



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

February 18, 2021

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

No. 2021 - 0011

TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES; DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS, SERVICES AND CENTERS FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH - BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL; DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CARE; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS, SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION; DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION CENTERS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT: Guidance on the Conduct of Health-enhancing Physical Activities and Sports under the Bubble Set-up during the COVID-19 Pandemic

I. Background

Pursuant to the Interagency Task Force (IATF) - Technical Working Group directive, to wit:

“DOH to issue a Memorandum Circular discussing the protocols for sporting events conducted under a bubble type concept including the frequency of testing among the participants; After which, for IATF to issue a resolution apportioning the jurisdiction of approving authority in case of leagues not within the scope of GAB and PSC.

For sporting events not otherwise under the jurisdiction of PSC and/or GAB, the monitoring of the event shall fall under the LGU where the event will be hosted or the NGA sponsoring the event.”

This Department Circular is being issued to provide guidance on the conduct of sports and other physical activities under a bubble set-up during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This guidance applies to all individuals, sports leagues, associations, sponsors and organizers, and all other entities engaging in health-enhancing physical activities (HPA) and sports that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) and the Games

and Amusements Board (GAB). Those governed by PSC and GAB shall continue to follow PSC-GAB-DOH Joint Administrative Order No. 2020-0001 entitled “Guidelines on the Conduct of Health-Enhancing Physical Activities and Sports during the COVID-19 Pandemic” and its respective specific protocols, requirements and supplemental guidelines.

II. Guidance on Implementation

Bubble-type training and competitions may be allowed only in low-risk areas or in areas with modified general quarantine classification, *provided* that:

1. The proponent of the sports bubble does not fall under the jurisdiction of PSC and GAB and shall have a National Government Agency (NGA) sponsoring the conduct of the activity;
2. The proposed sports bubble is compliant with the minimum public health standards set forth by this Order, and all other applicable government rules and regulations;
3. The LGU where the sports bubble is conducted, or the sponsoring NGA shall take full accountability in monitoring and oversight of the sports bubble and the management of possible COVID-19 outbreak following the sports bubble/event; and
4. The Regional Interagency Task Force (RIATF) has approved the conduct of the proposed sports bubble in keeping with IATF Resolution No. 79.

III. Minimum Public Health Standards

A. Prevention

1. The bubble training shall be conducted for at least 14 days following a “Closed Environment” set-up. A closed environment refers to the arrangement in which all participating athletes and personnel shall not be permitted to interact with individuals outside the bubble. In cases of travel, participating athletes and personnel shall only be allowed to travel to and from designated venues or locations;
2. A Bubble Central Oversight Committee shall be formed composed of the main organizer, a physician appointed by the Organizer, an infectious disease specialist, and a physician from the host LGU or City/Municipal Health Office. The sports league and association and/or sponsoring NGA or LGU shall also designate a Health and Safety Officer who shall ensure the implementation of the minimum public health standards and continuously monitor the health status of all individuals in the bubble training before, during, and after the conduct of the activity;
3. The size of the bubble shall not exceed 100 individuals including all athletes, coaches, and other support personnel at any given time;
4. Individuals participating in the bubble shall stay within the bubble for at least 14 days to complete the quarantine cycle and ensure integrity of the bubble; and

5. No live audience shall be permitted regardless of risk severity.

B. Detection

1. Athletes and personnel shall undergo medical examination and be cleared by a physician prior entry to the bubble. Any individual with a history of any COVID-19 symptoms or exposure to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases for the past 14 days shall not be allowed to enter the bubble;
2. Indiscriminate testing of asymptomatic individuals as a requirement to participate in the bubble training is not recommended. Sports leagues and associations and the sponsoring agency are enjoined to monitor the health status of the athletes and personnel who will participate in the bubble;
3. In the event that the sports league/association decides to conduct COVID-19 testing of athletes and personnel, RT-PCR is the only type of test allowed and the cost of which shall be borne by the sports league/association;
4. If a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case is detected in the bubble, the sports league and association and sponsoring agency shall immediately report and coordinate with the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team (BHERT) in compliance with the Republic Act No. 11332;
5. In the event that an individual is confirmed to be COVID-19 positive, the conduct of the athletic full bubble-type training and competition shall be suspended. Quarantine, isolation and contact tracing shall be initiated.

C. Isolation

1. Sports leagues and associations shall designate a temporary isolation facility within the premises of the bubble training for individuals needing further assessment due to the presence of flu-like symptoms, exposure to a suspect or probable COVID-19 case, or awaiting transport to the appropriate health facility.
2. All exposed individuals shall follow the matrix below in determining individuals who shall undergo isolation and quarantine of COVID-19 cases detected and those exposed from the bubble:

	EXPOSED	SUSPECT, PROBABLE, OR CONFIRMED
WITH SYMPTOMS	ISOLATION Needs medical attention/symptom management and monitoring by a medical personnel	

NO SYMPTOMS	<p>QUARANTINE</p> <p>Needs monitoring to (1) take action as needed for possible onset of symptoms, (2) ensure restricted movement by a non-medical personnel of the BHERT or the OSH, and (3) provide clearance for reintegration</p>	<p>ISOLATION</p> <p>Needs medical attention and monitoring by a medical personnel</p>
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3. Confirmed cases, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, suspect cases, probable cases, and symptomatic close contacts of probable and confirmed cases shall be isolated strictly for at least 10 days from date of onset of symptoms;
 - a. Asymptomatic close contacts of probable and confirmed cases shall be quarantined strictly for at least 14 days from last day of exposure;
 - b. Second-generation and third-generation close contacts, and general contacts shall be advised to self monitor, strictly adhere to the minimum health standards, and report for appearance of signs or symptoms.
4. The sports league or association shall also ensure facility-based quarantine and isolation of the cases and those exposed.
5. The sports league or association shall ensure linkage with a health facility or temporary treatment and monitoring facility that shall manage the potential COVID-19 cases resulting from the bubble

D. Treatment

Treatment of the COVID-19 cases from the sports bubble shall follow the latest COVID-19 treatment guidelines.

E. Reintegration

1. For exit protocols, all athletes and personnel who participated in the bubble training shall comply with the guidelines and requirements of the sponsoring NGA and LGU as part of their exit clearance and return to the community; and,
2. The sports league and association and sponsoring NGA, through the Health and Safety Officer, shall monitor the status of individuals who participated in the bubble for 14 days after the conduct of the activity to ensure the safe reintegration to their respective communities. In the event that an individual starts exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, the appropriate protocols on quarantine, isolation, reporting, and/or contact tracing shall be implemented.

For more guidance on the guidelines on COVID-19 testing, quarantine, isolation, and contact tracing protocols, refer to the DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-01512 entitled, "Revised Omnibus Interim Guidelines on Prevention, Detection, Isolation, Treatment, and Reintegration Strategies for COVID-19" (See Annex A).

IV. Approval of the Sports Bubble

The sports league and association proposing the bubble training shall register with the LGU/s where the bubble will be held and to the sponsoring national government agency prior to the

start of the sports bubble, and shall seek the approval of the RIATF in keeping with IATF Resolution No. 79.

V. Accountability

The LGU and the sponsoring agency shall ensure the compliance of the sports leagues and associations with the guidelines provided for in this Memorandum Circular and other existing policies and guidelines set by the national government, Inter-Agency Task Force, and concerned LGU/s. They shall take full accountability in monitoring and oversight of the sports bubble and the management of possible COVID-19 outbreak following the sports bubble/event

Violation on the provisions of this Order shall be ground for the termination of the sports bubble and penalties, as applicable.

For strict compliance and dissemination to all concerned.

By Authority of the Secretary of Health:

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OIC - Undersecretary of Health
Public Health Services Team