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Cimatu orders lockdown of DENR central office due to COVID-19 infections

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered a lockdown of the entire central office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Visayas Avenue in Quezon City after two employees tested positive for coronavirus.

“The lockdown takes effect in the afternoon of June 25 (Thursday) until June 27 (Saturday), during which disinfection and contact tracing will be conducted to stop the spread of COVID-19 within the DENR compound,” Cimatu said.

Cimatu issued the directive while supervising the government’s COVID-19 response in Cebu City as ordered by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte.

DENR Undersecretary and Spokesperson Benny D. Antiporda said the COVID-positive employees are assigned at the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), which office is located within the DENR compound.

“The two personnel were part of the skeleton force of the EMB, and they work directly with the office of the EMB Director,” Antiporda disclosed.

Antiporda said intensified sanitation procedures will be conducted during the lockdown, apart from the regular disinfection being done thrice a week at the DENR office grounds since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DENR lockdown is good for only two-and-a-half days, so that the agency’s skeleton workforce can immediately resume work on June 29, Antiporda said.

Antiporda said the DENR has sought the assistance of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) for the conduct of sanitation and disinfection of all buildings at the central office during the lockdown.

“We are tapping the assistance of the BFP, so that they can help us on the sanitation measures needed,” Antiporda said. “We will be using their equipment and we will be providing the disinfecting agents.”

Meanwhile, EMB Director William Cuñado said that all employees of the bureau will undergo self-quarantine for two weeks starting June 26 as a precautionary measure.

Cuñado said the EMB will continue to implement the alternative work arrangements as prescribed by the Civil Service Commission to ensure the safety and health not only of the employees, but also its stakeholders.
“We encourage our stakeholders to continue their transactions with EMB by maximizing our online services,” Cuñado said.

He said the bureau may be reached through its email address, recordscob@emb.gov.ph, for queries and other concerns about EMB services.

DENR press releases and other news/feature articles are posted at the DENR website: www.denr.gov.ph. For queries/comments, write: scis.pid@gmail.com