



Client Bulletin No. 33 (Updates on COVID-19 related PH Issuances):

**Metro Manila is back under GCQ starting August 19, 2020**

This is a briefing on the issuances as of August 19, 2020 on the following matters in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- A. [Metro Manila is under General Community Quarantine \(GCQ\) from August 19 to 31, 2020](#)
- B. [All courts in GCQ areas will be physically open starting August 19, 2020](#)

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**A. Metro Manila is under General Community Quarantine (GCQ) from August 19 to 31, 2020**

- 1. The President has put Metro Manila back under GCQ, to take effect from the midnight of August 19 until August 31, 2020.<sup>1</sup> GCQ is a more relaxed quarantine measure than the Modified Community Quarantine (MECQ) which was imposed over Metro Manila from August 4 to 18, 2020.<sup>2</sup>

Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal, which were all under MECQ until August 18, are also under GCQ for the same period.<sup>3</sup>

The table below sets out the types of community quarantine imposed on various areas of the country pursuant to the August 17, 2020 announcement of the President.<sup>4</sup>

Type of Community Quarantine Imposed	Period	Areas Covered
GCQ	August 19 – 31, 2020	• Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal
	August 16 – 31, 2020	• Luzon: Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Quezon • Visayas: Iloilo City, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Talisay, Minglanilla, Consolacion (Cebu)

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<sup>1</sup> *IATF Resolution No. 64* dated August 17, 2020; <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/07jul/20200817-IATF-RESOLUTION-NO-64.pdf>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 9:36 AM.

<sup>2</sup> See our Client Bulletin No. 30 dated August 3, 2020 at <https://syciplawresources.com/2020/08/03/syciplaw-bulletin-30-metro-manila-under-mecq-again-from-august-4-to-18/>.

<sup>3</sup> *IATF Resolution No. 64* dated August 17, 2020; <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/downloads/2020/07jul/20200817-IATF-RESOLUTION-NO-64.pdf>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 9:36 AM.

<sup>4</sup> *Metro Manila, 4 neighboring provinces back under GCQ* dated August 18, 2020; <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/18/metro-manila-4-neighboring-provinces-back-under-gcq/>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 10:11 AM.

Type of Community Quarantine Imposed	Period	Areas Covered
Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ)	August 16 – 31, 2020	All other areas in the Philippines not mentioned above

2. For the MGCQ and GCQ guidelines, as well as the list of establishments allowed to operate and their corresponding operational capacities, please refer to the relevant issuances of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) and of the Department of Trade and Industry.<sup>5</sup>

For more information, please contact your account partner.

**B. All Courts in GCQ areas will be physically open starting August 19, 2020<sup>6</sup>**

1. The Supreme Court (SC) has issued *Administrative Circular No. 45-2020 (Court Operations During General Community Quarantine From 19 August 2020 Onwards)* dated August 18, 2020<sup>7</sup> which provides that courts in areas under GCQ will be physically open starting August 19, 2020.
2. The circular further provides that “the courts may still be reached through their respective hotline numbers, email addresses and/or Facebook accounts as posted on the website of the Supreme Court.” Additionally, the raffle of cases shall proceed in-court, or electronically in eCourt stations.
3. The following are some of the other key points of the circular:
  - a. For Regional Trial Courts, Family Courts, and first level courts:
    - “All hearings in both the criminal and civil cases shall be fully in-court, except when a person deprived of liberty is involved, or under exceptional circumstances where fully-remote videoconferencing hearings may be conducted with prior approval from the Office of the Court Administrator.”
    - All pleadings, in both civil and criminal cases, “may still be filed electronically and received by the courts through their respective official email addresses.” The courts’ email addresses are posted on the website of the Supreme Court.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See our Client Bulletin No. 26 dated July 21, 2020 at <https://syciplawresources.com/2020/07/21/syciplaw-bulletin-25-gcq-over-metro-manila-is-further-extended-until-july-31-2020/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Courts in GCQ areas to ‘physically open,’ says SC* dated August 18, 2020; <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1323738/courts-in-gcq-areas-to-physically-open-says-sc>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 10:02 AM.

<sup>7</sup> *SC Administrative Circular No. 45-2020* dated August 18, 2020; <http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/12742/>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 10:03 AM.

<sup>8</sup> See *Email Accounts – Courts*; <http://sc.judiciary.gov.ph/11352/>; last visited August 19, 2020 at 10:20 AM. Client Bulletin No. 33 (Updates on COVID-19 related PH Issuances)

- b. For the Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan and Court of Tax Appeals:
  - These courts will continue to “receive petitions and pleadings electronically,” the process for which must be pursuant to the court’s respective internal rules.
  - They will continue to resolve and decide cases pending before them.
- c. For the Supreme Court *en banc* and its three (3) Divisions:
  - They “shall hold their sessions in-court, except under exceptional circumstances where sessions may be conducted through videoconferencing with prior approval from the Chief Justice, after consultations with the respective Division Chairpersons and First Division Working Chairperson.”

For more information about SC issuances, please contact:

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For more information regarding the issuances discussed above, please contact your account partner or [sshg@syciplaw.com](mailto:sshg@syciplaw.com) or [info@syciplaw.com](mailto:info@syciplaw.com).

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### Other COVID-19 related bulletins

The links to our earlier bulletins can be found at the SyCipLaw information hub, <https://syciplawresources.com/>.

Please note that there are other COVID-19 related government issuances that are not covered by our bulletins. For more information about other regulations, please contact your account partner or [sshg@syciplaw.com](mailto:sshg@syciplaw.com) or [info@syciplaw.com](mailto:info@syciplaw.com).

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