



**PROFESSIONAL REGULATION COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE**

July 28, 2021

**JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER  
No. 2021- 01**

**SUBJECT: Revised Standard Guidelines on the Strict Observance of Health Protocols  
in the Conduct of Licensure Examinations during Public Health Emergency  
and/or Pandemic**

**I. RATIONALE**

Recognizing that the availability of defined health protocols to be strictly observed during public health emergency and/or pandemic is vital to the continued success of the conduct of licensure examinations in various testing nationwide, there is a need to harmonize guidelines on the health protocols to be strictly enforced in the conduct of licensure examinations.

In this regard, pursuant to Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order 2020-0015 otherwise known as the "Guidelines on the Risk-Based Public Health Standards for COVID-19 Mitigation" and adopting the Professional Regulatory Board of Medicine Resolution Nos. 17 and 21 (s. 2020) and Professional Regulation Commission Memorandum Order Nos. 68, 24 and 28 (s. 2020) on guidelines in the conduct of licensure examinations during this public health emergency and/or pandemic, this Order shall establish consolidated guidelines in the conduct of licensure examinations during this public health emergency and/or pandemic.

**II. OBJECTIVE**

This Order aims to prescribe the **strict health protocols** particularly in the conduct of all licensure examinations during the public health emergency and/or pandemic.

**III. SCOPE**

This Order shall apply to the conduct of all licensure examinations during the public health emergency and/or pandemic.

#### IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

##### 1. PREPARATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

- a. All cancelled/postponed licensure examinations shall be rescheduled as may be determined by the Professional Regulation Commission (Commission) upon the recommendation of the Professional Regulatory Boards (PRBs) concerned and in accordance with the new requirements, rules, and procedures as may be issued related to the public health emergency.
- b. The deadlines for the filing of applications for the licensure examinations shall likewise be rescheduled in accordance with the new schedule of licensure examinations recommended by the Licensure Office and approved by the Commission.
- c. To comply with the physical/social distancing requirement of at least two (2)-meter distance between and among the examinees and examination personnel, examination rooms shall be limited to an applicable number of examinees per room. The required distance shall be observed in seating arrangement and in all areas of the testing venue for the duration of the examinations.

d. For testing venues:

For private testing venues, the provision of thermal scanning including the sanitation/disinfection of the examination venue prior to and after use at the end of the day shall preferably be provided by the owner and added to their agreement.

For government-owned testing venues, thermal scanner shall be provided by Commission, including the sanitation/disinfection of the testing venue prior to and after the use at the end of the day.

- e. Examination personnel shall be given thorough orientation of the precautionary measures and protocols that will be observed and implemented during the conduct of licensure examinations;
- f. The precautionary measures to be observed during the licensure examination shall be published in the Commission website, official social media accounts and shall be included in the Notice of Admission and examination program for the examinees' information;
- g. Further cancellation/postponement of Licensure examinations including the Special Professional Licensure Examination (SPLE) may be resorted to whenever appropriate, and in accordance with the issuances of appropriate government agencies.
- h. For the protection of the PRB Chairpersons/Members and assigned personnel during pre-examination activities, particularly those assigned in the Confidential Printing Room (CPR), the following shall be observed:
  - i. The CPR in the Central Office and the Regional Offices of the Commission shall be properly sanitized prior to and every after use. The Administrative Service of the Central Office and the Finance and Administrative Division of the Regional Office of



- the Commission shall see to it that air purifier shall be installed, including the necessary reconfiguration of its air conditioning and exhaust system.
- ii. PRBs and assigned personnel, shall undergo proper sanitation or disinfection procedure prior to entry to the CPR, including their private belongings and food packages.
  - iii. Mandatory wearing of protective masks, proper hand hygiene, physical/social distancing, and everyday thermal scanning shall be strictly implemented inside the CPR.
  - iv. In any event that a PRB or assigned personnel would manifest fever, colds or cough while inside the CPR, he/she shall be replaced and be assisted in seeking medical attention.

## **2. RT-PCR TESTING**

1. Examinees and examination personnel who fall under the following groups<sup>1</sup> shall undergo the mandatory RT-PCR testing or Saliva testing from any of the DOH accredited facilities 3-5 days before the examination date/s:
  - 1.1. Suspect cases and with exposure; or
  - 1.2. Individuals with relevant history of travel and exposure (or contact), whether symptomatic or asymptomatic; and
  - 1.3. Individuals with possible exposure to a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic.

The following exposures should have happened two (2) days before or within 14 days from onset of symptoms of a confirmed or probable case:

- 1.3.1. Face-to-face contact with a confirmed case within 1 meter and for more than 15 minutes;
- 1.3.2. Direct physical contact with a confirmed case;
- 1.3.3. Direct care for a patient with probable or confirmed COVID-19 disease without using proper personal protective equipment.

In this case, examinees and examination personnel shall be required to submit the result of their RT-PCR/Saliva tests. Only those examinees with negative results shall be allowed to take the examination.

2. If the examinee or examination personnel does not fall in the abovementioned conditions, he/she shall be allowed to take/assist the examination in the absence of RT-PCR test provided that he/she must undergo a fourteen (14)-day quarantine period wherein he/she is asymptomatic for at least fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled examination date/s. Provided further that he/she has no close contact or exposure to the aforementioned cases. A Certificate of Quarantine or its equivalent signed by any of the following shall be submitted instead:

- 2.1. Duly licensed Physician (government or private physician);
- 2.2. Municipal Health Officer, Provincial Health Officer or City Health Officer;

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1. According to DM 2020-258A or the Updated Interim Guidelines on Expanded Testing for COVID-19

- 2.3. Barangay Officer visiting the examinee's residence or examination personnel attesting that he/she has been in quarantine for fourteen (14) days.
3. Examinees coming from other countries are required to quarantine for fourteen (14) days in any government accredited facility and/or provide a negative RT-PCR/ Saliva test result whichever is shorter.
4. All examination personnel including the PNP/PRC Security Officers assigned in the Confidential Printing Room (CPR) and those assigned to transport and secure the test materials in various testing venues shall undergo the RT-PCR/ Saliva test, the costs of which shall be borne by the PRC, to assure their safety as well as to those involved in the administration of examination. Only those mentioned personnel with negative RT-PCR/Saliva result or Certificate of Quarantine shall be allowed to assist/administer the same.

## **5. ASSIGNMENT OF EXAMINATION PERSONNEL**

The following individuals are not permitted to serve as examination personnel in order to reduce their exposure and prevent infection in consonance with the Omnibus Guidelines On the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines:

1. the elderly (except for the PRBs);
2. individuals with underlying conditions (comorbidities); and
3. pregnant.

The Licensure and Registration Division of the Regional Offices of the Commission shall strictly apply the social/physical distancing and other infection prevention and control measures imposed in conducting orientations for all examination personnel including volunteer proctors and supply aides. They shall be directed to inform the said Division through email or text only (not by call), at least two (2) days before the examination day if they are showing any flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough and/or colds.

The Licensure and Registration Division of the Regional Offices of the Commission shall ensure that enough substitute examination personnel are available in the event that an examination staff is advised to go home for showing symptoms of fever, colds, and cough.

## **6. HEALTH STANDARDS FOR EXAMINEES AND PRC EXAMINATION PERSONNEL**

1. All examinees and examination personnel shall enforce the following precautionary measures among themselves:
  - 1.1 Observe physical distancing of at least two (2) meters between examinees. Examinees shall be restricted to their assigned seat;
  - 1.2 Wear face mask (at least 3-ply surgical mask, preferably N95 mask) and face shield at all times;
  - 1.3 Bring 70% ethyl alcohol for hand disinfection;
  - 1.4 Wear latex gloves for exam personnel handling the test questionnaires;
  - 1.5 Avoid close contacts like "beso-beso," hugging, handshake, and directly touching other persons;
  - 1.6 Avoid touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth;



- 1.7 When sneezing and/or coughing, facial tissues must be used to wipe the nose and mouth areas. Dispose used facial tissues properly; and
- 1.8 Avoid spitting in public, on floors, and corridors.
2. Examinee shall submit the duly accomplished Informed Consent (Annex "A") and Health Declaration (Annex "B") forms with the Notice of Admission (NOA) and the negative RT-PCR test result/Quarantine Certificate or copy of the Complete Vaccination Card to the proctor on the examination day.

Informed Consent and Health Declaration Forms can be downloaded from the PRC official website ([www.prc.gov.ph](http://www.prc.gov.ph));

3. Examinees and examination personnel shall bring their own meals (pre-packed meal/snack and drink) to be eaten during breaks, on their assigned seats. Face masks and face shields will only be removed when taking meals or drinks.
4. Windows will be opened to improve ventilation during breaks.
5. Examinees shall bring their own pens, pencils, and erasers. Borrowing from a seatmate is strictly not allowed.
6. Talking and loitering are prohibited in the hallways or in the examination room.

**7. BUILDING REQUIREMENT FOR A UNI-DIRECTIONAL FLOW OF PEOPLE (ONE ENTRANCE-ONE EXIT)**

1. The map of the building (showing layout of the entrance/exit points and comfort rooms) will be available on the official PRC website and Facebook page and shall be printed in the NOA of examinees for reference;
2. Location of comfort rooms will be indicated in the "map";
3. Examinees will be apprised regarding the specific DESIGNATED ENTRANCE and EXIT gate to be used;
4. The following announcement and infographics will be posted on the testing venues and PRC website:
  - 4.1 COVID-19 precautionary measures;
  - 4.2 COVID-19 symptoms; and
  - 4.3 Contingency Plan when an examinee develops COVID-19 symptoms during the examination.

**6. MINIMUM HEALTH STANDARDS AT THE ENTRANCE GATE OF THE TESTING VENUE**

1. Physical distancing shall be strictly observed in the queuing of the examinees entering the testing venues;

3. All examinees and examination personnel shall undergo temperature scanning:
  - 3.1 Only examinees with temperature of less than or equal to 37.5 degrees Celsius ( $\leq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) shall be allowed to enter the testing venue; and
  - 3.2 Examinee with temperature of more than 37.5 degrees Celsius ( $37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) shall be referred to the Building Supervisor, who shall refer the concerned examinee to onsite medical doctor/personnel for assessment. Examinee will not be allowed to take the rest of the examination.
4. 70% isopropyl or ethyl alcohol shall be available at the entrance gate for hand disinfection. Hand soap or 70% isopropyl or ethyl alcohol shall be provided also in all comfort rooms;
5. Examinees shall proceed immediately to their designated examination rooms after the thermal scanning/screening; and
6. Ensure the adequate ventilation in all venues of licensure examinations.

## **7. CONTINGENCY PLAN**

The following contingency plan shall be observed:

1. Every testing venue shall have the following:
  - 1.1 Isolation room/s for examinees/examination personnel showing symptoms of COVID-19;
  - 1.2 Medical personnel and/or on-call physician. The contact details of the on-call physician and DOH Focal Person shall be known to the Examination Coordinator and Building Supervisor in the event that an examinee/personnel shows signs of COVID-19 during the licensure examination;
  - 1.3 Stand-by ambulance or PRC vehicle that will transport the concerned examinee/personnel to the hospital as referred by the DOH Focal Person. This ambulance/PRC vehicle shall be disinfected before and after its use.
2. In the event that an examinee manifests COVID-19 symptoms such as temperature higher than 37.5 degrees Celsius ( $37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), colds, cough, other flu-like symptoms, and difficulty of breathing, the following must be observed:

### **2.1 Before the examination proper or entering the gate of the testing venue**

2.1.1 The Licensure and Registration Division of all concerned Regional Offices of the Commission should be aware that examinees have been directed to inform them through email or text, if they are showing any flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough and/or colds at least a day before the examination day. They shall be advised to defer taking the licensure examination but shall be allowed to take the next concerned licensure examination without forfeiture of their payments. This directive, along with the instruction to report as early as 5:30 A.M. considering the social/physical distancing in entering the examination venues, to wear protective face masks and bring alcohol/alcohol-based sanitizers, and the



contact information (email and/or cellphone number) of the Licensure and Registration Division, shall be included in the NOA and program, for the examinees' information;

2.1.2 The examinee shall not be allowed to enter the testing site. He/she shall be advised to go home to undergo necessary quarantine or to seek medical treatment. His/her health declaration form shall be collected at the gate and shall be endorsed to the Regional Office for reporting; and

2.1.3 The examinee shall be advised to defer taking the licensure examination, but shall be allowed to take the same immediately succeeding scheduled licensure examination.

## **2.2 During the examination proper**

2.2.1 The proctors shall ensure that all health protocols are observed during the examination proper;

2.2.2 If the examinee is manifesting symptoms of COVID-19, the proctor shall immediately notify the concerned Floor Supervisor who in turn takes the examinee to the isolation room and coordinate with the Building Supervisor. The Building Supervisor shall refer the concerned examinee to the on-site medical personnel or on-call physician for assessment;

2.2.3 Upon advice of the on-site medical personnel or on-call physician, the Building Supervisor shall report the case to the DOH Focal Person and get a referral hospital for the examinee's immediate medical attention. A separate exit gate shall be provided for his/her transport to the said hospital;

2.2.4 The name of the examinee, examination room number, seat number, and seat plan shall be forwarded to the Building Supervisor who shall then submit a report to the Regional Director and notify the Licensure Office and the Board. In addition, the people who had "close contact" with the examinee shall be properly reported;

2.2.5 Room Watchers/Proctors and examinees shall practice social distancing measures at all times within the examination rooms, particularly when examinees submit their answer sheets and test booklets/questionnaires; only one examinee at a time shall be accommodated;

2.2.6 Any examinee who needs to use the restroom shall be accompanied by a room watcher/proctor, always maintaining social distancing measures. Only one examinee at a time shall be allowed to go to the restroom. Proper hand hygiene shall be observed particularly every after use of the restrooms; and

2.2.7 Protective facemasks and handkerchiefs/tissue shall be inspected by room watchers/proctors before the start of every subject and, if necessary, during the conduct of examination to ensure that they are not

used to conceal codigos.<sup>2</sup> In compliance with social distancing measures, the inspection shall be done one at a time, while the rest of the examinees are seated. Examinees must show all the angles of their facemasks and handkerchiefs to the room watcher/proctor for inspection, from a distance of at least one (1) meter from the examinee.

### **2.3 Post-examination requirement**

2.3.1 All examinees shall be required to download and fill-out a Post Examination Health Surveillance Form, attached as Annex "C" and submit the same fourteen (14) days after the examination through the designated Regional Offices' email address. The said form can be downloaded from the PRC official website. The Regional Offices of the Commission shall submit a report to the Licensure Office who shall collate/summarize and submit to the Board for information;

2.3.2 All examinees and examination personnel inside the examination room who had close contact with the patient (manifesting symptoms of COVID-19) shall also be advised to undergo RT-PCR test or 14-day home quarantine after the examination; and

2.3.3 The Regional Offices of the Commission shall create an email address specifically reserved for this purpose which will be disseminated to the examinees by the proctors/room watchers during the examination day.

## **8. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Examinees coming from regions and will take the examination in another region shall abide by the respective Local Government Units (LGU) implemented protocols and directives issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) with regard to the interzonal and intrazonal movement of persons such as RT-PCR test, Rapid test, 14-day quarantine, IATF pass, travel pass and the like;

2. The examinee who fails to take his/her scheduled licensure examination (examinee's name is already included in the Room Assignment), shall be allowed to take the immediately succeeding scheduled licensure examination without forfeiture of payments for the said examination, provided that he/she has the following valid reason/s:

2.1 Health Reason: The examinee shall submit a letter to the Commission and the concerned Board together with a notarized medical certificate;

2.2 Travel Restriction: The examinee shall submit a letter with attached official letter of restriction from the LGU concerned.

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<sup>2</sup> PRC Resolution No. 163 (s. 1996)



3. In view of the declaration of the different community quarantine in the entire country, and the requirements of the LGU in the implementation of the cross-border travel, the Regional Directors, OICs and Regional Coordinators may:

- 3.1 Communicate with the LGU and Regional IATF, on behalf of the Commission, for proper coordination as to the implemented quarantine status in their respective areas due to localize implementation of community quarantine;
- 3.2 Request dispensation or special permit from the LGU if they can be allowed to administer and conduct the licensure examination even under the strict community quarantine classification; and
- 3.3 Seek assistance from LGU and Local DILG for the examinees and examination personnel in going to examination sites and back to their respective homes.

#### **V. REPEALING CLAUSE**


Other related issuances not consistent with the provisions of this Order are hereby revised, modified, or rescinded accordingly.

#### **VI. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE**

Should any provision of this Order or any part thereof be declared invalid, the other provisions, insofar as they are separable from the invalid ones, shall remain in full force and effect.

#### **VII. EFFECTIVITY**

This Order shall take effect immediately.

  
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