccinated.

Section 7. Venue Capacity. Staycation Hotels may accommodate Staycation guests at up to 100% of the Venue Capacity.

III. GUIDELINES ON GUESTS

Section 8. Permitted Guests; Vaccination or Testing Requirement. Individuals of all ages *except* those coming from areas under Granular Lockdown, Alert Level 5, those under mandatory quarantine, and those unable to quarantine in their households, are permitted to go on Staycation in Staycation Hotels, subject to the presentation of any of the following:

- a. Vaccination Card; or
- b. Swab or saliva-based RT-PCR test conducted within forty-eight (48) hours prior to check-in.

The testing requirement shall apply notwithstanding the absence of such requirement by the LGU as a condition for entry into their borders.

Participants in permitted events held in Staycation Hotels who meet the above conditions are also allowed to check-in, provided that they have a confirmed booking and registration in the event.

Section 9. Territorial Limitation and Point-to-Point Travel. Guests may Staycation in Accommodation Establishments located only in the same region as their residence, subject to the regulations of the LGUs concerned. Staycation guests crossing municipal, city, or provincial boundaries shall be strictly under Point-To-Point travel arrangement.

Section 10. LGU Restrictions. The LGU where the Staycation Hotel is located may impose additional reasonable requirements for inbound guests crossing municipal, city, or provincial boundaries, such as negative RT-PCR test result or proof of full vaccination for all individuals, regardless of age group.

IV. HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS; ANCILLARY ESTABLISHMENTS

Section 11. Contactless Payment and Other Transactions. Cashless methods of payment, online transactions, and other options for contactless transactions that promote minimal physical contact is mandatory.

Section 12. Permitted Ancillary Establishments. The following facilities may operate in Staycation Hotels for both in-house and non-billeted guests subject to the strict observance of Minimum Public Health Standards and maximum allowable capacity under the guidelines of the IATF-EID, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the DOT:

- a. Restaurants and other food and beverage outlets, excluding bars;
- b. Gyms;
- c. Swimming Pools; and
- d. Ballrooms, function halls, and other venues for the conduct of Essential meetings and Social Events, subject to the guidelines under DOT-DTI Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2021-001 or its subsequent amendments.

Section 13. Supplementary Application of DOT Memorandum Circular No. 2020-002-B and DOT Administrative Order No. 2021-005-A. Staycation Hotels shall comply with Minimum Public Health Standards, including the protocols and standards under DOT Memorandum Circular No. 2020-002-B entitled *Further Amended Health and Safety Guidelines Governing the Operations of Accommodation Establishments Under the New Normal*, and DOT Administrative Order No. 2021-004-A or the *Further Updated Guidelines on the Operations of Hotels and Other Accommodation Establishments under a Community Quarantine*, which are deemed to apply to this Order by analogy or in supplementary character.

V. BUSINESS PRACTICES

Section 14. Staycation Package Development. Staycation Hotels, hotel associations, and Travel Agencies or Tour Operators are highly encouraged to develop Staycation packages that are fit to the present market demands and conditions. The Staycation packages shall strictly adhere to the existing Health and Safety Guidelines of the DOT and shall be submitted to the DOT Regional Office concerned for monitoring purposes.

Section 15. Reportorial Requirements. Staycation Hotels shall comply with the reportorial requirements under Section 35 of DOT AO No. 2021-004-A or the *Further Updated Guidelines on the Operations of Hotels and Other Accommodation Establishments under a Community Quarantine*.

VI. OTHER PROVISIONS

Section 16. Compliance with Other Relevant Issuances. Staycation Hotels shall comply with other relevant IATF-EID, DOT, DTI, or Department of Health (DOH) issuances on health and safety standards, as well as rules and regulations imposed by the LGU having jurisdiction over the Accommodation Establishment.

Section 17. Interpretation in Case of Inconsistency with IATF-EID Guidelines. In case of any inconsistency between the provisions of these Guidelines and any interim guidelines imposed by the IATF-EID necessary to address the public health emergency, the inconsistent provisions of these guidelines shall automatically be deemed suspended or amended for the period that such IATF-EID guidelines are in effect.

Section 18. Penalties. Any violation of this Order may subject the Staycation Hotel to the appropriate fines and penalties including revocation of its DOT accreditation, under DOT AO No. 2021-004-A or the *Further Updated Guidelines on the Operations of Hotels and Other Accommodation Establishments under a Community Quarantine*.

Section 19. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Order is declared null and void or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in force and effect.

Section 20. Effectivity. This Circular shall take effect immediately upon filing with the University of the Philippines – Office of the National Administrative Register (UP-ONAR) and publication with the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation, and shall remain effective until otherwise superseded, amended, or repealed accordingly.

Section 21. Repealing Clause. This Order repeals the provisions of DOT Administrative Order No. 2021-005-A and all other DOT issuances inconsistent herewith.

For guidance and strict compliance.

18 October 2021


BERNADETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary

