



Republic of the Philippines
LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD
Quezon City

Memorandum Circular No. 59, Series of 2020

SUBJECT: PANDEMIC GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING BACK TO WORK

The following internal guidelines for the Legal Education Board (LEB) office and personnel shall take effect for the remaining months of the year 2020, and upon review, may be extended to the year 2021, in order to ensure occupational health and safety in the agency operations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It is understood that these rules shall be implemented under the broader guidelines of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

Section 1
DEFINITION OF TERMS

- 1.1. Unless particularly defined under Section 1, the terms used in these guidelines shall have their ordinary meaning, and if subject to interpretation, shall be read in consonance with public health advisories and IATF guidelines.
- 1.2. **Potential Carrier** – A person who has exhibited the symptoms for COVID-19. A potential carrier can be classified as a *Suspect* or a *Probable Case*.
- 1.3. **Suspect Case** – The following are considered as suspect cases as per the DOH's classification:
 - 1.3.1. A person with severe acute respiratory illness – described as having the following symptoms:
 - 1.3.1.1. Fever of 38°C or higher,
 - 1.3.1.2. Cough or sore throat,
 - 1.3.1.3. Shortness of breath, and,
 - 1.3.1.4. May even include severe pneumonia –
 - 1.3.1.5. Whose cause is undetermined prior to testing for coronavirus.
 - 1.3.2. A person with influenza-like illness – described as having the following symptoms:
 - 1.3.2.1. Fever of 38°C or higher, and,
 - 1.3.2.2. Cough or sore throat –
 - 1.3.2.3. Who lives in or has traveled to an area that reported local transmission of the coronavirus during the 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms.
 - 1.3.3. A person with influenza-like illness, and,

- 1.3.3.1. Has had contact with a confirmed/probable case of COVID-19 in the two days prior to the onset of that confirmed/probable case's illness or before that confirmed/probable case showed negative on repeat testing.
- 1.3.4. A person with fever or cough or shortness of breath or other respiratory symptoms and is one of the following:
 - 1.3.4.1. 60 years old or older;
 - 1.3.4.2. With a comorbidity or pre-existing illness;
 - 1.3.4.3. In high-risk pregnancy; or,
 - 1.3.4.4. A health worker.
- 1.4. **Probable Case** - A probable case of COVID 19 is:
 - 1.4.1. A suspect case who has been tested for COVID-19 but the results are inconclusive.
 - 1.4.2. A suspect case who has tested positive for COVID-19 but the test was not conducted in a national or subnational coronavirus reference laboratory, or an officially accredited laboratory for confirmatory testing.
- 1.5. **Exposure by Contact** - Exposure by contact means that a person is directly exposed to a COVID-19 patient through the following methods:
 - 1.5.1. Providing direct care to suspect, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 patients without the proper use of PPEs;
 - 1.5.2. Face-to-face contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 meter and more than 15 minutes;
 - 1.5.3. Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19; or,
 - 1.5.4. Other situation as indicated by local risk assessments.
- 1.6. **Exposure by Travel** – The type of exposure that is gained by travelling from a country / area where there is a sustained community level transmission to an area with no sustained community transmission.
- 1.7. **Exposure by Residence** – The type of exposure gained by someone who stays in a locality where there is a sustained community level transmission.
- 1.8. **Vulnerable Work Force** – This refers to employees who are believed to be highly susceptible to COVID-19. Vulnerable workforce includes the following:
 - 1.8.1. Employees with health risks such as high-risk pregnancy, 60 years of age and above, any age with co-morbidities or pre-existing illness (hypertension, diabetes, asthma, COPD, cancer, blood dyscrasia, chronic liver and kidney disease or with immunocompromised status); and,
 - 1.8.2. Employees who live with immediate household members who are classified as vulnerable individuals.
- 1.9. **Work from Home** – An arrangement in which an employee stays at home to work instead of coming to office. Employees who are working from home are expected to be reachable thru phone calls and texts, emails, and or messages in messaging platforms (i.e. Facebook, Viber, Telegram, Google Hangouts, etc.)
- 1.10. **Symptoms** – COVID-19 symptoms include: sore throat, body pains, headache, fever, including other flu-like symptoms (cough, cold, body malaise, fatigue).

Section 2 SELF-SCREENING

- 2.1. **Purpose.** In order to make sure that one is fit to report back to work in the physical office, one must be able to assure to the best of their ability that they:
 - 2.1.1. Are COVID-19 free;
 - 2.1.2. Have not come in contact with a potential carrier; or,
 - 2.1.3. Have not been tagged as a *Suspect* or a *Probable Case* (as per DOH's classification).
- 2.2. **Tools for Self-Assessment.** Prior to reporting back to the physical office, the employee must first answer the **Self Screening Test**, which is found in *Annex A*.
 - 2.2.1. The **Self Screening Test** will help the employee determine if, following minimum health standards, they are clear for work.
 - 2.2.2. The self-screening process will allow the employee to check themselves for any possible exposures, and presence of symptoms and enable them to make an informed decision about their own health condition and fitness for work. A reference checklist of symptoms is provided in *Annex B*.
- 2.3. **Personal hygiene materials.** Once clear for work, the employee must make sure that they keep the following with them at all times:
 - 2.3.1. Alcohol or hand sanitizer;
 - 2.3.2. Face mask (either surgical or cloth, but make sure that there is a ply of tissue inside the cloth face mask);
 - 2.3.3. Tissues or wet wipes; and,
 - 2.3.4. LEB ID and or any Government Issued ID.
- 2.4. **Honesty system.** The self-screening system will only work if employees remain honest and transparent. Employees are therefore expected to be truthful in their self-assessment to protect their health and the health of others.
- 2.5. **Regular Self-Checking.** Employees must conduct the **Self Screening Test** every time prior to reporting back to the physical office.
 - 2.5.1. They shall also be mindful of any changes to their health while at the office.
 - 2.5.1.1. Any employee who experiences the onset of any of the symptoms while in the office shall immediately advise their superior or the officer of the day.
 - 2.5.1.2. The case isolation and monitoring protocol shall be engaged.
 - 2.5.2. If after reporting for work in the physical office, an employee determines that they have begun experiencing the onset of any of the symptoms, they shall immediately advise their superior, and the case isolation and monitoring protocol shall be engaged, as appropriate.

Section 3

PERSONAL HYGIENE AND SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

- 3.1. **Personal cleanliness must be maintained.**
 - 3.1.1. Employees must disinfect themselves before entering the premises. Disinfectants and footbath are available in the lobby.
 - 3.1.2. Employees must regularly clean and disinfect their workplace (tables, light switches, handles, desktops - keyboard and mouse, laptops, phones) regularly within the day. Each employee has the responsibility to keep his or her personal workspace clean and disinfected all the time.
- 3.2. **Physical distancing must be properly observed.**

- 3.2.1. The office has limited space; thus, employees must be careful and mindful in order to observe proper physical distancing. Employees tables must be six (6) feet apart, and as far as practicable, should all be facing the same way.
- 3.2.2. Employees (with no exception) must always observe proper physical and social distancing of **one (1) meter**. To properly enforce this rule, markers shall be placed in the office to guide everyone in the observance of proper distancing.
- 3.2.3. Employees must avoid gathering in the pantry. As much as possible, there should only be a maximum of **three (3) persons present** in the pantry at any given time. When needed, a person must ask someone to first leave the pantry in order not to violate this section.
- 3.2.4. All flag ceremonies and similar office gatherings shall be suspended until further notice. However, the National Flag shall be respectfully raised and lowered, and the National Anthem shall be played with honor at the expected time.

3.3. **Proper hygiene is expected of everyone.**

- 3.3.1. Employees are also encouraged to bring their own food, utensils and beverage containers, and avoid sharing of food or of food utensils.
- 3.3.2. Employees must observe proper sneezing and coughing etiquette. Guide on how to's (proper sneezing, coughing, and washing of hands) will be posted in conspicuous places inside the office.
- 3.3.3. Employees must wash and disinfect their hands regularly.

Section 4 SANITATION GUIDELINES

- 4.1. **Occupational health and safety point person.** One or two occupational health and safety point persons will be assigned to manage and oversee the proper implementation of health protocols as well as individual and workplace guidelines.
- 4.2. **Sanitation materials.** The following shall be procured by the agency and ready by the time of return to work:
 - 4.2.1. Alcohol or hand sanitizer placed in a conspicuous place;
 - 4.2.2. Aerosol sprays for the regular disinfection;
 - 4.2.3. Soap, tissue and other hygiene materials; and,
 - 4.2.4. Non-contact digital temperature scanner for the use of guards.
- 4.3. **Protective gear.** The following standards for personal protection gear shall be maintained:
 - 4.3.1. Employees must always have their face masks, alcohol or sanitizers and tissues to their personal effects.
 - 4.3.2. In addition, all employees are required to wear a mask while in the office.
 - 4.3.3. Security personnel must wear face shields with masks underneath.
 - 4.3.4. Members of the disinfecting team must always wear the necessary protection equipment such as face shields with masks underneath, jacket, and disposable gloves.
- 4.4. **Two-Step regular disinfection.** Aside from the normal cleaning operations of the maintenance personnel especially on frequently touched surfaces, the office shall be regularly disinfected twice every work day.
 - 4.4.1. *Main disinfection step.* Primary and thorough disinfection of the office premises shall be done every day at the end of the physical operations of the agency.
 - 4.4.1.1. This shall be scheduled at 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM.
 - 4.4.1.2. The disinfection shall cover the entire office space, work station, pantry and toilet, as well as office furniture and equipment.
 - 4.4.1.3. The disinfection shall be facilitated by the office maintenance personnel.

- 4.4.1.4. No other personnel, except the security staff, shall be allowed back to the office after the disinfection for the remaining of the day.
- 4.4.2. *Supplementary disinfection step.* A less thorough disinfection shall be done at the beginning of the work day to supplement the cleaning done end-of-day before.
 - 4.4.2.1. This shall be scheduled at 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM.
 - 4.4.2.2. The disinfection shall primarily involve the cleaning by the employees of their work stations, and the normal cleaning operations of the maintenance personnel.
 - 4.4.2.3. More detailed sanitation and disinfection steps will be provided to the employees familiarize themselves in cleaning and disinfecting their own workplace.
- 4.4.3. *Emergency disinfection protocol.* An emergency thorough disinfection of the office premises shall immediately be implemented at any point upon the happening of any of the following situations:
 - 4.4.3.1. An employee experiences the onset of any of the symptoms while in the office and the isolation and monitoring protocol has been engaged;
 - 4.4.3.2. After monitoring of a risk case, the office quarantine protocol has been engaged.
- 4.5. **Foot baths.** Foot baths will be provided at the entrance of the building. Everyone must first walkthrough the foot bath before entering the premises.
- 4.6. **Temperature and visible symptoms screening.** All individuals will be screened first outside the lobby before being allowed to enter inside the premises.
 - 4.6.1. Security Personnel shall be equipped with a non-contact digital temperature scanner.
 - 4.6.2. Each individual who wish to enter the premises, who should all be wearing the required face masks, must first have their temperatures taken, **with no exceptions.**
 - 4.6.2.1. Employees will be allowed to enter the premises, when not denied entry.
 - 4.6.2.2. All other individuals, however, will not be allowed to enter the premises **with no exceptions**, and they will only be allowed to engage in the very limited physical transactions available for public services outside the lobby.
 - 4.6.2.3. All individuals allowed entry to the office premises shall be asked to provide their contact details for record purposes.
 - 4.6.3. The following shall be denied entry based on health concerns:
 - 4.6.3.1. Anyone who will register to have a temperature reading of at least **37.5°C** (on their first and second try) shall not be allowed to go inside the premises.
 - 4.6.3.2. All individuals showing any of the symptoms, or not wearing face masks, will also be denied entry into the office premises.
 - 4.6.4. The case isolation and monitoring protocols must be observed in dealing with persons denied entry on the basis of health concerns.
- 4.7. **Toilet use.** Restrooms shall be maintained with a higher level of sanitation.
 - 4.7.1. Restrooms shall be regularly disinfected within the day, at least once every hour.
 - 4.7.2. Sanitation materials and disinfectants shall be conspicuously placed inside the restroom for ready use.
 - 4.7.3. Individuals using the restroom are expected to disinfect the restroom surfaces after every use, or shall notify the maintenance personnel to disinfect when needed.
 - 4.7.4. No utensils shall be cleaned or stored within the restrooms.

- 4.8. **Use of air conditioning units.** Unless necessary, the use of aircon units shall be heavily discouraged to prevent aerosol transmission. Instead, opening of windows or use of alternative cooling methods must be used.
- 4.9. **Office vehicles.** All vehicles shall be regularly cleaned and disinfected following the two-step regular disinfection procedure. When the emergency disinfection protocol is engaged, the vehicle used by the case risk shall be prohibited from being further used for the remainder of the day.
- 4.10. **Deliveries.** All deliveries and document drop-offs shall be allowed as long as the packages undergo proper disinfection and sanitation process.

Section 5 PUBLIC SERVICES DELIVERY AND MODIFIED OPERATIONS

- 5.1. **Migration of services.** All public services shall be migrated to virtual platforms using online and internet technology, and phone advising. These virtual platforms shall allow for the holding of all meetings, public consultations and similar gatherings using online technology.
- 5.2. **Physical transactions.** No physical transactions shall be entertained at any point.
 - 5.2.1. Clients who have not been denied entry will be advised to facilitate their transactions through the virtual platforms.
 - 5.2.2. Clients may be given paper to write their queries on, asked to drop their document off, and told to expect a response via their emails or phone.
 - 5.2.3. Document drop-off and pick-up are also allowed.
 - 5.2.4. As an exception, however, only in extremely necessary cases may limited physical transactions be allowed.
 - 5.2.4.1. The cases that are considered extremely necessary are those that involve clients who have travelled from outside Mega Manila to visit the LEB office, or regardless where they are from, is shown to have exerted great effort in order to transact physically, or any similar situation based on humanitarian grounds.
 - 5.2.4.2. In these limited physical transactions, only phone advising using the local trunk line system will be allowed.
- 5.3. **Streamlined process.** Separate guidelines for virtual platforms and streamlined regulatory operations that will outline the public services delivery of the agency shall be issued.

Section 6 ALTERNATIVE WORK SET-UP AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

- 6.1. In the course of the public health emergency, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the work schedule in the agency shall be adjusted to match and support the migration of public services to virtual platforms.
- 6.2. **Adjustments to the work schedule.** Following both IATF and Civil Service Commission guidelines, a specific alternative work schedule shall be developed for the personnel.
 - 6.2.1. Whenever allowed, work-from-home and a skeleton staff system shall be encouraged, and the personnel present in any given work day shall be limited to 50% of the total staff. Vulnerable employees, in particular, are expected to apply for a full work-from-home schedule.
 - 6.2.2. When engaged in a work-from-home set-up, employees are tasked to be on call during the duration of their work hours through all the ordinary communication channels. The

appropriate daily time recording or accomplishment reporting system will also be implemented.

6.2.3. The alternative work schedule shall be reviewed monthly and revised when necessary for safety and related purposes. Whenever the office quarantine protocol is engaged, the alternative work schedule is suspended.

6.3. **Transportation services.** In the context of expected increased difficulty for public transportation, and in an effort to ensure the minimizing of exposure risks for employees, the agency will provide a free transportation service.

6.3.1. A specific transportation route and schedule shall be developed for the personnel.

6.3.2. These transportation services must always have alcohol and or sanitizers and must also observe proper physical distancing.

6.3.3. Those who wish to do a bi-modal mode of transportation (e.g. biking to work or to a pick-up point) should coordinate with the occupational health and safety officer.

Section 7 CASE ISOLATION AND MONITORING

7.1. If any individual is refused entry to the office premises on health concerns, or an employee is isolated because of the onset of any symptom, the following protocol shall be engaged:

7.2. **Risky case.** The following individuals are considered risky cases under this protocol:

7.2.1. An employee or client who wishes to enter the office premises but during the temperature and visible symptoms screening is determined to be showing symptoms;

7.2.2. Any employee who experiences the onset of any symptom while in the office; or,

7.2.3. Any employee who, after reporting to the physical office, shall experience any of the symptoms at home.

7.3. **Denying entry.**

7.3.1. Any individual who, upon temperature and visible symptoms screening, is determined to be a risky case shall be denied entry.

7.3.2. If the individual does not seem to require assistance, then no further interaction shall be made between the security staff and the client. The client shall be asked to leave immediately.

7.3.3. If the individual seems to require assistance, then the specific isolation protocols shall be engaged.

7.4. **Isolation protocol.**

7.4.1. A risky case who requires assistance shall be immediately isolated and placed in a designated holding area outside the main office premises.

7.4.2. Only the occupational health and safety officer, wearing the required protection gear, shall be allowed to consult and assist the risky case. If the risky case, is an employee, the officer, before approaching the holding area, shall also collect the employee's personal effects, place these into a plastic bag and bring to the holding area.

7.4.3. The risky case shall be assisted for them to get home, by providing them with a phone call and other similar help.

7.4.4. If the risky case requires more critical assistance because of the nature of their condition, the occupational health and safety officer shall offer calling emergency health services.

7.4.5. When the risky case has successfully vacated from the designated holding area, the occupational health and safety officer shall then engage the monitoring protocol.

7.4.6. If it is an employee that becomes a risky case, the emergency disinfection protocol shall be engaged.

7.5. Monitoring protocol.

- 7.5.1. The conditions of all risky cases conditions shall be regularly monitored by the occupational health and safety officer. The monitoring must be done at least once a day for 14 days.
- 7.5.2. The officer shall, to the best of their ability, keep track of the changes in symptoms and other conditions of the risky case.
- 7.5.3. If in the monitoring process, it is determined that the risky case's symptoms have worsened to make them a Suspect Case, has become a Probable Case, or has tested positive for COVID-19, then the office quarantine protocol shall be engaged.
- 7.5.4. The monitoring process shall be continued for each risky case until after 14 days, or the patient has recovered, whichever entails a longer period.

7.6. Office quarantine protocol.

- 7.6.1. Other than the Chairman, only the Executive Committee, upon recommendation of the occupational health and safety officer, shall have the authority to engage the office quarantine protocol.
- 7.6.2. When engaged, the Executive Committee shall coordinate immediately with the local barangay and city public and health officials for their information.
- 7.6.3. The office shall immediately be vacated, and the emergency disinfection protocol shall be engaged.
- 7.6.4. The entire office operations shall be migrated to virtual platforms for 14 days covering the quarantine period, and no personnel shall be allowed to return to work during this period. The public shall be properly informed of such fact.
- 7.6.5. After 14 days, the Executive Committee, shall reassess whether the quarantine period shall be extended.

7.7. Recovered employees. Employees who will be afflicted with COVID-19 shall be extended all available and allowable assistance by the agency.

- 7.7.1. When the employee has fully recovered, a health certificate shall be required for the employee to be able to resume work.
- 7.7.2. For employees who are *Suspect* or *Possible Case*, or has *Exposure from Travel, Close Contact* or *Residence*, they shall, before being allowed to report to work in the physical office, be required to secure a Certificate of Completion of the 14-day quarantine period.

7.8. Readiness for Emergency.

- 7.8.1. All employees are expected to prepare for emergency evacuation of premises when necessary.
- 7.8.2. Employees are therefore required to keep their work stations and personal effects in proper order to effectuate their prompt exit from the office premises when necessary.
- 7.8.3. Employees shall also regularly store their virtual work files on online and movable storage devices.

**Section 8
IMPLEMENTATION**

8.1. **Coverage.** These guidelines are immediately executory and shall apply until revoked.

8.2. **Adjustments in implementation.** As reasonably required by exigency, the Chairman or the Executive Committee may adjust these guidelines to facilitate the accomplishment of occupational health and safety for the agency's personnel and ensure faithful compliance with national government directives and public health advisories.

8.3. **Violations.** Employees who are reported to have violated these guidelines shall be subjected to proper administrative disciplinary proceedings, and penalized accordingly. They shall also be required to work from home until directed otherwise.

Issued under the seal of the Legal Education Board this 8th day of May 2020 in Quezon City.

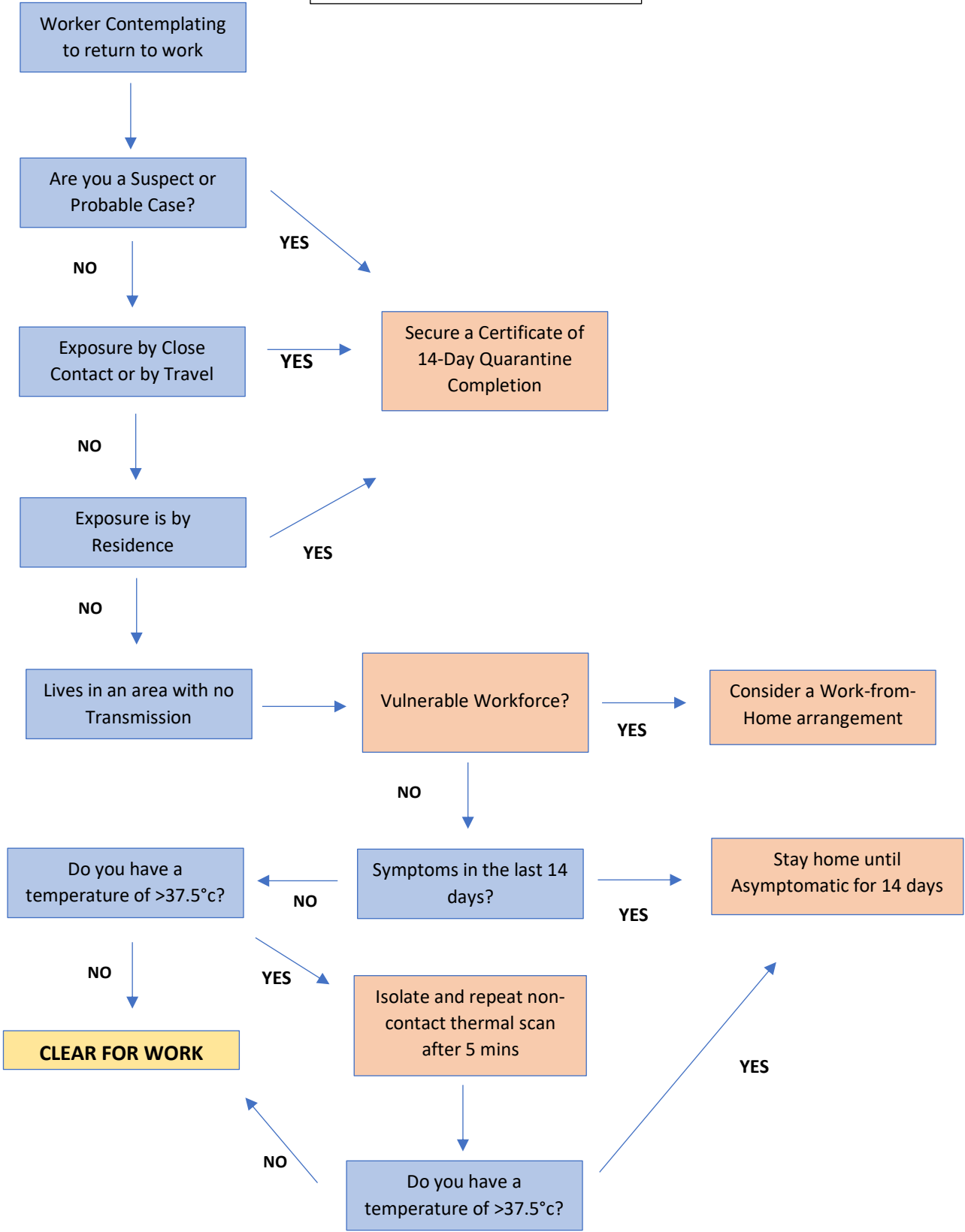
For the Board:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zenaida N. Elepaño', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

ZENAIDA N. ELEPAÑO
OIC, Commissioner

ANNEX A

SELF SCREENING TEST



ANNEX B

SYMPTOMS CHECKLIST

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cough | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sore throat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss of taste or smell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Chills | <input type="checkbox"/> | Diarrhea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Repeated shaking with chills | <input type="checkbox"/> | Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Muscle pain | <input type="checkbox"/> | Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Headache | | |