



MC No. 16, s. 2021

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

- TO : ALL HEADS OF CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES; DEPARTMENTS, BUREAUS AND AGENCIES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT; LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS; GOVERNMENT-OWNED OR CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS WITH ORIGINAL CHARTERS; AND STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES**
- SUBJECT : Interim Guidelines on Absences of Government Officials and Employees Due to COVID-19 Vaccination and/or Adverse Events Following Immunization of COVID-19 Vaccine**

Pursuant to **CSC Resolution No. 2100880** promulgated on 02 November 2021, the Commission, in support of the government's COVID-19 Vaccination Program, adopts the following **Interim Guidelines on Absences of Government Officials and Employees Due to COVID-19 Vaccination and/or Adverse Events Following Immunization of COVID-19 Vaccine**:

1.0 Purpose

These guidelines provide for the treatment of absences incurred by government officials and employees during the day of the inoculation of COVID-19 vaccine and/or the required treatment/recuperation period from the Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) of COVID-19 vaccine.

Moreover, said guidelines seek to support the implementation of the government's Vaccination Program for COVID-19.

2.0 Scope and Coverage

These guidelines shall apply to all government officials and employees regardless of status of appointment (permanent, temporary, provisional, substitute, coterminous, casual, contractual or fixed term) including local elective officials.

Bawat Kawani, Lingkod Bayani

3.0 Definition of Terms¹

As used in these guidelines, the following terms shall be understood to mean:

- 3.1. **Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI)** refers to any untoward medical occurrence which follows immunization and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of vaccine.
- 3.2. **Excused Absence** shall refer to the period when government officials and employees are not required to report for work during the inoculation of COVID-19 vaccine and/or the required treatment/recuperation from AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine but are entitled to pay and remunerations.
- 3.3. **Serious AEFI** is defined as an event that results in death, hospitalization or prolonging of an existing hospitalization, persistent or significant disability or incapacity, congenital anomaly or birth defect, an event that may be life-threatening, or a medically important event or reaction.
- 3.4. **Non-serious, or minor AEFIs** are AEFIs that are not included or categorized as serious AEFIs, or do not pose a potential risk to the health of the recipient.

Non-serious AEFIs include, but are not limited to, local adverse events (such as pain, swelling, redness) and systemic reaction (fever) that are expected after immunization as part of the immune response of the vaccine recipient to induce immunity.

4.0 Guidelines

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of each government official or employee to ensure that he/she employs the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infection in the public sector workplace. COVID-19 vaccination is considered as one of the major strategies to complement the existing measures and practices to mitigate the spread and reduce morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19.
- 4.2 It shall be the responsibility of every government official or employee inoculated against COVID-19 to monitor themselves for any adverse event within one (1) year from the date of vaccination as shown in the COVID-19 Vaccination Card and regularly report to their primary care provider and their agency HRMO their experience of adverse events.

¹ Adopted from the Department of Health (DOH) Department Memorandum No. 2021-0099 re: Interim Omnibus Guidelines for the Implementation of the National Vaccine Development Plan for COVID-19, except for "Excused Absence".

- 4.3** Absence from work during the day of inoculation of the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including future booster shots, whenever applicable, shall be considered as excused absence.

Government officials and employees availing the one (1)-day excused absence during the inoculation of COVID-19 vaccine shall submit a proof of vaccination schedule, e.g. vaccination card, along with the application for leave of absence, five (5) days prior to the scheduled vaccination date, if applicable, to their respective head of office/department/unit for approval.

- 4.4** Absence from work due to the required treatment/recuperation period from AEFI of the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, including future booster shots, whenever applicable, shall be considered as excused absence.

The following table shows the allowable period of excused absence based on the following classification of AEFI and the documentary requirements upon return to work:

Classification of AEFI	Allowable Period of Excused Absences	Required Documents Upon Return to Work
1. Serious AEFIs ² : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hospitalization (Severe reaction with unusual symptoms such as, but not limited to difficulty breathing, wheezing, swelling of the face, and tightening of the throat which requires hospitalization) or prolonging of an existing hospitalization; b. Persistent or significant disability or incapacity; c. Life-threatening; or Medically important event or reaction. 	Treatment and recuperation for a maximum period of fifteen (15) calendar days.	Submit to agency's HR Office/Unit the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application for Leave of absence 2. Copy of Immunization/ Vaccination Card, with indicated information on the local vaccination operations center or vaccination site 3. Medical Certificate and/or clinical abstract indicating the diagnosis, management done and number of days of recuperation needed, signed by

² <https://doh.gov.ph/Vaccines/Possible-Side-Effects-after-Getting-the-COVID-19-Vaccine>

		the attending physician, either in original copy or electronic copy, with indicated contact information
<p>2. Non-serious or minor AEFIs² such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tenderness, pain, warmth, redness, itching or swelling on the arm where you got the injection • generally feeling unwell • feeling tired (fatigue) • chills or feeling feverish • headache • joint pain or muscle ache 	<p>Treatment and recuperation for a maximum period of three (3) calendar days. ²</p>	<p>Submit to agency's HR Office/Unit the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application for Leave of absence 2. Copy of Immunization/ Vaccination Card, with indicated information on the local vaccination operations center or vaccination site. 3. Medical Certificate signed by an attending physician at the vaccination center or medical facility where the official or employee underwent observation due to AEFI.

- 4.5** In the event that the required period of treatment/recuperation exceeds the maximum period of excused absence as provided in the above table, absences incurred thereafter shall be treated as sick leave and shall be charged against the sick leave credits, if any.
- 4.6** In the event of circumstances above-mentioned wherein the employee has exhausted his/her sick leave credits, Section 56 of the Omnibus Rules on Leave shall apply allowing the use of vacation leave credits in lieu of sick leave credits. In case the vacation leave credits have been exhausted, the employee may apply for sick leave of absence without pay.
- 4.7** Government officials and employees who experienced AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine which causes permanent disability may be entitled to benefits as provided under R.A. No. 8291.

- 4.8 Government officials and employees covered by these Guidelines whose absence during the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and/or the required treatment/recuperation from AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine was deducted against their leave credits prior to the issuance of these Interim Guidelines can have the said leave credits restored through their respective agency Human Resource/Personnel Office/Unit.
- 4.9 The DOH Administrative Order No. 2016-0006 dated February 29, 2016 or the Revised Guidelines on Surveillance and Response to Adverse Events following Immunization, and DOH Department Circular No. 2021-0099 or the Interim Omnibus Guidelines for the Implementation of the National Vaccine Deployment Plan shall apply. Moreover, future guidelines instructions/advisories issued by the Office of the President based on the recommendation/s of the IATF-EID, and DOH on the assessment and management of AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine shall also be subsequently applied.

5.0 Responsibilities of the Agency Head

The Agency Head through the Human Resource Management Office/Officer shall be responsible for the following:

- 5.1. Maintain a database of officials and employees inoculated with COVID-19 vaccine, subject to the provisions of Data Privacy Act;
- 5.2. Establish or designate a unit that will perform the functions of a Workplace Epidemiology Surveillance Unit (ESU) within their respective premises as mandated under Section 2, Rule VI, and Section 1(c), Rule X of the 2020 Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. No. 11332, or the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act;
- 5.3. Monitor the treatment of absences due to COVID-19 Vaccination and/or the required treatment/recuperation from AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine based on these Interim Guidelines; and
- 5.4. Ensure that efficiency and productivity work standards are met, and that public service delivery is not prejudiced during the COVID-19 vaccination and/or the required treatment/recuperation of officials and employees concerned due to AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine.
- 5.5. Submit a report to the CSC RO/FO concerned on the number of officials/employees who availed of the excused absence due to COVID-19 vaccination and/or AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine.

- 5.6. Ensure that the agency has contingency plans should large number of employees suffer AEFI of COVID-19 vaccine and other similar incidents.

6.0 Effectivity

This Resolution shall take effect retroactively on March 1, 2021, the official rollout of the vaccination drive in the Philippines, and shall remain in full force and effect during the period of state of calamity as declared under Proclamation No. 1218 dated September 10, 2021 issued by the President of the Philippines, or one (1) year after the government has declared the completion of the COVID-19 Vaccination Program.



ALICIA dela ROSA - BALA
Chairperson

12 November 2021