

PRESS RELEASE

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BI allows temporary visitors to pay ECCs at int'l airports

Bureau of Immigration (BI) announced that they will temporarily be allowing holders of temporary visitors visa, who have stayed in the country for less than one year, to acquire their Emigration Clearance Certificates (ECCs) at the international airports.

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente said that the decision followed after Luzon was placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

An ECC is issued to temporary visitors who have stayed in the country for more than six months, and to holders of residence, work, or students visas who wish to leave the country for good.

According to Morente, they have also suspended biometrics capturing and fingerprinting, and the issuance of Special Security Registration Numbers (SSRNs) as requirements for processing of Emigration Clearance Certificates (ECCs) to ensure compliance with physical distancing directives.

"The Bureau complied with the directive from Malacanang by continuing to operate with a skeletal workforce," Morente said.

"We have put this temporary measure in place to prevent the influx of foreign nationals leaving the country who will be applying to process their ECCs, essentially minimizing physical contact with the traveling public," Morente added.

Morente stated that the Bureau will still counter match the applications with their derogatory database to ensure that no foreigner will leave country with a pending case.

"We will still conduct derogatory records checking before giving clearance to ensure that any foreign national who wish to leave the country has no pending obligation with the government," Morente said.

Morente then appealed to the public to bear with the Bureau amid the crisis. "We have instructed our men to hasten processing of Immigration requirements and lessen person to person contact," he said. "All our offices remain open despite having a skeletal work force, to provide essential immigration services," he added.

It can be recalled that the BI issued an earlier advisory suspending several transactions in Luzon, including tourist visa extensions except for foreign nationals intending to depart the country. In said directive, aliens whose visas will expire during the ECQ may file for extension after the quarantine period sans penalties. #