



21 May 2020

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No: 12

Series of 2020

**TO : ALL STAKEHOLDERS
ALL CONCERNED PERSONNEL
REGIONAL FIELD UNITS
This Office**

FROM : THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT : GENERAL GUIDELINES ON FOOD SAFETY MEASURES OF
AGRICULTURAL FRONTLINERS FOR HANDLING OF FERTILIZER,
PESTICIDE AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS AND
RELATED ACTIVITIES**

In the interest of service and in consonance to the Memorandum of the Executive Secretary dated March 16, 2020 or the Community Quarantine over the Entire Luzon and further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation pursuant to Proclamation Nos. 922 and 929 s. 2020 and Republic Act No. 11332, wherein private establishments providing basic necessities and such activities related to food production shall be open provided that their respective managements shall ensure adoption of a strict skeletal workforce and all strict social distancing measures, the following guidelines are hereby promulgated.

The fertilizer and pesticide industry, its stakeholders and all Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) Regional Field Personnel are hereby directed of strict compliance with the guidelines adapted from the Department of Health (DOH) "Interim Guidelines on 2019 Novel Corona Virus Acute Respiratory Disease (2019 NCOV-ARD) Response in the Workplace" dated February 5, 2020 for guidance to all employers and their workforces to take necessary steps in the prevention, containment and mitigation of the transmission of the 2019 n-COV ARD in communities.

The guidelines shall consider the daily activities in the immediate workplaces of the fertilizer and pesticide industry frontliners such as but not limited to the supply, movement (importation, transport, hauling, loading and delivery), sampling, quality inspection, storage, piling, stacking, display, purchase, sale, use and disposal of fertilizer, pesticide and other agricultural chemicals.

Below are the precautionary strategies which shall help raise the awareness and mitigate the spread of the Covid-19 virus and maintain a safe workplace for all personnel within the industry:

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FPA REGIONAL FIELD PERSONNEL

a. Field Monitoring, Inspection, and other related Activities

1. All Regional Field Personnel, being the operating arm of the

A food-secure Philippines
with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk



Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), are mandated to ensure strict implementation of the provisions of P.D. No. 1144 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations at the local level.

They are tasked to monitor fertilizer, pesticide and other agricultural chemical products, F/P establishments and its various related activities. Good housekeeping of these establishments shall be prioritized and regularly be monitored as guided by the Bluebook and Greenbook.

2. In consonance, they shall strictly enforce all guidelines set per issuance of Memorandum Circular No. 11, s. 2020 dated May 15, 2020 and are obliged in the promulgation of the abovementioned activities and those indicated herewith.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE HANDLERS

The safety and upkeep of all personnel in the industry is very critical specially in the current health crisis. All personnel shall keep themselves responsible, well informed and updated about the guidelines, reports and status of the ongoing pandemic.

They shall be regularly reminded of these guidelines which may be sourced from announcements, public advisories and promotion materials of the DOH and resolutions related to COVID-19 as approved by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

The following shall be the preventive routine plan imposed for implementation within the establishments and premises to minimize risks and exposures.

1. All handlers shall remain guided per P.D. No. 1144 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Their operations should follow and remain compliant to all pertinent rules and regulations with required licenses, registrations and permits.
2. There shall be strict observance of the approved sanitation measures in the immediate workplaces including warehouses/storage facilities, stores, modes of transportation and their service personnel. Sanitation equipment, thermal scanners, alcohols, disinfectants, feet/wheel baths, Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), improvised physical barriers and soaps and other cleaning agents should be provided. They shall also be oriented and trained in the proper use of all necessary PPEs to avoid risk of infection. When possible, they shall undergo daily health checks for safety monitoring and assessment.
 - Approved sanitation measures such as hygienic hand practices shall be imposed. These shall include regular thorough hand washing with soap and water and the use of 60% alcohol-based sanitizers frequently and after every hand washing. Single-use/single-service articles such as gloves and face masks shall be disposed of immediately and shall be discouraged for reuse.
 - The workforce shall be reminded of proper respiratory etiquette specifically when coughing or sneezing that the mouth and nose shall always be covered and used tissues shall immediately be properly disposed. There shall be prominent displays of warning signs and safety precautions in common areas and other shared spaces.
 - It shall become a habit not to touch the face, eyes, nose and mouth when in common areas and when handling F/P and other agricultural products. All

A food-secure Philippines

with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk



these, among others, shall be strictly imposed and reminded regularly.

3. All F/P handlers, workers, service personnel, owners and stakeholders shall have been oriented and reminded of the symptoms of COVID-19 including coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing and/or fever, chills, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell and diarrhea. For health and safety, precautionary measures related with social distancing shall always be followed.
4. Physical contact and prolonged face-to-face interactions amongst employees involved with hauling and transportation, owners and other service staff shall be reduced and prohibited when possible.
 - For the sale of products, there should be a designated place for deposit and pick-up of parcels and payments to devoid of prolonged exposures and/or contactless product delivery schemes when available. Virtual/digital systems, through strengthened communication in any social media platform, shall be devised in order for unhampered delivery of regular services provided by the establishment.
5. A distance of three (3) feet or at least one (1) meter shall be maintained amongst all personnel and clients in the workplace. It must be ensured that physical/social distancing be observed thus the modification of the layout of the office/establishment and or adaptation of other available schemes. Floor markings shall be used when applicable.
6. The surfaces where F/P products are displayed shall be frequently sanitized to avoid contaminations. All other touch points and common operational areas, work facilities and equipment frequented by their employees and or stakeholders shall be generally maintained.

C. MANAGEMENT OF SUSPECTED COVID-19 IN THE WORKPLACE

In the event that any employee becomes unwell within the workplace showing typical symptoms of COVID-19, the employer shall endorse the personnel to the nearest health facility.

1. Personnel showing symptoms of COVID-19 shall not be allowed entrance to the abovementioned establishments but shall immediately notify their supervisors/employers and shall refer and report to the medical authorities for proper endorsement.
2. The management is suggested to provide support facilities/ emergency medical services where the personnel may be isolated away from other employees in case of infection. All areas and surfaces that may have been possibly come into contact by the unwell employee shall be immediately disinfected.
3. Upon knowledge that the employee is positive for COVID-19, other employees shall be notified and be directed to take necessary measures in minimizing further spread and risks. They shall be traced and be quarantined for fourteen (14) days consistent to the guidelines issued by the DOH.
4. Work continuity plans shall be made for the unhampered service of these establishments. Employees who have not had close contact with the confirmed case shall be allowed to attend to work once disinfection of the workplace had been done. The workforce shall be organized into shifts in manning their workplaces when possible.
5. Interventions such as applicable entitlements and leave

absences promulgated by the Department of Labor and Employment during the pandemic, return-to-work policy, monitoring, surveillance and support systems shall be implemented for those who have been cleared and had duly recovered from COVID-19.

For immediate compliance.


WILFREDO C. ROLDAN
Executive Director

A food-secure Philippines

with prosperous farmers and fisherfolk

