



Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BATANES
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Basco



EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 55

Series of 2022

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER PROVIDING FOR THE GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS ON THE FULL RE-OPENING OF TOURISM ACTIVITIES IN THE PROVINCE OF BATANES

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2022, the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan* enacted S.P. Ordinance No. 363 series of 2022 entitled AN ORDINANCE EFFECTING THE GRADUAL RE-OPENING OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IN THE PROVINCE OF BATANES which was approved by the undersigned Provincial Governor on May 10, 2022.

WHEREAS, pursuant to S.P. Ordinance No. 363 s. 2022, the Undersigned issued *Executive Order No. 23, series of 2022* which provided for GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS ON THE RE-OPENING OF TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES UNDER THE NEW NORMAL on May 13, 2022;

WHEREAS, on June 30, 2022 the Undersigned issued *Executive Order No. 28, series of 2022* which provided for REVISED GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS ON THE RE-OPENING OF TOURISM INDUSTRY OF THE PROVINCE OF BATANES UNDER THE NEW NORMAL which further simplified the procedure for the arrival of tourists and removed the limit on tourist arrivals for third quarter 2022;

WHEREAS, Section 6 of said Executive Order No. 28, s. 2022 provides:

Section 6. Trial Period Assessment. No later than the last week of September 2022, the BPTC, the Batanes Provincial Tourism Council, through the PGO Tourism and Heritage Office, shall report to the Provincial COVID-19 IATF its assessment of the status of the re-opening of tourism in the province for the period of July to September 2022 and shall recommend improvements in the protocols based on actual experience of tourism stakeholders and other measures to support the gradual reopening of tourism in the province.

WHEREAS, pursuant to above-quoted provision, the Provincial COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force ("Provincial IATF") deliberated and discussed the report and recommendations of the PGO Tourism and Heritage Office Council and the Health Cluster of the Provincial PIATF in meeting held on September 27, 2022 and unanimously decided on the following matters:

1. The vaccination rate of the Province of Batanes against COVID-19 have reached more than the desired level whereby the unregulated entry of tourists no longer poses significant risk to the local population, as indicated by the following figures as September 25, 2022:

- a. 99.72% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated;
 - b. 73% of the eligible population has received Booster 1 vaccine;
 - c. 31.24% of the eligible population has received Booster 2 vaccine;
2. Certificate of Acceptance for all kinds of travelers will no longer be required.
 3. Children below 5 years old (i.e. ineligible for vaccination) will be allowed to travel to Batanes and will no longer be required to undergo quarantine/isolation unless they exhibit COVID-19 symptoms;
 4. All tourism workers shall be required to receive booster vaccine against COVID-19;
 5. Only those fully vaccinated tourists shall be allowed to tour in the Province of Batanes.
 6. The requirement of ***Clearance to Tour*** to assure that tourists shall only avail of DOT-accredit tour operators and accommodation establishments as well as other mechanisms to implement the smooth full re-opening of the tourism industry under the new normal shall be formalized by the Tourism Sector and legislated by the *Sangguniang Panlalawigan*.

WHEREAS, the foregoing recommendations were formally adopted by the Batanes Provincial Tourism Council in a meeting held on September 29, 2022 with additional suggestions pertaining to the different tourism sectors.

WHEREAS, to revitalize the local economy and support the national policy to resume tourism activities in the country, there is a need to fully open the province for tourism activities while observing minimum public health standards and other safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases ;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, MARILOU H. CAYCO, Provincial Governor of the Province of Batanes, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order the following guidelines and protocols on the full re-opening of tourism in the Province of Batanes under the new normal effective **October 1, 2022**:

Section 1. *Arrival guidelines.* Certificate of Acceptance will no longer be required for persons travelling to the Province of Batanes; however, all travelers who are eligible for vaccination against COVID-19 must be prepared to present vaccination cards bearing complete details or digital copy of vaccination certificate generated from VaxCertPH.

Those ineligible for vaccination shall present proof of ineligibility e.g. birth certificate of children below 5; medical certification for ineligibility due to medical reasons.

Section 3. *Tour Proper / While in Batanes*

A. Health and Safety

1. All tourists must be fully vaccinated (primary series) against COVID19 and must obtain a ***Clearance to Tour*** from the Provincial Tourism Office prior to conduct of

tour activities. Such Clearance shall be issued upon verification that the planned tour itinerary is compliant with the requirements of this EO, applicable provincial ordinance and such other relevant rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of tourism-related activities under the "new normal."

2. All tourism workers must have COVID-19 vaccine booster shots.
3. Minimum public health standards shall be observed at all times.
4. All tour sites must have functioning hand washing stations and/or available 70% isopropyl or 60% ethyl alcohol/alcolgel.
5. If a tourist is tested positive with COVID-19 anytime during his stay in Batanes, he shall be isolated in a government-managed quarantine facility. The food expense shall be shouldered by the guest and facilitated by the tour operator.
6. The Provincial Health Office shall provide guidelines and orient operators of accommodation establishments on (a) obtaining and assessing health declarations (b) flow of referral in case any of its guests develop COVID-19 symptoms, and (c) other COVID-19 protocols.
7. As a general rule, tour activities of tourists shall be coordinated with a DOT-accredited tour operator and accompanied by an accredited tour guide. During free days of guests, their tour operators and accommodation establishments must be aware of the planned activities or destinations of guests and shall orient them on the relevant protocols and remind them to have their **Clearance to Tour** always ready for presentation. The tour operator and/or accommodation establishments may require guests to sign a waiver that they shall be free from liability in case the tourists/guests conduct activities without an accredited tour guide.

B. Tour Operators

1. All tour operators must be DOT-accredited.
2. Tour operators shall orient guests/tourists in the local protocols and assist guests in obtaining **Clearance to Tour**.
3. The tour operator shall be responsible in coordinating with private transport providers or the guest accommodation for airport transfer of its guests.
4. Joined tours shall be allowed subject to compliance with the minimum public health standards.
5. All tours must have a PGB-accredited tour guide.¹
6. They shall ensure that all tour vehicles have alcohols, extra facemasks, and first aid kits with gun thermometer.

¹ Accreditation by DOT and LGUs shall not be required as additional requirement for tourist guides to render general tour guiding services. However, tourists shall be accompanied by DENR accredited guide if they will visit strict protection zone areas (example: Mt. Iraya).

7. All tours shall be limited to open tour sites provided by the LGU and the tour operators.
8. All specialized tours must be coordinated with the concerned tourism office prior to offering it to the public for approval.
9. Government fees shall be included in the tour package rate breakdown for the awareness of the tourists.
10. Tour operators are encouraged to provide reminder card to their guests which will serve as directory containing reminders of minimum public standards, local guidelines, and emergency hotlines of Batanes General Hospital or the nearest health facility, local police station, BATODA, etc.

C. Tour Guides

1. All tour guides must be accredited by the Provincial Government of Batanes (PGB) and has completed the tour guiding reorientation conducted by the PGB.
2. Tour guide vests must be worn at all times during the tour. The vests provided by the Provincial Government to accredited guides shall be preferred but guides may also use their association or company uniform as alternate.
3. Each guide shall have a maximum of 10 guests at a time. Mountain guides shall be limited to 4 guests.
4. Anytime during the tour, or upon return of the guests to their AEs, the tour guides shall report to the AE management if he observed that any of the guests experienced fever, cough, flu-like symptoms, headache or other symptoms for appropriate monitoring or referral.
5. The guide shall assure that minimum health standards are complied with and shall advice the guests on what is appropriate to be posted on social media.
6. All other relevant provisions of the SP Ordinance regulating tour guides shall continue to be observed.

D. Accommodation

1. All Accommodation Establishments (AEs) must be DOT Accredited shall follow the guidelines provided under **DOT Administrative Order No. 2022-001** GUIDELINES ON THE OPERATIONS OF HOTELS AND OTHER ACCOMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS UNDER THE ALERT LEVEL SYSTEM and its subsequent amendments, as such:
 - a. They may allow full room occupancy subject to observance of minimum public health standards.
 - b. They should allow flexible check-in/check-out to ensure minimal waiting time and avoid exposure during check-in and check-out of guests. Overbooking shall be strictly prohibited.
 - c. Proper ventilation shall be complied with.

- d. The AEs shall incorporate in its registration and reservation form an undertaking from the guests declaring their purpose of stay (e.g. business, leisure, events, etc.) and compliance with the terms and conditions of their booking.
2. All AEs must refer booked guests who intend to tour or conduct leisure activities in the Province to a DOT-accredited local tour operator for the processing of *Clearance to Tour*. They shall accomplish a spreadsheet provided by the Provincial Tourism Office with the basic personal information of such guests to support the application of *Clearance to Tour*.
 3. All guests shall be instructed to immediately notify the AEs management in case they feel unwell or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. In such a case, the guest shall be immediately referred to the RHU/MHO or Batanes General Hospital and shall be handled in accordance with ***DOT Advisory No. 02 s. 2022 dated 23 February 2022*** (RE: COVID-19 RESPONSE AND HANDLLING OF GUESTS IN ACCOMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS) and its subsequent amendments.
 4. AEs are encouraged to post signages visible to their guests or leave reminder cards in occupied rooms which will serve as directory containing reminders of minimum public standards, local guidelines, and emergency hotlines of Batanes General Hospital or the nearest health facility, local police station, BATODA, etc.
 5. AEs shall orient guests requesting the services of massage therapists on the protocols regarding the conduct of massage. They shall be responsible for the accomplishment of Health Declaration Form by both provider and guest. They shall also check the Health Certificates or Certificates of Training of massage therapists as provided sub-section G below.
- E. Food Establishments. Only duly registered food establishments with Health Certificates shall be included in tour packages. Tour operators and tour guides shall also orient the tourists to only patronize such establishments during their free times.
- F. Transportation
1. Use of duly registered single motorcycle rented from registered motorcycle rentals shall be allowed provided that a tour guide shall accompany the guest. A guest with a valid driver's license shall be allowed to drive the motorcycle.
 2. Four-wheel vehicles (van) shall follow national guidelines on its capacity depending on the Alert Level of the province. For Alert Level 1, maximum capacity is allowed provided that all passengers shall wear face masks at all times.
 3. Tricycles shall have a maximum of two tourists plus the designated tour guide. Cogon tricycles shall be prioritized for tour purposes while TODA tricycles (i.e. those with local public convenience franchise) shall be prioritized for point to point transfers such as transfer to restaurants.

4. Passengers 5 years old and above shall be considered as adult passenger or one occupying one seat for purposes of allowable number of passengers.
5. Passengers below 8 years old shall not be allowed to board tour tricycles unless accompanied by an adult.
6. All tour vehicles must have appropriate waste disposal bins for use of its passengers and the following:
 - a. 70% isopropyl or 60% ethyl alcohol/alcohol
 - b. extra disposable facemasks
 - c. first aid kits with gun thermometer

G. Personal Care Services

1. Personal care establishments shall be duly registered and continue to observe the conditions of its Health Certificate issued by the concerned MLGU.
2. Freelance and in-house massage therapists may provide service to guests of Accommodation Establishments provided that:

- a. The massage therapist shall have Health Certificate and Certificate of Training. Local untrained traditional *manghihilot* must attend an orientation seminar on customer service and health protocols to be conducted by the Provincial Tourism Office and the Provincial Health Office.

For this purpose, the Provincial Tourism Office with the assistance of the respective Municipal Tourism Offices shall maintain an updated directory of massage therapists and traditional *manghihilot* who have complied with the foregoing requirements and shall be made available to AEs upon their request.

- b. Both provider and client shall be free from COVID-19 symptoms and shall execute a Health Declaration prior to the massage session to be facilitated by the AE management.
- c. The client is encouraged to take a bath before the massage session.
- d. The room shall have proper ventilation during the entire massage session.

H. Other Guidelines

1. In the event that the Province is declared to be under Alert Level 3, all tourism activities shall be temporarily suspended.
2. Rules and regulations set by DENR, NCIP, and MLGUs pertaining to the conduct of tours must also be observed.

3. All other guidelines involving the tourism industry which do not significantly affect the public health and safety of locals and tourists shall be decided upon by the Batanes Provincial Tourism Council.
4. All personal and confidential information provided by all tourists/guests and processed by the tour operators, accommodation establishments, and other entities shall be handled with confidentiality and in accordance with the Data Privacy Act. The same shall be disposed of after thirty (30) days from the departure of the tourists/guests unless allowed to be retained by the law for other purposes.

Section 3. *Monitoring and collection of fees.*

- a. MLGUS shall designate checkers at specific tour sites in their respective jurisdictions to ensure compliance of the foregoing guidelines and protocols.
- b. A personnel from the Provincial Tourism Office shall be designated to process *Clearance to Tour* including on weekends.
- c. The Provincial Treasury shall also assign a personnel for the collection of fees including weekends in coordination with the tour operators.

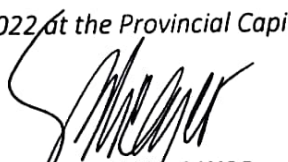
Section 4. *Quarantine/Isolation.* Mandatory Quarantine and Isolation periods for COVID-19 cases shall follow issuances issued by the Department of Health and other competent national authorities.

Section 5. *Wearing of Face Masks.* The regulations regarding the mandatory use of Face masks shall follow national issuances. For this purpose, the MLGUs shall accordingly amend their respective ordinances imposing penalties for non-wearing of face masks on certain circumstances.

Section 6. This Order shall supersede or modify or existing issuances inconsistent herewith.

Section 7. This Order shall take effect on October 1, 2022.

Done this 28th day of September 2022 at the Provincial Capitol Complex, Basco, Batanes.


MARILOU H. CAYCO
 Provincial Governor

Copy furnished:

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|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| - Office of the President, Malacañang Palace | - Prelate of Batanes and heads of other religious denomination |
| - OSS, OVG, SP Committee on Tourism | - Regional and National IATF (through DILG Batanes) |
| - Municipal Mayors and Punong Barangays | - DWBT Batanes |
| - RHUs/Municipal Health Officers | - PAL, SkyPasada, NorthSky |
| - NGAs, CDO | |
| - LDHs/OIC/IOC | |