



DOLE-DOH-DILG-DOT-DTI
JOINT MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 21-01
Series of 2021

IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES OF THE
SAFETY SEAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Section 15 Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them;

WHEREAS, the presence of new variants of SARS-CoV-2 which originated from the United Kingdom and South Africa (501.V2) has been confirmed in the Philippines and are believed to be one of the major factors affecting the surge in cases of COVID-19 in the country;

WHEREAS, to contain the spread of COVID-19 and prevent future surges, there is a need to enforce strict and continual compliance with the Minimum Public Health Standards (MPHS) especially in business establishments and major public places;

WHEREAS, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) adopted StaySafe.ph as the official digital contact tracing application of the government and the institution of a Safety Seal Certification Program to ensure compliance with MPHS and directed the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Tourism (DOT), and the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to issue the necessary joint memorandum circular to detail requirements to secure a Safety Seal which shall include the adoption of the StaySafe.ph application and generation of its QR Code to be displayed in all entrances;

NOW THEREFORE, the following guidelines are hereby promulgated to guide establishments, local governments, and other implementing agencies on the grant of and retention of the Safety Seal certification.

RULE I GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Objective. The Safety Seal Certification Program aims to:

- a) assure the consumers and the public in general of establishments' compliance with the minimum public health standards set by the government;
- b) encourage the adoption of the StaySafe.ph digital contact tracing application to strengthen the contact tracing initiative of the government and effectively contain the spread of COVID-19; and
- c) safely reopen the economy.

Section 2. Scope. These guidelines shall apply to all private business establishments, selected public places, and government offices. Separate guidelines may be issued to cover other government offices and public transportation units.

Section 3. Definition of Terms

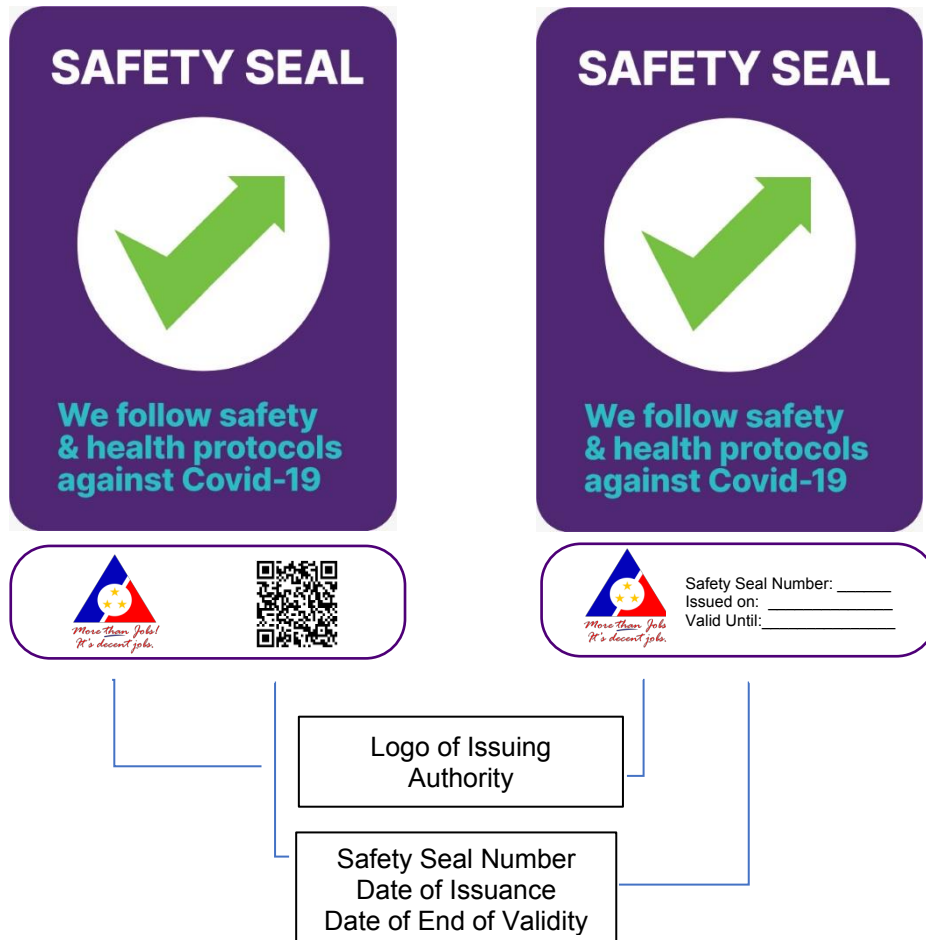
- a) *Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF)* – an inter-agency task force created under Executive Order No. 168 S. 2014 tasked to establish preparedness and ensure efficient government response to assess, monitor, contain, control, and prevent the spread of any potential epidemic in the Philippines
- b) *Issuing Authority* – the government agency or instrumentality vested under these guidelines with the authority to issue the certification and award the Safety Seal
- c) *Minimum Public Health Standards* - refers to current guidelines set by the DOH and other sector-specific guidelines issued by national government agencies as authorized by the IATF, to aid all sectors in all settings to implement non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI)
- d) *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI)* - refer to public health measures that do not involve vaccines, medications, or other pharmaceutical interventions, which individuals and communities can carry out in order to reduce transmission rates, contact rates, and the duration of infectiousness of individuals in the population to mitigate COVID-19
- e) *Safety Seal Certification Program* - a certification scheme affirming that an establishment or public transportation unit has been inspected by the government and was found compliant with minimum public health standards, is using or its contact tracing is integrated with StaySafe.ph and the establishment or public transportation unit possesses the requisite business permits or franchise
- f) *StaySafe.ph* - the official digital contact tracing application of the government that is linked with COVID-19 testing laboratories in the Philippines

**RULE II
THE SAFETY SEAL**

Section 1. The Safety Seal. The Safety Seal affirms that an establishment has been found compliant with the minimum public health standards set by the government, including the adoption or integration with the StaySafe.ph in contact tracing application. The seal shall be displayed conspicuously at all entrance points according to prescribed dimensions. Obtaining the Safety Seal shall be at no cost to the establishment.

Section 2. Validity. The Safety Seal shall be valid for six (6) months from the date of issuance, except for those issued to tourism enterprises which shall be valid for one (1) year. The Safety Seal shall be renewable subject to continued compliance with the eligibility requirements set forth herein.

Section 3. Security Measures. The Safety Seal shall indicate the Issuing Authority, Date of Issuance, and Safety Seal Number and must be verifiable with the Issuing Authority. Other security measures may also be introduced. Issuing Authorities shall keep a record of establishments issued with the Safety Seal. The Safety Seal may be issued in printed or digital form. The digital Safety Seal may be sent by Issuing Authorities through electronic mail or downloaded in their respective microsites.



Section 4. Issuing Authorities. The following agencies shall be the Issuing Authorities of the Safety Seal:

Issuing Authority	Establishments
Department of Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Tourism Enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation Establishments (Hotels, Resorts, Apartment Hotels, and other Accredited Accommodation Establishments) • Travel and Tour Services • Meetings, Incentives, Conferences & Events (MICE) Venues/Facilities • Restaurants inside Hotels/Resorts
Department of Labor and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing • Construction sites • Utilities (Electric, Water, Gas, Air conditioning Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management) • Information and Communication companies (Private Publication, News, Movie Production, TV and Radio Companies) • Warehouses
Department of Trade and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groceries, supermarkets, membership shopping clubs • Convenience stores • Construction supply/ hardware stores • Logistics Service Providers (outlets) • Barbershops and Salons • Service and Repair Shops
Local Government Unit (City or Municipality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malls • Wet markets • Other retail stores • Restaurants outside Hotels/Resorts • Fast food, Eateries, Coffeeshops, etc. • Banks, money changers, pawnshops, remittance centers • Car wash • Laundry service centers • Art galleries, libraries, museums, zoo • Sports centers • Tutorial, Testing, and Review Centers • Gyms • Spas • Cinemas • Arcades • All other private establishments
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)/Philippine National Police (PNP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Halls, Municipal Halls, Provincial Capitols • All other Local Government Unit facilities and buildings • Police Camps and Stations • Bureau of Fire Protection Offices and Fire Stations • Provincial/District/City Jails • Barangay halls and other barangay facilities • All other public establishments not covered by the other Issuing Agencies

RULE III ELIGIBILITY AND CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Section 1. Eligibility. The following are the eligibility requirements to qualify for the Safety Seal certification:

1. Compliance with registration or accreditation requirements (e.g., Mayor’s permit, DTI/SEC registration, or DOT accreditation);
2. Use of StaySafe.ph or any contact tracing tool integrated with the same;
3. Enforcement of the Minimum Public Health Standards (MPHS), including the following, as applicable:
 - a) Putting up of Screening or Triage area at different points-of-entry where:
 - i. employees submit health declaration and/or symptoms are assessed
 - ii. non-contact temperature check is performed to all employees, customers, and any individuals who enter the premises
 - iii. customers and other individuals who enter the premises are asked to register with StaySafe.ph
 - iv. as applicable, an isolation area shall be installed for symptomatic employees and once identified as a suspect COVID-19 case shall be reported to the Barangay Health and Emergency Response Team (BHERT) immediately for proper observance of COVID-19 protocols
 - b) Availability of handwashing stations, soap and sanitizers, and hand drying equipment or supplies (e.g., single use paper towel) to employees and clients/visitors which are placed in strategic locations in the establishment
 - c) Observance of physical distancing or spacing through installation of physical barriers in enclosed areas where physical distancing may be compromised, i.e., blocking off of chairs, use of markers or stickers on the floor for spacing
 - d) Ensure adequate air exchange in enclosed (indoor) areas as cited in DOLE Department Order No. 224-21 or the Guidelines on Ventilation for Workplaces and Public Transport to Prevent and Control the Spread of COVID-19
 - e) Disinfection protocol in accordance with DOH Department Memorandum No. 2020-0157 and 0157-A or the “Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfection in Various Settings as an Infection Prevention and Control Measure Against COVID-19 and Cleaning and Disinfection of Environmental Surfaces in the Context of COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO)
 - i. Regular sanitization of chairs, desks, tables, counters, pens, doorknobs, equipment, devices, workstations, comfort rooms, and other high-touch surfaces
 - f) Wearing of facemasks, face shields, especially in enclosed places and wearing of other protective outer garments as warranted
 - g) Establishment of a referral system for medical and psychosocial services
 - h) Designation of Safety Officer who shall:
 - i. coordinate with the appropriate bodies for support and referral to community-based isolation facilities for confirmed cases with mild symptoms, and to health facilities for severe and critical care; and
 - ii. undertake contact tracing or coordinate the conduct thereof; and
 - iii. monitor status of employees quarantined or isolated; and
 - iv. implement return to work policies.
 - i) Facility for proper storage, collection, treatment, and disposal of used facemasks and other infectious waste

Section 2. Checklists. The Issuing Authorities shall develop checklists that will enumerate the eligibility requirements in an easy-to-understand format.

Section 3. Safety Seal Certification Microsite. Issuing Authorities may establish a microsite, a dedicated page in the agency's official website, which shall contain the following information:

- a) Implementing Guidelines of the Safety Seal Certification Program
- b) Checklist for the Type of Establishments Covered by the Issuing Authority
- c) Contact Details of Inspection Units
- d) Downloadable Safety Seal Toolkit
- e) List of All Establishments Issued with Safety Seal, including status (Active, Revoked, Reinstated)
- f) Complaint Hotlines
- g) Request Form for Reassessment or Reinstatement of Safety Seal

Section 4. Certification Procedures

a) By Application

1. The owner or authorized representative of the business establishment shall download from the website or secure from the office of Issuing Authority the appropriate checklist and perform self-assessment.
2. If self-assessment is favorable, the owner or authorized representative of the business establishment shall then contact the Issuing Authority to schedule an inspection.
3. The Issuing Authority shall validate the status or validity of government-issued permits and/or accreditation.
4. If found to be with valid government-issued permits, registration, and/or accreditation, the Issuing Authority may proceed with the inspection.
5. The Issuing Authority shall inspect compliance of the business establishment. The Philippine National Police (PNP) shall join the inspections upon the request of the Issuing Authority especially in inspecting places open to the public.
6. After the inspection, the inspector/inspection team shall inform the owner or authorized representative of the result of inspection and next steps.
 - i. If the business establishment is compliant, the owner or authorized representative shall be informed on how the Safety Seal sticker will be provided.
 - ii. If the business establishment is found lacking in any of the eligibility criteria, the owner or authorized representative shall be advised to correct the deficiencies and apply for reassessment.

b) By Visit (From Regular Monitoring)

1. During regular monitoring, the inspection team shall also check whether the business establishment is eligible to the Safety Seal Certification
2. Upon determination of compliance with Safety Seal certification, the inspection team shall inform the owner or authorized representative of the establishment's eligibility and how the Safety Seal sticker will be obtained
3. If deficiency/ies is/are found, the owner or authorized representative shall be advised to correct the deficiencies and apply for reassessment.

**RULE IV
COMPLAINTS HANDLING**

Section 1. Complaints Handling. The public may report non-compliance with the minimum public health standards and the use of the Stay Safe application by establishments and businesses granted the Safety Seal with the following:

Issuing Authority	Complaint Hotline/s
DTI	DTI Direct (1-384)
DOT	feedback@tourism.gov.ph or DOT Hotline (1-386)
DOLE	1349
DILG	Public Assistance and Complaints Center Telephone: (892) 50343 (892) 51144 Globe: (0927) 422 6300 Smart: (0931) 384 9272
City/Municipality	Public Assistance and Complaints Desk (PACD)

Section 2. No Wrong Door Policy. A no-wrong-door policy shall be observed. Complaints received that are not under the receiving agency’s jurisdiction shall be referred to the appropriate Issuing Authority and City/Municipality concerned.

**RULE V
RENEWAL, REVOCATION REINSTATEMENT**

Section 1. Renewal. The Safety Seal may be renewed not earlier than one (1) month before its expiration. To renew:

1. Establishments shall contact the Issuing Authority to schedule inspection.
2. The Issuing Authority shall inspect the establishment to verify continued compliance with the eligibility requirements.
3. If the establishment is found to be fully compliant, the Issuing Authority shall issue a new Safety Seal.
4. If the establishment is found to have deficiencies, the owner or authorized representative shall be advised to correct the deficiencies within and apply for reassessment.

Section 2. Revocation

1. The Safety Seal may be revoked *motu proprio* by the Issuing Authority or through a valid complaint. The complaint must state:
 1. name and location of the establishment,
 2. particular public health standard violated or a substantial description thereof;
 3. name and contact number of complainant/s;
 4. supporting proof (e.g., photos)
2. Upon receipt or referral of a valid complaint, the Issuing Authority shall conduct a surprise inspection on the complained establishment. The Issuing Authority may also conduct a surprise inspection, *motu proprio*, for the purpose of revoking the Safety Seal when:
 1. a clustering of COVID-19 cases has been reported in an establishment
 2. willful violation of any of the minimum public health standards
3. Should the business establishment granted with the Safety Seal be found non-compliant with any of the minimum public health standards and the use of the Stay Safe application:
 1. A Notice to Explain (NTE) shall be issued by the Issuing Authority
 2. The NTE should be answered within forty-eight (48) hours and submitted to the Issuing Authority. Alternatively, the business establishment may opt to comply within the same period and attach proof of compliance with the NTE.
 3. Should the explanation be found lacking or should the business establishment fail to comply, the Safety Seal shall be recalled by the Issuing Authority

Revocation of the Safety Seal Certification shall not automatically result in the suspension of operations.

In case the violation pertains to any of the minimum public health standards, the business establishment shall be given another forty-eight (48) hours from the time the Safety Seal is revoked to implement corrective actions. If after this period the establishment still fails to correct the deficiency, suspension of operations may be ordered by the City/Municipality until corrective actions have been implemented.

Section 3. Reinstatement. Establishments with revoked Safety Seal may have the same reinstated in accordance with the following:

1. Submission to the Issuing Authority of a request for reinstatement complete with proof of full compliance with the minimum public health standards and the installation of the Stay Safe digital contact tracing application.
2. Conduct of an inspection by the Issuing Authority to verify compliance.



Reinstated Safety Seal shall be valid for six (6) months or one (1) year, in the case of tourism enterprises, from the date of reinstatement.

**RULE VI
FINAL PROVISIONS**

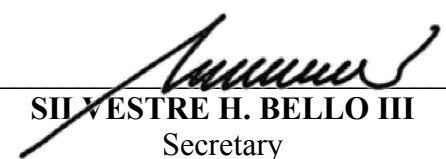
Section 1. Separability Clause. If any clause, provision, paragraph or part thereof shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such judgment shall not affect, invalidate or impair any other part hereof but such judgement shall be merely confined to the clause, provision, paragraph or part directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment has been rendered.

Section 2. Effectivity. These Guidelines shall take effect immediately upon publication in the Official Gazette or in any major daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines and upon filing with the Office of the National Administrative Registrar (ONAR) and will remain in effect until the state of public health emergency is lifted, subject to changes as may be instructed/issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Issued this 23rd day of April, 2021.

RAMON M. LOPEZ
Secretary
Department of Trade and Industry




SILVESTRE H. BELLO III
Secretary
Department of Labor and Employment



BERNABETTE ROMULO-PUYAT
Secretary
Department of Tourism

Digitally signed by
Duque Francisco
Tiongson III

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III
Secretary
Department of Health



EDUARDO M. AÑO
Secretary
Department of the Interior and Local Government

