



Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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**AMENDING MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 2017-30 S. 2017 RELATIVE TO POLICIES
AND GUIDELINES ON FOREIGN TRAVEL AUTHORITY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES**

Memorandum Circular No. 2018-197
November 9, 2018

1.0 Background

In furtherance of OP Executive Order No. 459, s. 2005, streamlining the procedures in the disposition of requests of local government officials to travel abroad, as it relates to Sections 47 and 96 of the Local Government Code of 1991, these rules and regulations governing the foreign travel of local officials and employees are hereby promulgated.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum Circular is to provide amendments to DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2017-30 dated February 10, 2017, in order to promote administrative efficiency in the performance or delivery of Departmental functions and services.

3.0 Legal Compliance

- 3.1 OP Administrative Order No. 267, series of 1992.
- 3.2 OP Executive Order No. 459, series of 2005.
- 3.3 Section 47 and 96 of the Local Government Code of 1991.
- 3.4 DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2017-30, series of 2017.
- 3.5 OP MC No. 35, series of 2017.
- 3.6 OP Memorandum dated January 3, 2018, series of 2018.

4.0 Scope/Coverage

All local government officials and employees, including those in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, are covered by this Memorandum Circular.

5.0 Policy Content and Guidelines

5.1 Definition of Terms

- 5.1.1 **Sponsored Trip** means a foreign travel that is fully funded or subsidized by the inviting agency or organization.
- 5.1.2 **Official Time Only** means that, except for the payment of salary and other applicable emoluments for the duration of such trip, no other government expense such as international airfare (economy) and daily subsistence allowance is authorized.
- 5.1.3 **Official Business** refers to a foreign travel with entitlements, i.e., payment of international airfare (economy), or travel allowance as prescribed under OP Executive Order No. 298 s. 2004.

5.2 Nature of Travel

- 5.2.1 **Study trip.** It covers technical training or scholarship grant processed or coordinated either by the Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Local Government Academy of this Department, other national government agencies, international agencies, foreign governments, or as part of an existing partnership agreement between a local government unit in the country and its counterpart abroad.

A study trip is to be pursued on Official Time Only. However, if the host country or institution requires counterpart funding i.e., pre-departure expenses, with or without international airfare (economy) or with full or partial daily subsistence allowance, the same may be authorized on Official Business to the extent of the counterpart sharing.

- 5.2.2 **Non-study trip.** It refers to a foreign travel that is: (a) urgent and extremely necessary with a Learning Agenda which seek to improve or develop the knowledge, skills and service delivery of the participant, (b) expected to bring immediate benefit to the country particularly to the LGU such as, creation of employment, and such activities that directly address or respond to the actual capacity development needs or gaps identified based on the assessment of actual capacities, (c) clearly essential to Philippine international commitment, or (d) a part of a contractual obligation.

- 5.2.2.1 A non-study trip is pursued on **official time only** under the following circumstances:

5.2.2.1.a. To attend a conference, seminar or event organized by a local private organization; and

5.2.2.1.b. To attend a conference, seminar or event organized by an international private organization, the invitation of which is directly sent to the local government unit.

- 5.2.2.2 However, a non-study trip may be pursued on **official business only** under highly meritorious circumstances, and shall be limited to the following:

5.2.2.2.a. To attend a conference, seminar or event which is in accordance with the Capacity Development Agenda of the local government unit as reflected in the Annual Investment Plan, and organized by foreign government or by an international organization to which the Philippine Government is committed or invited to send representative(s);

5.2.2.2.b. To attend a conference, seminar or event which is in accordance with the Capacity Development Agenda of the local government unit as reflected in the Annual Investment Plan and organized by foreign private organization. Provided, that, invitation thereto should be sent through its respective government to the Philippine Government;

5.2.2.2.c. To attend a conference, seminar or event that is clearly intended to promote local government technical exchange and cooperation, or is a part of an existing sisterhood agreement between a foreign local government and the participating Philippine local government;

5.2.2.2.d. To undertake a site or product inspection which is stipulated in a duly perfected contract;

5.2.2.2.e. To undertake a national government agency-organized Study Cum Observation Tour, on such matters as trade, investment and tourism promotion. Provided, that, the activity is supported or endorsed by the central office of the agency. Provided, further, that there is a deliberate follow-up action embodied in an NGA-LGU After-Travel Roadmap for Development; and

5.2.2.2.f. To undertake a local government-initiated Study Cum Observation Tour outside the country which is in accordance: (i) under the DILG and DBM Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2, dated September 23, 2016, (ii) with the Capacity Development Agenda of the local government unit, and reflected in their Annual Investment Plan.

5.2.3 **Personal or Private Trip** refers to a foreign travel pursued for a *personal or private purpose* such as medical reason, emergency, and/or a special occasion. A special occasion is when the presence of a local government official or employee is deemed indispensable and other personal considerations such as attendance to a gathering of an organized association of Filipinos abroad or commemoration of a special event or festival celebration, social visit and the like.

A personal or private trip shall be undertaken while on an **Official Leave of Absence**.

5.3 Entitlements

5.3.1 Government expenditures relative to a Study Trip shall be limited to pre-departure expenses in the amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00), and to counterpart share, as applicable, and

5.3.2. For a Non-Study Trip under highly meritorious circumstances cited in Items 5.2.2.2.a. to 5.2.2.2.f., government expenditures may include international airfare (economy) and/or daily subsistence allowance based on the United Nations Development Program Index pursuant to Executive Order No. 298, s. 2004.

5.4 Approving Official

The Secretary of Interior and Local Government shall sign the Travel Authority of the following foreign trip:

- Provincial Governor, Mayor of Highly Urbanized City and Independent Component City, regardless of the nature, purpose, and duration of such travel,
- Mayor of Component City and Municipality, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Panlungsod and Bayan, and Barangay Elective Official including Sangguniang Kabataan, on official time only, or on official business, or when the travel duration exceeds three (3) calendar months, or during a period of emergency or crisis,
- Local Government Department Head, on official time only, or on official business, or when the travel duration exceeds three (3) calendar months, or during a period of emergency or crisis, and
- Local Government Employee, on official time only, or on official business.

5.5 Administrative Requirements

See attached Annex "A"

5.6 Filing of Application for Travel Authority

The application for Travel Authority, complete with all the required documents, must be filed at least ten (10) working days, for official purpose (official time only and official business) and at least ten (10) calendar days, for personal or private purpose, both prior to the date of departure, thru the Foreign Travel Authority (FTA) On-Line System at www.blgs-pcmd.com.

5.7 Other Rules and Regulations

- 5.7.1 In keeping with the policy to promote a high standard of ethics in public service, every local government official and employee shall refrain from accepting an invitation to travel abroad, directly or indirectly funded, fully or partially, by any contractor or supplier of goods, equipment and services, unless such travel is to be undertaken for the purpose of product inspection as part of a duly perfected contract.
- 5.7.2 As an important pillar of the Philippine relations with China, every local official or employee shall strictly observe the One-China Policy mandated in Presidential Executive Order No. 313, s.1987, Office of the President Memorandum Circular No. 148, s. 1992, and as reiterated in DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2008-150 dated October 2, 2008.
- 5.7.3 For a trip relating to: (a) sister city or twinning relationship; and (b) for purposes of promoting trade and investment, tourism or environmental protection, a maximum travel duration of three (3) calendar days (exclusive of travel time) and a maximum of three (3)-member delegation to represent the local government unit may be allowed, provided that: 1) the responsibility of each member is clearly defined and clearly related to his work or job in his official station; and 2) there is a clear added value of the trip in relation to an existing or planned scheme of the local government unit in furtherance of good governance and development. Provided further that, the size of the delegation must be kept to the barest minimum without sacrificing effective representation of the LGU, meaning, where two (2) or more officials or employees perform or act in the same capacity during the activity proper, reduction of the members of the delegation is called for. In the event that, two (2) or more tasks can be handled by one (1) person, there is no need for a local government unit to send additional participant(s) to handle such tasks separately.
- 5.7.4 For a trip relating to Study Tours or Lakbay Aral, and Benchmarking Programs, an endorsement from the Executive Director of the Local Government Academy, shall form part of the requirement. A maximum travel duration of five (5) days (exclusive of travel time) and a maximum of five (5) participants per trip may be allowed. In the event the number of participants exceed five (5), approval from the Office of the President is required.
- 5.7.5 An extended stay in the place(s) of destination beyond the authorized period shall be considered as *personal or private in purpose* thus, the official or employee must file his/her corresponding application for a leave of absence.

- 5.7.6 In accordance with the Commission on Audit Circular No. 2012-003 dated October 29, 2012, the following expenditures shall not be allowed:
- 5.7.6.1 Excessive allowances to participants;
 - 5.7.6.2 Payment for rent of expensive halls or rooms in luxury hotels and restaurants; and
 - 5.7.6.3 Payment of accommodation expenses in five star hotels.
- 5.7.7 No government official or employee shall be allowed to depart for any travel abroad, even if such travel is personal or private purpose, unless such official or employee has duly accomplished the requisite leave forms and has obtained a travel authorization from appropriate authorities.
- 5.7.8 Travel abroad of a Local Chief Executive while on leave of absence or for a private purpose shall not exceed: (a) ten (10) consecutive days except in highly meritorious cases, and prolonged absences must be properly explained or justified; and (b) thirty (30) cumulative days for one (1) year.
- 5.7.9 A Mayor of a Component City or Municipality or Punong Barangay who intends to pursue a personal or private trip that does not extend to more than three (3) months, or when such trip is to be undertaken during a period where there is no emergency or crisis, shall notify the Provincial Governor, or in the case of the Punong Barangay, the City or Municipal Mayor, in writing, with the duly accomplished leave application filed for the approval, or appropriate action of, the Provincial Governor or City or Municipal Mayor concerned. In the event that the leave application is approved, the said approved leave application shall serve as the Travel Authorization relative to such personal or private trip. Provided that, when the application for leave of absence is not acted upon within five (5) working days after receipt thereof, such application for leave of absence shall be deemed approved, as provided for in Section 47, Approval of Leaves of Absence, of the Local Government Code of 1991.
- 5.7.10 A Vice Governor, City Vice Mayor or Municipal Vice Mayor who intends to pursue a personal or private trip that does not extend to more than three (3) months, or when such trip is to be undertaken during a period where there is no emergency or crisis, shall notify the Local Chief Executive concerned, in writing, with the duly accomplished leave application filed for the approval, or other appropriate action of, the Local Chief Executive. In the event that the leave application is approved, the said approved leave application shall serve as the Travel Authorization relative to such personal or private trip. Provided that, when the application for leave of absence is not acted upon within five (5) working days after receipt thereof, the application for leave of absence shall be deemed approved, as provided for in Section 47, Approval of Leaves of Absence, of the Local Government Code of 1991.
- 5.7.11 A Sanggunian Member who intends to pursue a personal or private trip that does not extend to more than three (3) months, or when such trip is to be undertaken during a period where there is no emergency or crisis, shall notify their respective Presiding Officers, the Vice Governor in the case of Sanggunian Panlalawigan Member, the City Vice Mayor in the case of the Sanggunian Panlungsod Member, or the Municipal Vice Mayor in the case of the Sanggunian Bayan Member, in writing, with the duly accomplished leave application filed for the approval, or other appropriate action of, the concerned Presiding Officer. In the event that the leave application is approved, the said approved leave application shall serve as the Travel Authorization relative to such personal or private trip. Provided that, when the application for leave of absence is not acted upon within five (5) working days after receipt thereof, the application for leave of absence shall be deemed approved, as provided for in Section 47, Approval of Leaves of Absence, of the Local Government Code of 1991.

- 5.7.12 All personal or private trips of all local elective and appointive officials with the rank of local government department head, with the period of travel extending to more than three (3) months, or during a period of emergency or crisis, shall be subject to the approval of the Secretary of Interior and Local Government or his authorized representative. However, if the personal or private trip of a local government department head does not extend to more than three (3) months, or is not to be undertaken during a period of emergency or crisis, a travel authority from the Secretary is not required. Provided that, the concerned local official shall first secure a written permission from local authorities who are empowered by law, rules or regulations to act on such matter, with the duly accomplished leave application filed for the approval, or appropriate action of, competent local authorities. Provided further, that when the application for leave of absence is not acted upon within five (5) working days after receipt thereof, the application for leave of absence shall be deemed approved, as provided for in Section 47, Approval of Leaves of Absence, of the Local Government Code of 1991.
- 5.7.13 A provincial, city, municipal or barangay appointive official or employee, except for a local government department head, who intends to pursue a personal or private trip, regardless of the duration of such trip, shall first secure a written permission from local authorities who are empowered by law, rules and regulations to act on such matter, with the duly accomplished leave application filed for the approval, or appropriate action of, competent local authorities. In the event that the leave application is approved, the said approved leave application shall serve as the Travel Authorization relative to such personal or private trip. Provided that, when the application for leave of absence is not acted upon within five (5) working days after receipt thereof, the application for leave of absence shall be deemed approved, as provided for in Section 47, Approval of Leaves of Absence, of the Local Government Code of 1991.
- 5.7.14 In case of political conflict or issues, or when a local chief executive concerned failed to act within the prescribed period under the Local Government Code of 1991, on a request for an authority to travel of any local official or employee, the Secretary of Interior and Local Government may issue a Department Authorization as part of his supervisory power, and in adherence to the Constitutional provision protecting the human right of a person to travel under Section 6, Chapter VIII, 1997 Philippine Constitution.
- 5.7.15 The Foreign Travel Authority On-Line System will be automatically closed at 5:00 pm every Friday and will be opened at 8:00 am every Monday, to give way for system maintenance.
- 5.7.16 The Department thru the Bureau of Local Government Supervision shall closely coordinate with the Bureau of Immigration in enforcing the provisions, and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to accomplish the objectives of this Circular.

6.0 Recall of Authority

The Travel Authority issued to any local government official or employee may be recalled by the Secretary, or his duly authorized representative, in case of emergency, and/or natural or human-induced disaster.

7.0 Grounds for Non-Processing or Disapproval of Request

1. Incomplete administrative requirements shall not be processed and shall be returned to the concerned party without favorable action.
2. Any request submitted not within 10 working days prior to the date of departure shall be automatically denied for processing.
3. Any request submitted on weekends and on holidays shall be processed only on the next working day, provided the period of submission is within 10 working days prior to the date of departure.
4. No post-travel authority shall be issued.

8.0 Submission of Reports

8.1 The Bureau of Local Government Supervision shall submit a Quarterly Report to the Office of the President thru the Executive Secretary, in electronic copy, on the Lists of Travel Authorities issued to the following local government officials.

- (a) Provincial Governor, Mayor of Highly Urbanized City and Independent Component City regardless of the nature, purpose and duration of such travel, and
- (b) Mayor of Component City and Municipality, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Panlungsod and Bayan, and Barangay Elective Official including Sangguniang Kabataan,

for travels undertaken on official time only, or on official business, or when the duration exceeds three (3) calendar months or during a period of emergency or crisis.

8.2 The following local authorities are required to submit to the Office of the President a Quarterly List of travel authorities, in electronic copy, cc: the Director, BLGS:

- (a) Provincial Governor, for travel authority issued to Component City and Municipal Mayors, and Vice Governor;
- (b) Component City and Municipal Mayor, for travel authority issued to Vice Mayor and Punong Barangays;
- (c) Vice Governor, for travel authority issued to the Members of Sangguniang Panlalawigan,
- (d) Vice Mayor, for travel authority issued to the Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod and Bayan; and
- (e) Punong Barangay, for travel authority issued to the Members of Sangguniang Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan,

for travels undertaken while on leave of absence that does not exceed three (3) calendar months or not during a period of emergency or crisis.

8.3 For International Benchmarking Programs, Study Tours or Lakbay Aral activities participants are required to submit their individual Learning Agenda and/or Re-entry Action Plan prior to the travel, and Post Activity Report within five (5) days upon return to official station.

8.4 The members of a delegation who participated in an international conference or convention shall submit a Report to the Office of the President thru the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, with appropriate recommendation, if any, on the conference or seminar attended or mission undertaken by the local official or employee, within 30 days after the closing of the conference or convention.

8.5 Local officials and employees shall submit a report, with appropriate recommendations, if any, on the conference or seminar attended or mission undertaken, to the head of agency within 30 days after his/her return to official station.

9.0 Sanctions

- 9.1 Non-compliance with this Circular, as well as other applicable laws, rules and regulations, shall be sufficient ground for the outright denial or non-processing of requests for foreign travel authority, entitlement to travel expenses and allowances.
- 9.2 Failure to comply with the above directives may result in the filing of administrative actions for misconduct, insubordination and other related offenses under the Civil Service Commission Revised Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service and/or relevant laws, rules and regulations.

10.0 Responsibilities of the DILG Regional Directors and the ARMM Regional Governor, through the DILG-ARMM Secretary

- 10.1 Cause the immediate and widest dissemination of this Memorandum Circular within their Region; and
- 10.2 Ensure that this Issuance is effectively communicated to concerned local authorities.

11.0 Repealing Clause

All DILG issuances which are inconsistent with this Memorandum Circular are hereby amended or repealed accordingly.

Any future reference relating to rules and regulations governing foreign travels of local government officials and employees shall be made in reference to this Memorandum Circular.

12.0 Effectivity

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

13.0 Approving Authority


EDUARDO M. AÑO
Secretary

 
DILG-08EC 07012016-27476

14.0 Feedback

For related queries, kindly contact the Bureau of Local Government Supervision at Telephone Nos. 8763454 loc 4210 or at email address at lad_blg@yahoo.com

Annex A

Administrative Requirements

A. For Study Trip

1. Endorsement from:
 - i. the Local Chief Executive (if applicant is a Component City and Municipal Mayor, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Punong Barangay and LG employees);
 - ii. the Presiding Officer (if applicant is a Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Employees); and
 - iii. the Punong Barangay (Sangguniang Barangay Member and Barangay Employees including Sangguniang Kabataan)
2. Invitation Letter from the host country or sponsoring agency
3. Acceptance letter from CHED, TESDA, LGA, organizer, or donor, as applicable
4. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case.
5. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities.

B. For Non-Study Trip

- Attendance to a Training, Seminar and/or Workshop
 1. Endorsement from:
 - i. the Local Chief Executive (if applicant is a Component City and Municipal Mayor, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Punong Barangay and LG employees);
 - ii. the Presiding Officer (if applicant is a Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Employees); and
 - iii. the Punong Barangay (Sangguniang Barangay Member and Barangay Employees including Sangguniang Kabataan)
 2. Invitation Letter from the host country, sponsoring agency, or organizer
 3. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case
 4. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities
- Attendance to an event that promotes Local Government Technical Exchange and Cooperation or Sister-City/Town Twinning relations
 1. Endorsement from:
 - i. the Local Chief Executive (if applicant is a Component City and Municipal Mayor, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Punong Barangay and LG employees);
 - ii. the Presiding Officer (if applicant is a Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Employees); and
 - iii. the Punong Barangay (Sangguniang Barangay Member and Barangay Employees including Sangguniang Kabataan)
 2. Invitation Letter from the host country, sponsoring agency, or organizer
 3. Copy or draft of the Memorandum of Agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding
 4. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case.
 5. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities

- LGUs initiated Study Cum Observation Tour or Lakbay Aral, Benchmarking Programs
 1. Endorsement from:
 - i. the Local Chief Executive (if applicant is a Component City and Municipal Mayor, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Punong Barangay and LG employees);
 - ii. the Presiding Officer (if applicant is a Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Employees); and
 - iii. the Punong Barangay (Sangguniang Barangay Member and Barangay Employees including Sangguniang Kabataan)
 2. Activity Design
 3. Itinerary of Travel
 4. Sangguniang Resolution relative to the proposed travel
 5. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case
 6. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities
 7. Endorsement from the Local Government Academy

- National Government Agency organized Study Cum Observation Tour
 1. Endorsement from:
 - i. the Local Chief Executive (if applicant is a Component City and Municipal Mayor, Vice Governor, Vice Mayor, Punong Barangay and LG employees);
 - ii. the Presiding Officer (if applicant is a Sangguniang Panlalawigan Member, Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang Employees); and
 - iii. the Punong Barangay (Sangguniang Barangay Member and Barangay Employees including Sangguniang Kabataan)
 2. Invitation Letter from the host country, sponsoring agency or organizer
 3. Endorsement from the Central or Regional National Government Agencies, i.e., (a) Department of Trade and Industry (for trade and investment purpose); (b) Department of Tourism (for tourism purpose); (c) Department of Environment and Natural Resources (for environment purpose), among others
 4. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case
 5. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities

If the request is on official business, the following will form part of the requirements:

- 1. Endorsement from the Central National Government Agencies, stating that the activity of the trip is in consonance with the overall program and/or equivalent initiative of the concerned NGAs;**
- 2. Certification stating that the purpose of the trip is the within the LG Capacity Development Agenda; and**
- 3. Statement as to the immediate and direct benefits that may be derived from the said foreign travel.**

C. For Personal or Private Trip of:

- Governors, Mayors of Highly Urbanized Cities and Independent Component Cities
 1. Duly Accomplished Application Form for Leave of Absence
 2. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case
 3. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities
 4. Medical Certificate for medical reasons

- Other Elected Officials and LGU Department Heads when the trip exceeds three (3) calendar months
 1. Approved Leave of Absence
 2. A duly notarized Sworn Statement attesting that no administrative charge or criminal case has been filed or pending against the applicant; or Oath of Undertaking, when the applicant has a pending case
 3. Clearance from Money and Property Accountabilities
 4. Medical Certificate for medical reasons