

Extensive tests for QC residents under 'special concern lockdown'

20 areas in 5 villages with multiple COVID-19 cases placed under new quarantine scheme for 14 days

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Twenty areas in five barangays in Quezon City with a high number of new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases were placed under a 14-day "special concern" lockdown starting at 5 a.m. Wednesday.

The affected areas under the new quarantine scheme, according to the initial list provided by the Quezon City government, included Sitio Militar in Barangay Bahay Toro; Vargas Compound-Adelfa Metro

Heights-abanay and Ancop Canada in Barangay Culiat; Lower Gulod in Barangay Sauyo; 318 Dakila St., 2nd Alley Kalayaan B and Masbate Street in Barangay Batasan Hills; and Victory Avenue, ROTC Hunters, BMA Avenue and Agno Street in Barangay Tatalon.

Food to be provided

Residents in these areas will be subjected to extensive testing by the city health department within the 14-day period. They will be provided with food and other relief goods by the local government, according to Mayor Joy Belmonte.

The extensive testing component makes this new scheme different from the "extreme enhanced community quarantine" (EECQ) being implemented by the city government.

Dr. Rolly Cruz, head of the city's epidemiology and surveillance unit, earlier said that the areas were picked based on the results of the community-based testing conducted by the city health department and his unit.

"If clustering was observed in these areas, meaning two or more households have positive cases, it is very likely they will end up under the special concern lockdown," he explained.

As of Monday, there were 37 active COVID-19 cases in Culiat, 29 in Batasan Hills, 21 in Bahay Toro, 19 in Sauyo and 17 in Tatalon.

"Instead of placing an entire barangay under total lockdown, we will just focus on particular areas within a barangay with clustering of COVID-19 cases, so it could be a street, a block of a compound," said Alberto Kimpo, assistant city administrator for operations.

Other areas eyed

Urban poor and high-density neighborhoods with clustering of confirmed COVID-19 cases may also be placed under special concern lockdown, according to the city government.

So far, 34 of 142 barangays in Quezon City are still under EECQ. Under this scheme, members of households with COVID-19 patients are not allowed to leave their houses.

A team of quarantine officers, composed of city health department officials, local police and the military, has been tasked to monitor areas within barangays that will be placed under special concern lockdown.

The city government said that over 200 members of the **Quezon City Police District (QCPD)**, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police would become part of the contingent, just as the National Capital Region Police Office placed 73 police officers from the QCPD under quarantine on Tuesday after they were exposed to 13 other policemen and a soldier who had tested positive for the virus.