MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
No. 2021-034

24 MAR 2021

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES TO ACCELERATE THE INTERNET CONNECTIVITY AND TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES TO ADDRESS THE NEED FOR RAPID DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE NEW NORMAL

1. Background

Access to the internet and digital technologies has become essential in enabling people to work, learn, communicate, do business and even access government services. During this public health emergency due to COVID-19 where our everyday movements are restricted, access to the internet becomes even more of an essential tool in staying connected online, ensuring business continuity, and household sustainability.

The use of digital technologies in the Philippines is still challenged as compared to our regional neighbors. The “digital divide” between those with and without internet leads to unequal access to social services and life-changing economic opportunities.

Despite the improvement of the country’s ranking from 111th to 86th rank out of 140 countries per Ookla’s 2021 Speedtest Global Index, the Philippines is still way behind with its neighboring countries within the ASEAN Region.

Upgrading digital infrastructure that our country needs will require establishment of more new telecommunication towers and multifarious facilities that will cater the growing demand for connectivity all over the country.

In view of the foregoing and in line with the directives of the President against red tape and corruption, it is necessary to facilitate the processing and issuance of permits, licenses, clearances and authorizations anticipating the upsurge in applications for the
construction and establishment of telecommunication related facilities and infrastructures.

2. Purpose

The primary purpose of this Memorandum Circular is to apprise all Local Government Units and concerned stakeholders with all necessary steps with the end in view of levelling-up the mobile internet speed across the country, specifically aims to:

2.1 Fast track the issuance of necessary permits, clearance, certification and authorization like certificate of final electrical inspection, business, building permit, locational clearance, fire safety evaluation certificate (FSEC), certificate of use and others in relation to establishment of telecommunication towers;

2.2 Facilitate unhampered operations of telecommunication companies to allow them to fast-track establishment of telecommunication facilities during the pandemic, and

2.3 Ensure observance minimum health standards (MHS) to eliminate or minimize the spread of COVID-19.

3. Legal Compliance

3.1 Republic Act 11032 or Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service and Delivery Act of 2018 which promotes integrity, accountability, proper management of public affairs and public property as well as to establish effective practices, aimed at efficient turnaround of the delivery of government services and the prevention of graft and corruption

3.2 Cabinet Directive on Telecommunication Companies dated February 23, 2021 which requires local government units to allow telecommunication companies to continuously work during emergencies, issuance of a separate health protocols for telecommunications manpower.

3.3 Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) Resolution No. 101 dated February 26, 2021 which approves the uniform travel protocols for land, air and sea.
3.4 ARTA-DICT-DILG-DHSUD-DPWH-CAAP-DOH-FDA Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) No. 01 series 2020 titled “Streamlined Guidelines for the Issuance of Permits, Licenses, and Certificates for the Construction of Shared Passive Telecommunications Tower Infrastructure (PTTIs) which aims streamlined processes and requirements as to application for permits, licenses and clearances.


3.6 DILG-DTI-DICT Joint Memorandum Circular 2016-01 titled Revised Standards in Business Permit and Licensing System which aims to revise the standards in business and permit licensing system.

4. Scope/Coverage

This Memorandum Circular covers all Provincial Governors, City Mayors, and Municipality Mayors, including DILG Regional and Provincial Directors, City/Municipal Officers, Local Government Functionaries, Office of Building Officials, Business Permit and Licensing Office, Local Sanggunian, and others concerned.

5. Policy Content and Guidelines

In adherence to the directive of the President of the Philippines, all Local Governments Units (LGUs) are hereby apprised and encouraged to observe the strict implementation of the following:

5.1 Allow unhampered operations of telecommunication companies during pandemic to allow them to fast-track establishment of telecommunication facilities such as application of permits, construction and installation, maintenance and repair and other related activities.

5.1.1 All telecommunication company personnel and staff which include those who perform indirect services such as technical, sales, and other support personnel, as well
as the employees of their third-party contractors doing sales, construction, installation, maintenance and repair work must be allowed to work without any disruption, provided they strictly comply with the required public health standards prescribed for offices/workplaces under DOH Administrative Order No. 2020-0015 dated April 27, 2020 and the DTI-DOLE Joint Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 dated April 30, 2020; and observe uniform travel protocols for land, air, and sea provided under IATF-MEID Resolution 101 dated 26 February 2021 and other relevant issuances of the IATF-MEID.

5.1.2 Equipment, construction materials and related goods necessary and essential in the construction, installation, maintenance and repair of telecommunication infrastructure and facilities must be allowed entry without disruption as long as they present valid usual permits, clearances or authorization.

5.2 Fast track the issuance of Certificate of Final Electrical Inspection and streamline requirements and procedures for the processing or related, permits, licenses, clearance and/or authorization in accordance to JMC 2020-1: Streamlined Guidelines for the Issuance of Permits, Licenses, and Certificates for the Construction of Shared Passive Telecommunications Tower Infrastructure (PTTIs) issued on 23 July 2020 to streamline requirements and reduce procedural delays in securing the necessary permits, licenses, clearances, certificates, and other requirements in the construction of Shared Passive Telecommunications Tower Infrastructures (PTTI).

5.3 Provide support and assistance to telecommunication companies during installation, maintenance, repair and other related activities; and to render full assistance and cooperation, and mobilize the necessary resources to undertake critical, urgent, and appropriate measures to curtail and eliminate the threat of COVID-19 while allow business recovery and public service continuity in the LGUs respective jurisdiction.
3. Monitoring

Upon issuance of this Memorandum Circular, the Department shall monitor the LGU compliance from these directives. All provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays are hereby directed to submit a weekly compliance report (every Wednesday) through this link: http://bit.do/PresidentialDirective or scan this QR code.

Kindly submit your initial report on or before April 7, 2021 in preparation for the weekly Cabinet Meeting.

4. Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

5. Approving Authority

UNDERSECRETARY BERNARDO C. FLORECE, JR.
Officer-In-Charge

6. Feedback

Inquiries concerning this Memorandum Circular should be directed/addressed to Bureau of Local Government Development (BLGD) through any of the following: Tel No, (02) 925-0356 / (02) 927-7852, email address lfrdd.official@gmail.com, or thru mail at 25th Floor, DILG-NAPOLCOM Center, EDSA corner Quezon Avenue, Quezon City for appropriate action.