PRESS RELEASE
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No Additional International Travel Restrictions Under MECQ - BI

MANILA, Philippines - The Bureau of Immigration (BI) said the government has not imposed additional restrictions or revised its guidelines on international travel despite the re-imposition of Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) in Metro Manila and other areas of the country.

“Existing travel restrictions remain unchanged until these are revised or changed by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID),” BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said in a statement. “Unlike domestic flights which are suspended under MECQ, international flights at our airports in Manila, Cebu and Clark continue.”

Morente advised the public to always keep themselves updated on international travel guidelines implemented by the BI by accessing the Bureau’s website at www.immigration.gov.ph and other social media accounts such as www.facebook.com/immigration.helpline.ph and www.facebook.com/officialbureauofimmigration.

He said postings on the Bureau's official website and social media accounts are regularly updated to enlighten the public on existing travel guidelines in conformity with the latest issuances of the IATF-EID.

The BI Chief said he was prompted to issue the statement after the Bureau's offices were again swamped with numerous calls and queries from the public after the government announced that Metro Manila was reverting to MECQ.

According to BI Port Operations Division Acting Chief Grifton Medina, the country remains off limits to foreign tourists. Furthermore, aside from Filipinos, only holders of permanent immigrant visas and foreign spouses, minor dependents and foreign parents of Filipino minor children can enter the country.

“However, dependents of Filipinos and children of foreigners who have special needs may enter the country, regardless of age,” Medina said. He also reiterated that only foreigners, overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), and Filipinos who are permanent residents or students abroad are permitted to leave the country.
Medina also reported that despite the government’s decision to allow the entry of aliens with permanent resident or immigrant visa, only 87 of them have so far arrived since August 1-5, 2020.

The figure represents a 94-percent drop from 1,412 permanent residents who arrived in the country during the same five-day period in 2019.

Earlier, the BI said its records indicate that there are still about 15,000 foreigners who are permanent residents who were stranded abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic.