



PNP urges public to follow rules on face shields

By **EMMANUEL TUPAS**

Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Guillermo Eleazar yesterday urged the people to comply with President Duterte's directive retaining the mandatory use of face shields on top of masks in public places to avoid getting infected with COVID-19.

Eleazar asked the public to strictly follow Duterte's order amid the threat of the more transmissible Delta COVID variant.

"This is for the protection of

everyone especially since we now have the Delta variant in the country," he said. "According to the experts, this variant is no joke so we need to be extra careful."

In an interview on radio *dzBB*, Eleazar reminded police officers to wear face shields and set an example, adding that he does not want to receive complaints about lawmen without the protective gear apprehending violators.

He directed police officers to exercise maximum

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tolerance and refrain from imposing sanctions on those who fail to wear face shields. Penalties should be imposed based on ordinances of local government units.

'Small Inconvenience'

The mandatory wearing of face shields is a "small inconvenience" that can avert a "disaster," President Duterte said as he stressed that the Philippines cannot afford another surge in COVID-19 infections.

Duterte has decided to require the wearing of face shields in open and enclosed spaces, adopting the recommendation of health experts who noted that the facial cover provides an additional layer of protection against the virus.

"The first wave of the pandemic, it has depleted the resources of government. Now, another one would be disastrous for the country. That is why the stricter you are, the better," Duterte said during his pre-recorded public address on Monday.

"We must triple our effort... we cannot afford a second wave because it might be far worse than the first, and we will have a problem with our economy, and it would be a disaster for the country," he added.

Duterte said the Delta variant of COVID-19, which was first detected in India, is an "aggressive infection that poses a very grave danger" so he was left with no recourse but to adopt the experts' recommendation.

"It's a small inconvenience, actually. I know that it is inconvenient to be wearing a mask, adjusting it from time to time. But that is only a small price to pay rather than gamble with doing away with it and courting disaster," the President said.

Following debates on the use of face shields as additional protection against COVID-19, the government is mulling the mandatory use of goggles or eyeglasses to further prevent the spread of the virus through eye contamination.

Duterte said he is considering the use of eyeglasses in addition to face shields and



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transmission of the Delta variant.

In considering the use of eyeglasses, Duterte noted that some people, at times, cannot prevent rubbing their eyes.

Duterte admitted he also has a hard time preventing himself from rubbing his eyes.

The President welcomed the recommendation of Dr. Anna Ong-Lim, a member of the technical advisory group of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, on retaining the use of face shields.

According to Lim, studies showed that wearing of face shield provides 78 percent protection against the virus.

Clearer policy

Senators sought yesterday a clearer policy and scientific justification for the wearing of face shields indoors and outdoors, noting that it is only in the Philippines that such a measure is enforced.

Senators Panfilo Lacson and Aquilino Pimentel III asked for an explanation from the government and its panel of expert advisers on addressing the COVID-19

pandemic.

Pimentel said as far as he knows, the Philippines is the only country in the world requiring the use of face mask and face shield, and requiring the wearing of the latter even outdoors "where the heat and the wind can easily disable the COVID-19 virus."

"Hence our experts advising the government must know something that the experts in other countries do not know. Let the government explain to the people why the face shield is needed to combat COVID-19 based on science. Let us not allow the face shield to be just another requirement to be used to regulate behavior under pain of penalty for not following requirements," Pimentel said.

Lacson said while it is a policy to wear face shields, the mandate must be measured against its results.

"Question is, are we better off than those countries that don't impose the same in terms of infection and mortality on a per capita basis?" Lacson said. — With Alexis