



SEP 01 2020

**MEMORANDUM**  
No. 71, s. 2020

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT COUNCILS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL, PROVINCIAL, CITY, MUNICIPAL LEVELS AND BARANGAY DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES, HEADS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICES, STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES, GOVERNMENT OWNED AND/OR CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS**

**SUBJECT: Interim Guidelines on the Conduct of the Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic**

**1. REFERENCES**

- 1.1. Republic Act (RA) No. 11469: The Bayanihan to Heal as One Act
- 1.2. Department of Budget and Management (DBM) National Budget Circular No. 580, s. 2020: Adoption of Economy Measures in the Government due to the Emergency Health Situation
- 1.3. Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order No. 2020-0015: Guidelines on the Risk-based Public Health Standards for COVID-19 Mitigation
- 1.4. Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) Resolution No. 38, s. 2020
- 1.5. NDRRMC Memorandum No. 23, s. 2020: Revised Guidelines on the Conduct of Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED)
- 1.6. NDRRMC Memorandum No. 57, s. 2020: Updating of Public Service Continuity Plans (PSCPs) and Contingency Plans (CPs) Due to Ongoing Public Health Emergency

## 2. RATIONALE

Amidst the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the declaration of the State of Public Health Emergency or Presidential Proclamation No. 922 was issued nationwide to bolster a whole-of-government response on the ongoing pandemic. As part of the continuous effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 virus, the State had enforced an Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) throughout Luzon on 16 March 2020, followed by the enactment of RA 11469 or Bayanihan to Heal as One Act for the imposition of Community Quarantine and all its variations across the country.

While the response for COVID-19 is ongoing, certain realities on the impending threats of other natural and human-induced hazards should be realized. These include the unpredictability and inevitability of the occurrence of earthquake and other geological hazards, which remain as potential risks. With the enactment of RA 10121 or Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) has been leading the efforts to reduce the country's risk to earthquakes and other geological hazards through the interventions of disaster preparedness activities such as drills and exercises. Moreover, as stated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 10121, activities such as drills shall be conducted by the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (LDRRMO) regularly for information and public awareness.

Relatedly, one of NDRRMC's distinct programs is the quarterly conduct of the Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED) under the direct facilitation of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD). The NSED is designed and held to test the institutional capacities and individual awareness relative to earthquake preparedness and response.

The issuance of the NDRRMC Memorandum No. 23, s. 2020 has institutionalized the standard methodologies, synchronized timelines, and new approaches to improve the conduct of NSED. However, alternative methods shall be pursued due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Resolution No. 38 issued by the IATF for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases outlined the pertinent guidelines to be observed during ECQ and its known variations such as the limitations for the conduct of mass gatherings in areas with community quarantine declaration.

In this regard, this NDRRMC Memorandum is hereby issued as Interim Guidelines for the conduct of NSED, with the integration of minimum public health standards to be observed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **3. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the NDRRMC Memorandum is to provide the interim guidelines for the conduct of NSED during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of mainstreaming awareness on earthquake preparedness.

### **4. GOAL**

The goal of this Memorandum is to ensure the proper conduct of NSED with prime importance on adhering to minimum required standards during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **5. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this NDRRMC Memorandum are as follows:

- 5.1. To incorporate minimum public health standards in the conduct of NSED and help reduce the risk factors during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 5.2. To specify the requirements and adjustments for all activities associated with NSED such as the conduct of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns, updating of earthquake preparedness and response plans, and other post-NSED activities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- 5.3. To enjoin the nationwide participation of public and private stakeholders in observing public health precautionary measures in conducting NSED.

### **6. SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

This NDRRMC Memorandum shall only be applied during the public health emergency situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It shall cover the parties involved in the conduct of the NSED led by the OCD Central Office and Regional Offices, including but not limited to the DRRMC member agencies at the national, regional, and local levels, other government instrumentalities, academic institutions, private sector, civil society organizations (CSO), and community members.

### **7. POLICY STATEMENT**

This NDRRMC Memorandum shall be guided by and shall adopt the COVID-19 mitigation objectives as prescribed in the issuance of the DOH Administrative Order (AO) No. 2020-0015: Guidelines on the Risk-Based Public Health Standards for COVID-19 Mitigation. The AO serves as a framework for incorporating public

health strategies for sectoral planning and implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions to mitigate the threat of COVID-19.

## 8. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 8.1. **After Action Conference (AAC)** refers to the post-exercise activity that is conducted to review the After Action Review (AAR) and develop the Improvement Plan (IP) of an exercise. It is an interactive session that provides attendees the opportunity to discuss and validate the observations and corrective actions in the AAR.
- 8.2. **After Activity Review (AAR)** refers to the exercise documentation that summarizes the overall conduct of the exercise and the key information related to evaluation. It describes the overall exercise information and presents the analysis of response components, including capability performance, strengths, and areas for improvement.
- 8.3. **Ceremonial Pressing of the Button** refers to the symbolic gesture executed in the identified Ceremonial Site, which signifies the simulation of ground shaking and the official ceremonial observance of the NSED.
- 8.4. **Ceremonial Site** refers to the host area for the conduct of the NSED, which shall be evaluated by the NDRRMC member agencies in terms of standard and procedures.
- 8.5. **Contingency Plan** refers to the scenario-based plan for a specific and projected natural and/or human-induced hazard. It aims to address the impacts of the hazard and/or prevent the occurrence of the emerging threats by arranging well-coordinated responses and enabling efficient management of resources.
- 8.6. **Disaster Control Group (DCG)<sup>1</sup>** refers to an organized and designated group that is in charge of ensuring safety and security in any workplace or establishment.
- 8.7. **Disaster Preparedness** refers to the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities, and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions. Preparedness action is carried out within the context of disaster

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<sup>1</sup> Other agencies and organizations may use a different terminology for DCG but performs similar or related functions.

risk reduction and management and aims to build the capacities needed to efficiently manage all types of emergencies and achieve orderly transitions from response to sustained recovery. Preparedness is based on a sound analysis of disaster risk and good linkages with early warning systems. It includes such activities as contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, the development of arrangements for coordination, evacuation and public information, and associated training and field exercises. These must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities.

- 8.8. **Drill** refers to an operations-based exercise that is used to test specific operations or functions within a department or functional area.
- 8.9. **Evaluation** refers to the systematic assessment of an exercise. It focuses on the identification of strengths and areas that need improvement in accordance with the exercise objectives.
- 8.10. **Exercise** refers to a practice activity wherein participants are placed in a simulated situation, and exercise functions are as expected in a real event.
- 8.11. **Exercise Design** refers to a comprehensive and detailed plan of a practice activity with a simulated situation. It is a compilation of processes and documents that specifies the background, concept, objectives, and direction to manage the operational and administrative requirements of an exercise. The Exercise Design composes the Exercise Plan, Controller and Evaluator handbook, Master Scenario Events List, Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG), and other relevant exercise documentation.
- 8.12. **Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG)** refers to the exercise documentation that informs the evaluator. It documents exercise objectives and aligns response component along with any associated critical tasks. And it summarizes the information on what the evaluators should expect to see demonstrated during the conduct of the exercise
- 8.13. **Functional Exercise** refers to an operations-based activity that is designed to evaluate coordination and multiple functions of several agencies and jurisdictions using simulated response.
- 8.14. **Full Scale Exercise** refers to an operations-based exercise that involves actual deployment of resources in a coordinated response, as if a real incident had occurred.

- 8.15. **Hot Wash** refers to the post-exercise activity that allows the players and evaluators to discuss strengths and areas for improvement, and to seek clarification regarding player actions and decision-making processes.
- 8.16. **Improvement Plan (IP)** refers to the document that is an output of the After Activity Review. It identifies the specific corrective actions to address the areas that need improvement as observed in the exercise
- 8.17. **Minimum Public Health Standards** refer to the guidelines set by the DOH in Administrative Order No. 2020-0015, as well as sector-relevant guidelines issued by national government agencies. These are issued to aid all sectors in all settings to implement non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), which refer to public health measures that do not involve vaccines, medications or other pharmaceutical interventions, which individuals and communities can carry out to reduce transmission rates, contact rates, and the duration of infectiousness of individuals in the population to mitigate COVID-19.
- 8.18. **Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF)** refers to the appropriation of not less than five percent (5%) of the estimated revenue from regular resources that shall be set aside by the local government unit (LGU) to support disaster risk management activities such as, but not limited to, pre-disaster preparedness programs including training, purchasing life-saving rescue equipment, supplies and medicines, for post-disaster activities, and for the payment of premiums on calamity insurance.
- 8.19. **Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill (NSED)** refers to an NDRRMC event conducted to test the preparedness of the whole of society in times of earthquake. It is composed of different types of exercises and other relevant preparedness activities such as information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns.
- 8.20. **Public Service Continuity Plan (PSCP)** refers to the internal document that consists of capacities, recovery requirements and strategies of an agency or institution. It aims to ensure the continuous delivery of quality public services during an emergency, disaster or any other disruption by performing the mission essential function of the organization.
- 8.21. **Tabletop Exercise** refers to a discussion-based exercise wherein players are set to deliberate their emergency response plans regarding a hypothetical scenario.

## 9. GUIDELINES

9.1. **Suspension of NSED Hosting at Ceremonial Sites:** The hosting of NSED at national and regional ceremonial sites shall be suspended while the COVID-19 pandemic situation is ongoing.

### 9.2. Schedules:

9.2.1. The quarterly schedules for NSED, as provided for in NDRRMC Memorandum No. 23, s. 2020, shall remain as follows:

Quarter	Month	Day	Time
1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	March	Thursday of the Second Week	1400H
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	June		0900H
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	September		1400H
4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	November		0900H

The conduct of NSED on the fourth quarter shall remain as part of the observance of the World Tsunami Awareness Day.

9.2.2. In compliance with the minimum public health standards, traditional forms of exercises requiring physical interaction and leading to mass gathering, particularly evacuation drills, shall no longer be conducted as part of the NSED.

### 9.3. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Campaign:

9.3.1. In addition to the usual earthquake awareness advocacies, the IEC for NSED during the COVID-19 pandemic shall highlight the following, among others:

9.3.1.1. Conduct of earthquake evacuation while adhering to minimum public health standards based on policies and guidelines by the IATF, the DOH, the OCD, the Department of Science and Technology - Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DOST-PHIVOLCS) and other relevant organizations.

9.3.1.2. Development and updating of preparedness and response plans with consideration on the situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 9.3.1.3. Preparation of emergency survival bag or “Go Bag” with the inclusion of health-related personal protective equipment and items such as face masks and sanitation solutions; and
  - 9.3.1.4. Equipage of Disaster Control Group (DCG) or similar entities with health-related personal protective equipment and items; and
  - 9.3.1.5. Promote gender-sensitivity and inclusiveness in all relevant earthquake preparedness and response activities.
- 9.3.2. Given the decreased physical activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, there shall be an intensified IEC campaign for NSED using distant means such as, but not limited to the following:
- 9.3.2.1. **Social Media Platforms:** IEC materials on NSED shall be posted and disseminated using various social media sites with the official hashtag #BidaAngHanda.
  - 9.3.2.2. **Webinar:** The conduct of NSED webinars shall form part of the IEC campaign. The webinars shall cover various topics related to earthquake and tsunami preparedness and response during the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - 9.3.2.3. **Video Presentation:** Video presentations shall showcase various topics on earthquake awareness such as the proper conduct of earthquake drill while observing health precautionary measures, guides on development of evacuation plans. They shall be published on social media sites and all other relevant media platforms.
  - 9.3.2.4. **Online-based games, contests, etc.:** Awareness on earthquake preparedness and response can be promoted by organizing educational online-based games, contests, and other similar activities.
  - 9.3.2.5. **Other non-online media platforms:** Use of non-online media platforms such as radio, television, and text blast shall be used. Such shall be considered especially for areas with limited internet access or for remote communities wherein modern smart phones and related gadgets are not widely used.



- 9.3.3. Above provisions on IEC campaigns for NSED shall be incorporated in the Communication Plan to be developed and implemented by the OCD Central Office through the Public Affairs Office (PAO) and the Information Officers of the OCD Regional Offices. Said Communication Plan and the specified IEC campaigns shall be implemented within at least two (2) months until the announced schedule of NSED.
- 9.3.4. All relevant agencies and stakeholders shall be enjoined to jointly work on IEC campaigns to promote the conduct of the NSED within their respective areas of jurisdiction. For a wider reach of audience, IEC materials shall be localized or translated to local language.
- 9.3.5. During and even after the NSED proper, IEC campaigns shall be continued to constantly remind the public to prepare for an earthquake and other major disasters amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **9.4. Updating of Earthquake Preparedness and Response Plans:**

- 9.4.1. As part of the observance of the NSED, existing earthquake preparedness and response plans (such as contingency plans and public service continuity plans) shall be updated to integrate scenarios, mechanisms, and arrangements that are calibrated to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 9.4.2. Minimum public health standards shall be observed in the conduct of activities for the development, updating, and revision of earthquake preparedness and response plans. For this purpose, remote coordination or online-based workshops may be conducted, as necessary and as applicable to the area.
- 9.4.3. Earthquake preparedness and response plans with integrated minimum public health standards integrated shall serve as prerequisite to conduct other allowable exercise types for implementation during the NSED proper.
- 9.4.4. Approaches for the preparation, updating, and revision of the earthquake preparedness and response plans shall be gender-sensitive and gender-inclusive to ensure participation of women and other marginalized groups.

9.4.5. The DOST-PHIVOLCS, OCD, DILG, DOH and other relevant agencies and organizations shall provide technical assistance for the review, updating, and revision of contingency plans, public service continuity plans, and other LGU preparedness and response plans.

**9.5. NSED Proper:**

9.5.1. There shall be no more ceremonial sites during the actual conduct of NSED. Instead, the NSED will be conducted within respective households, schools, offices, and institutions.

9.5.2. During quarterly schedules of the NSED, all stakeholders shall be enjoined to simultaneously practice the “duck, cover, and hold” procedure on the set time.

9.5.3. To signify the start of the practice, the OCD, in collaboration with partner information agencies, shall initiate the ceremonial pressing of the button online using social media platforms and other relevant media platforms. This shall serve as the trigger for all stakeholders to simultaneously observe the “duck, cover and hold” procedure.

9.5.4. Aside from the “duck, cover and hold” procedure, stakeholders may also implement other exercises such as drills, tabletop, and functional exercises. However, full-scale exercises shall be discouraged.

For this purpose, the respective exercise designs should incorporate the use of online tools and other alternative means to prevent physical exposures, in adherence to the minimum public health standards.

9.5.5. In case of actual emergencies in the area where the NSED is conducted, the event shall be suspended to give priority to the provision of emergency response interventions and ensure the safety of all exercise participants from the immediate danger. An official evacuation warning shall be issued by relevant authorities to differentiate with the drill. Further, in situations where the event will put stakeholders to unnecessary exposures during the COVID-19 pandemic, the observance of NSED shall likewise be suspended.

## **9.6. Post-NSED Activities:**

- 9.6.1. There shall be no external evaluators to be mobilized after the conduct of NSED. Instead, stakeholders shall be enjoined to conduct self-evaluation and processing of the NSED within their respective areas of jurisdiction. The OCD shall prescribe a self-evaluation format for this purpose.
- 9.6.2. In the event that other exercise types have been conducted, post-exercise activities such as debriefing, "hot wash," preparation of After Action Review (AAR), conduct of After Action Conference (AAC), and development of Improvement Plan (IP) shall be undertaken while complying with the minimum public health standards. For this purpose, remote coordination or online-based workshops may be conducted, as necessary.
- 9.6.3. An online Exercise Evaluation Guide (EEG) shall be prepared and disseminated by the OCD and to be accomplished by all public and private stakeholders who participated in the NSED. Within seven (7) working days after the conduct of the NSED, all OCD Regional Offices shall report to the Central Office, through the Capacity Building and Training Service (CBTS), the summary of the accomplished online EEGs within the areas of responsibility.
- 9.6.4. The OCD CBTS and the Regional Offices shall report to the National and Regional DRRMC, respectively, the results of the NSED and the accomplished online EEGs during the Full Council Meeting.
- 9.6.5. As prescribed by the RA 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women, all reports to be generated as the result of the conduct of NSED shall contain sex-disaggregated data and information.

## **9.7. Funding:**

- 9.7.1. All public offices, LGUs, private establishments, universities, schools, and other stakeholders are hereby enjoined to allocate funds and resources to support the administrative, logistical and operational requirements for the conduct of NSED and to include the IEC campaigns, the purchasing of PPE, the updating of preparedness and response plans, and other related activities. Allocating funds for NSED shall be in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

- 9.7.2. All expenses relative to the conduct of NSED and other associated activities at the local level shall be charged against the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (LDRRMF) of the LGU as part of disaster preparedness.

#### **10. REPEALING CLAUSE**

In the event that any provision or part of this Memorandum is deemed invalid by a court of law or competent authority, the remaining provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.


#### **11. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE**

All existing issuances inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

#### **12. EFFECTIVITY**

This Memorandum shall take effect only for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

For the Chairperson, NDRRMC:

  
**USEC RICARDO B. JALAD**  
Executive Director, NDRRMC and  
Administrator, OCD