

# QC gov't issues MECQ guidelines

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With Quezon City now placed under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), Mayor Joy Belmonte on Saturday urged the public to observe the local guidelines in adherence to the “new normal” to avoid any inconveniences that may lead to heavy penalties.

She made the call after issuing a memorandum prescribing localized guidelines that will be implemented amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Belmonte’s memorandum includes some localized strategies and initiatives to help stop the spread of COVID-19, on top of the MECQ guidelines earlier released by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Among them is the continued implementation of the special concern lockdown areas, where select places with high COVID19 cases or high probability of virus spreading will be placed under strict containment.

In addition, Belmonte said the city also requires businesses with 10 or more employees to submit to the City Health Department their program for COVID-19 employee testing, at cost to the establishments.

While no public transportation is allowed, Belmonte said the city permitted establishments that are allowed to operate under MECQ to provide point-to-point private transport services or shuttles, including the hiring of public utility buses, public utility jeepneys, or high occupancy vehicles, for the exclusive use of their employees.

She noted that the city government has allowed tricycles to operate under strict health and safety conditions and adherence to the route indicated in their franchise.

Belmonte encouraged all drivers concerned to submit themselves for COVID-19 checking in one of the city’s community-based centers.

The city government also plans to expand its current “Libreng Sakay” bus services to accommodate residents traveling to and from permitted establishments.

In an effort to encourage local residents to use bicycles as a mode of last-mile transport, Belmonte encouraged barangays to provide free bicycle parking spaces.

The directive also mandates all establishments in Quezon City to assign a Health and Safety Officer accountable to ensure that these guidelines are strictly implemented, in addition to compliance with the usual occupational health and safety standards and regulations.

As earlier directed by the IATF, Belmonte said businesses like manufacturers of food, water, and non-alcoholic beverage and medical and hygiene products, hospitals and clinics, essential retailers such supermarkets, grocery stores, markets, water refilling stations and drug-stores can now fully operate under the MECQ.

“This is subject to compliance with thermal scanning, social distancing, hand washing, use of face masks, testing program and other applicable health measures,” said Belmonte.

The local government also allowed other businesses to operate with up to 50 percent of their workforce on-site, including general manufacturing, office administration and support services.