

QC intensifies monitoring of quarantine hotels

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The **Quezon City government** has ordered the strict implementation of health protocols and monitoring of hotels serving as quarantine facilities for returning overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) from countries with cases of the new COVID-19 variant.

In a statement, Mayor Joy Belmonte said yesterday the move aims to prevent the transmission of the virus as the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed that the B117 variant has entered the country.

“Now that the DOH has confirmed the presence of the new COVID-19 strain in the country, the more we need to double our efforts in preventing the spread of the virus. If necessary, we can tap police officers to man these hotels so we can prevent returning OFWs from going home without completing the mandatory quarantine period,” Belmonte said.

The mayor said she ordered the local police to study the possible deployment of lawmen outside these hotels to ensure that no one breaches the 14-day quarantine period.

The local government’s tourism department also vowed to inspect hotels and other establishments to ensure compliance with health and safety protocols against COVID-19.

“We want to make sure that every hotel operating in the city is implementing the safety guidelines to the letter,” Tetta Tirona, action officer of the **city tourism department**, said.

Under the guidelines of the national government, only four and five-star hotels accredited by the Department of Tourism can accept guests for staycation and leisure purposes. The rest are allowed to accept health workers and long-term bookings.

Hotels in Quezon City are also required to submit the lists of returning OFWs staying in their facilities for strict monitoring.

“We will not allow them to go home or continue their quarantine at home. It’s part of our protocol to ensure the safety of everyone,” Rolando Cruz, the city’s chief epidemiologist, said.

Belmonte said personnel of the city tourism department would conduct surprise visits in hotels and other similar establishments.

“We want to be sure that hotels don’t slip past our monitoring of their acceptance of visitors that are not allowed in these establishments,” she said.