

## **Annex F. GUIDANCE ON COVID-19 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Pursuant to Republic Act 11058<sup>8</sup> and the DOLE Department Order No. 28<sup>9</sup>, employers have the responsibility to ensure the physical safety of workers and also craft mental health policies which are integral parts of occupational safety and health (OSH).

- A. It must be emphasized to all workers to observe the following actions to stay healthy and active:
  - a. Eat nutritious and well-cooked food.
  - b. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcoholic beverages.
  - c. Increase the body's resistance by having adequate rest and at least eight (8) hours of sleep.
  - d. Exercise regularly.
- B. Regarding Hours of Work, the following working hours must be strictly enforced<sup>10</sup>:
  - a. For production sites, a maximum of up to 14 hours
  - b. For workplaces and offices (e.g. post-production houses and animation studios), a maximum of up to 12 hours

A 12-hour turnaround time for all must be observed to allow for workers to have ample time to rest and recoup mentally and for proper sanitation to be done between call times.

- C. The method of how the producer/employer promotes mental health must be included in their COVID-19 Safety Plan as workers have a significant risk of experiencing distress during a pandemic due to uncertainty on production security, financial status, and the overall pandemic situation.
- D. Referrals to mental health professionals must be provided for workers needing counseling or presenting with mental health concerns.
- E. The following are other considerations and techniques for producers/employers to support their own and other's mental health and well-being within a production as individuals at all levels of production are at risk of experiencing distress.
  - a. If workers are working from home, they may feel additional pressure from the added distraction of household members and chores. Workers tend to overwork, especially if there is a tight deadline or a large amount of work to do. Remind workers to take breaks from work so they don't become over-tired as this is harmful to mental health.
  - b. Keeping active will help. If gym facilities aren't open, workers could be encouraged for walks, runs, yoga or workouts at home.
  - c. It is important to reach out. Encourage workers to stay connected with your family, friends, and colleagues from the industry.

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<sup>8</sup> Republic Act 11058 *An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof* <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2018/08aug/20180817-RA-11058-RRD.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> DOLE Department Order No. 28, S. 2020 *Guidelines for the Implementation of Mental Health Workplace Policies and Programs for the Private Sector* [https://www.dole.gov.ph/php\\_assets/uploads/2020/02/DO-208-20-Guidelines-for-the-Implementation-of-Mental-Health-Workplace-Policies-and-Programs-for-the-Private-Sector.pdf](https://www.dole.gov.ph/php_assets/uploads/2020/02/DO-208-20-Guidelines-for-the-Implementation-of-Mental-Health-Workplace-Policies-and-Programs-for-the-Private-Sector.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> *In line with the COVID-19 pandemic, the working hours shall be adapted from a maximum of 16 hours (pursuant to FDCP-DOLE JMC No. 1) to 14 hours. This shall apply for the whole duration of the protocol implementation.*

- d. Producers/Employers should keep in touch with their workers who may be required to stay at home and self-isolate.
- e. Ensure that workers are aware that they can safely report if they are unwell or have been classed as confirmed, probable, or a suspected case in a supportive work environment free of discrimination and harassment.
- f. Workers must be provided with the correct information about COVID-19 to remove any assumptions, stigma, or discrimination associated with them becoming unwell.
- g. Producers/Employers must only get information and posters on physical and mental health safety from trusted sources such as Safe Filming Program, Bureau of Working Conditions, Department of Health, or the World Health Organization.
- h. OSH Officers must be available to support workers on-set or to refer to appropriate services if required or requested.
- i. Workers may be allowed to be flexible around work schedules wherever possible especially if they might be affected by other household members' work schedules, or they may be caring for an at-risk person.
- j. Should there be concerns about workers' mental health, well-being, and coping, it is important to encourage them to talk to a health professional.