PRESS RELEASE

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BI braces for ‘new normal’

MANILA, Philippines - Bureau of Immigration (BI) offices are prepared to resume full operations as it was issued a set of guidelines and protocols that its employees and stakeholders are bound to follow and observe under a “new normal” environment after the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) is lifted in Metro Manila and other areas of the country.

Immigration Commissioner Jaime Morente said the new protocols will be implemented at the BI main office and other immigration field, satellite and extension offices as soon as the government places Metro Manila under General Community Quarantine (GCQ).

“We are adapting these new guidelines and protocols to ensure that our employees and persons who transact business in our offices are protected against the coronavirus,” Morente said.

However, he stressed that due to continuing risk posed by COVID-19, the bureau’s workers will continue to follow several work schemes and arrangements to achieve social distancing and congestion in their workplace.

“Depending on the requirements of their respective offices, our division and section chiefs have the option to implement flexible working arrangements for their staff which particularly suits them. The bottomline is that wearing of face masks, sanitation and social distancing measures are always observed,” said BI Deputy Commissioner and COVID-19 Task Force Head Aldwin Alegre.

Among these work schemes are staggered working hours, assignment of skeleton force, four-day workweek, and work-from-home arrangements for employees who are seniors or have underlying medical conditions.

Alegre also bared that wearing of face masks is a must for all persons entering the bureau and that the number of individuals allowed inside the premises will be limited to a certain number at a particular time to avoid overcrowding.

“These ‘new normal’ protocols will soon be posted in our bureau’s website for the information of the general public,” he added.

It will be recalled that the BI suspended operations in many of its offices two months ago after the government placed Metro Manila and Luzon under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) due to the COVID-19 outbreak.