

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDERNo. 20

Series of 2018

Subject: Enhanced Mechanism on Promoting Occupational Wellbeing and Employee Reinvigoration (EMPOWER)

I. Rationale

An organization's human resources is its life-blood, the primary moving force which can either make or break its achievement of its goals and the delivery of its mission. For an organization to achieve excellent and quality performance, it is vital that its workforce are motivated, are working under humane working conditions, able to cope with the challenges of daily living, able to obtain a healthy, safe, and conducive work-life balance, and are able to engage in decent work¹.

Being the national government agency mandated to lead in the formulation, implementation and coordination of social welfare and development policies and programs, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) strives towards the empowerment of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized citizens for an improved quality of life building itself as a dynamic organization with a culture of innovative integrity and excellence.² With the continuous implementation, coordination, and expansion of programs aimed towards the improvement of the wellbeing of poor families, and the protection of the rights of the poor and vulnerable sectors, the workplace situation of the Department has radically changed over the years and that the workload of the 30,000-strong workforce has increased and became more complex; notwithstanding the inevitable challenges that need to be addressed at different levels. Hence, this requires the ability of personnel to maintain the high level of motivation and productivity to ensure an uncompromised quality of service delivery.

In keeping with the DSWD Core Values of 'Maagap at Mapagkalingang Serbisyo', 'Serbisyong Walang Puwang sa Katiwalian', and 'Patas na Pagtrato sa Komunidad'³ the DSWD workforce should be kept engaged to commit themselves to service excellence at all times. An effective way of doing so is by providing them adequate, responsive, and a holistic mechanism that promotes their health, safety and wellbeing to maintain their vigor to work and serve, motivates to drive them to have more passion for their job, and acts as a retention strategy that would make them achieve work-life balance. In recognition, both the DSWD management and the Social Welfare Employees' Association of the Philippines (SWEAP) have stipulated a comprehensive Employee Welfare Program under Article V, Section 15 of the Collective Negotiation Agreement (CNA) for 2016 to 2019. This provides for the complementation of the current DSWD Wellness Program, under DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 13, series of 2013. This seeks to contribute to the efficiency and improvement on the quality of work enabling the achievement of full sense of worth and self-esteem of DSWD personnel.

¹ The Decent Work Agenda being espoused by the International Labor Organization (Somavia, 1999) highlights its devotion to reducing poverty, achieving fair globalization and advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work means productive work in which rights are protected, which generates an adequate income, with adequate social protection. It also means sufficient work, in the sense that all should have access to income earning opportunities.

² DSWD Strategic Framework 2017-2022.

³ DSWD Administrative Order No. 2, series of 2017

Thus, being mindful of the current thrusts, priorities and initiatives of the Department and in faithful compliance to the provision of the CNA, then Human Resource Development Bureau developed the Enhanced Mechanism on Promoting Occupational Wellbeing and Employee Reinvigoration (EMPOWER) which promotes the health, safety and overall wellbeing of the DSWD workforce, aiming to uplift their morale, strengthen their motivation to help more those who are in need, and more importantly, recognize the varying needs of women and men in the DSWD workplace.

It is hereby emphasized that EMPOWER is a rights and needs-based, holistic and integrated approach aimed towards the uplifting of the over-all welfare of DSWD employees. It rationalizes the dimensions and the scope of the programs enunciated under DSWD wellness guidelines and looks beyond the physical and inter-personal factors, which affect the performance of employees. It also ensures that the promotion of wellbeing of DSWD personnel towards greater employee productivity and overall organizational development is a collective effort of all organizational clusters, the Management, the employees' Association, and the DSWD personnel themselves. Towards this end, EMPOWER aims to integrate, under one overarching framework, the current as well as future initiatives and programs that endeavour to promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of the DSWD workforce towards a more responsive public service.

II. Legal Bases

The establishment of a dynamic health, safety and well-being programs for the DSWD workforce is embodied in various international laws, national laws/statutory provisions and administrative issuances governing the public sector workers.

A. International Laws and Declarations

1. International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Agenda

"The primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity...Decent work is the converging focus of all its four strategic objectives: the promotion of rights at work; employment; social protection; and social dialogue."

2. Part III, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

"Article 6

- 1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.*
- 2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.*

Article 7

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:

- (a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
 - (i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions**

- of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;*
- (ii) *A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;*
 - (b) *Safe and healthy working conditions;*
 - (c) *Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;*
 - (d) *Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.*

Article 8

1. *The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure:*
 - (a) *The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned, for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interest of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;*
 - (b) *The right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade-union organizations;*
 - (c) *The right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedom of others;*
 - (d) *The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country.*
2. *This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces or of the police or of the administration of the State.*
3. *Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organization Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or apply the law in such a manner as would prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.*

Article 9

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

3. World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy on Occupational Health for All

“Urges Member States to devise national programmes on occupational health for all, based on the global strategy, with special attention to full occupational health services for the working population, including migrant workers in small industries and in the informal sector, and other occupational groups at high risk and with special needs.”

4. WHO Global Plan of Action on Worker's Health 2008-2017

“The following actions are to be considered and adopted by countries, as appropriate, to their national priorities and specific circumstances in order to achieve the objectives... (1) to devise and implement policy instruments on worker's health; (2) to protect and promote health at the workplace; (3) to improve the performance of and access to occupational health services; (4) to provide and

communicate evidence for action and practice”; and (5) to incorporate workers’ health into other policies.”

5. Article 2, ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety Convention 2006

“... shall take active steps towards achieving progressively a safer and healthier working environment through national programmes on occupational safety and health...”

6. Article 1, United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

“... to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

7. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

“...reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women”

8. The Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action 1995

“Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace”

9. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

“Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.”

B. National Laws

1. Article XIII, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines:

“The State shall afford full protection to labor, local and overseas, organized and unorganized, and promote full employment and equality of employment opportunities for all. It shall guarantee the rights of all workers to self-organization, collective bargaining and negotiations, and peaceful concerted activities, including the right to strike in accordance with law. They shall be entitled to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage. They shall also participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits as may be provided by law.”

2. Magna Carta of Women (RA 9710), Chapter I, Section 2:

“Recognizing that the economic, political, and sociocultural realities that affect women’s current condition the State affirms the role of women in nation-building and ensures the substantive equality of women and men. It shall promote empowerment of women, and pursue equal opportunities for women and men and

ensure equal access to resources and development results and outcome. Further, the State realized that equality of men and women entails the abolition of the unequal structures and practices that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. To realize this, the State shall endeavour to develop plans, policies, programs, measures and mechanisms to address discrimination and inequality in the economic, political, social and cultural life of women and men."

3. Magna Carta for Public Social Workers (RA 9432), Section 21:

"Human Resources Development. - The DSWD shall conduct a periodic human resource development and management study in the following areas:

- (a) Adequate facilities and resources to render quality social service to the clientele;*
- (b) Opportunities for public social workers to grow professionally and to develop their potentials and experience a sense of worth and dignity in their work;*
- (c) Mechanisms for democratic consultations;*
- (d) Staffing patterns and standards of social work to ensure that the clients receive quality care;*
- (e) Upgrading of working conditions, reclassification of positions and salaries of public social workers to correct the disparity vis-a-vis other professions.*
- (f) Allocation of funds for the participation of public social workers in seminars, conferences, conventions and similar activities as part of their continuing professional growth."*

4. Republic Act No. 10524 or An Act Expanding the Positions Reserved for Persons with Disability, Amending for the Purpose Republic Act No. 7277, As Amended, Otherwise Known as the Magna Carta for Persons with Disability

Section 3. General Policies and Objectives

"Recognizing the right of persons with disability to work on an equal basis with others and to participate fully into the mainstream of society, it is the aim of this IRR to provide persons with disability, equal opportunity for employment and equal remuneration for work of equal value. Towards this end, the State shall facilitate access of persons with disability to labor market information, capacity building programs, and wage employment."

5. Republic Act No. 9994 or An Act Granting additional Benefits and Privileges to Senior Citizens, Further Amending Republic Act No. 7432, As Amended, Otherwise Known as "An Act to Maximize the Contribution of Senior Citizens to Nation Building, Grant Benefits and Special Privileges and For Other Purposes (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010)

Section 1. Declaration of Policies and Objectives

"x x x

Article XIII, Section 11 of the Constitution provides that the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health development which shall

endeavor to make essential goods, health and other social services available to the people at affordable cost. There shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged, sick, elderly, disabled, women and children. Article XV, Section 4 of the Constitution further declares that it is the duty of the family to take care of its elderly members while the State may design programs of social security for them.

Consistent with these constitutional principles, this Act shall serve the following objectives:

“(a) To recognize the rights of senior citizens to take their proper place in society and make it a concern of the family, community, and government;

(b) To give full support to the improvement of the total well-being of the elderly and their full participation in society, considering that senior citizens are integral part of society;

(c) To motivate and encourage the senior citizen to contribute to nation building;

x x x”

6. Article 162, Chapter II, Book IV (Occupational Safety and Health Standards) of the Labor Code of the Philippines:

“Safety and health standards... set and enforce mandatory occupational safety and health standards to eliminate or reduce occupational safety and health hazards in all workplaces and institute new, and update existing, programs to ensure safe and healthful working conditions in all places of employment.”

7. Sanitation Code of the Philippines (PD 856) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations setting the Standards Governing the Operation of Food Establishments

“Chapter III (Food Establishments), Section 14. Sanitary Permit, Item (a): “No person or entity shall operate a food establishment for public patronage without securing a permit from the local health office. The term “food establishment” as used in this chapter means an establishment where food or drinks are manufactured, processed, stored, sold or served.”

C. Administrative Issuances for Public Sector Workers

1. Executive Order No. 292: Administrative Code of 1987 (Book V, Title I, Subtitle A, Chapter 5, Section 31):

“Each department or agency shall prepare a career and personnel development plan... which shall include provisions on merit promotions, performance evaluation, in-service training, including overseas and local scholarships and training grants, job rotation, suggestions and incentive award systems, and such other provisions for employees’ health, welfare, counselling, recreation and similar services.”

2. Omnibus Rules Implementing Book V of Executive Order No. 292:

Rule VIII (Career and Personnel Development)

“Section 2. Each department or agency shall prepare a career and personnel development plan, which shall be integrated into a national plan by the

Commission, which shall serve as the basis for all career and personnel development activities in the government. The Career and Personnel Development Plan shall include provisions on merit promotion, performance evaluation; in-service training; overseas and local scholarships and training grants; suggestions, incentive award systems, provision for welfare, counselling, recreation and similar services; and other human resource development interventions such as on the job training, counselling, coaching, job rotation, secondment, job swapping and others."

Rule XI (Employee Relations and Services)

"Section 1. Each head of department or agency shall be responsible for the creation of an atmosphere conducive to good supervisor-employee relations and their improvement of employee morale. For the purpose, the head of each department or agency shall make provisions for the establishment of units responsible for the maintenance of employee health, welfare, counselling, recreation and similar activities, including the establishment of employee organization/union."

3. Civil Service Commission Memorandum Circular No. 30, s. 1994 (Checklist of Reasonable Working Conditions in the Public Sector)

"Definition of Reasonable Working Conditions. They pertain to the humane and acceptable working environment that promotes, develops, sustains and satisfies the physical, economic, psycho-social and spiritual wellbeing of the employees; promote harmonious relationship between employees and management to enhance their dignity; provide motivation and recognition and harness their potentials towards increased productivity and efficiency in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the employees as well as the organization for a more responsive public service."

4. CSC Memorandum Circular No. 33, s. 1997 (Policy on Working Conditions at the Workplace)

"...recognizes the need to institutionalize viable programs to improve working conditions in the government..."

5. CSC Memorandum Circular No. 38, s. 1992, "Physical and Mental Fitness Program for Government Personnel", CSC Memorandum Circular No. 06, s. 1995, "The Great Filipino Workout", and CSC Memorandum Circular No. 8, s. 2011, "Reiteration of the Physical Fitness Program "Great Filipino Workout"

"In order to develop a healthy and alert workforce, the CSC reiterates the implementation of the program, particularly:

1. *Allotment of a reasonable time for regular physical fitness exercise in seminars, training programs and similar occasions.
The above-stated MCs authorize one (1) hour each week for the conduct of wellness or fitness program. Where public services will be unduly disrupted or prejudiced, the personnel complement may be divided into such number of groups as may be necessary who shall undertake such activities in different times of the day and different days of the week; and*
2. *Adoption of plans for a continuing physical fitness and sports activities."*

6. CSC Memorandum Circular No. 04, s. 2003, "Promotion of Good Nutrition in the Bureaucracy

“...supports the National Nutrition Council’s promotion of good nutrition of workers as an effective strategy to achieve and sustain increased organizational productivity.”

7. CSC Memorandum Circular No. 7 Series of 2014, “Encouraging Government Agencies to hire PWDs pursuant to Republic Act No. 7277, as amended”

“Section 5 of RA 7277 or An Act Providing for the Rehabilitation, Self-Development and Self-Reliance of Disabled Person and their Integration into the Mainstream of Society and for Other Purposes as amended by Section 1 of RA 10524 (An Act Expanding the Positions Reserved for Persons with Disability) provides that:

“Section 5. Equal Opportunity for Employment – No person with disability shall be denied access to opportunities for suitable employment. A qualified employee with disability shall be subjected to the same terms and conditions of employment and the same compensation, privileges, benefits, incentives or allowances as a qualified abled bodied person. At least one percent (1%) of all positions in all government agencies, offices or corporations shall be reserved for persons with disability: Provided, That private corporations with more than one hundred (100 employees are encouraged to reserve at least one percent (1) of all positions for persons with disability.”

III. Objectives

A. General Objective:

To provide a rights-based, holistic and integrated approach in advancing and promoting the health, safety and overall wellbeing of the DSWD workforce, enabling them to achieve their fullest potentials and capabilities, towards the delivery of excellent and coordinated social welfare and development programs.

B. Specific Objectives:

1. To complement existing initiatives in improving the efficiency and productivity of DSWD’s human resources;
2. To provide a safe and conducive occupational environment for the DSWD’s human resources;
3. To boost the *esprit de corps* or morale of DSWD’s workforce and to enable them to cope with the challenges of the workplace;
4. To promote an enabling environment recognizing the different practical and strategic gender needs of women and men in the DSWD workplace;
5. To promote a supportive organizational environment receptive to the needs of DSWD personnel with special concerns and special needs and that which promotes affirmative action measures such as those concerning Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and Senior Citizens in the workplace;
6. To elicit support and participation from different stakeholders in promoting the wellbeing of all DSWD personnel;
7. To motivate, engage and support productive and dedicated DSWD personnel; and
8. To inculcate values and build interpersonal relations in support to the delivery of excellent public service.

IV. Coverage

This shall cover all DSWD personnel, without distinction as to rank and status of employment, in the Central and Field Offices, including those in hazardous work conditions, disaster response operations, residential and non-residential care facilities, community-based implementation of programs and services, field operations and direct service work with clients.

V. Definition of Terms

1. Health – is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization); connote a sound state of the body and mind of the worker, which enables him to perform his job normally (Department of Labor and Employment)
2. Personnel - refers to individuals occupying first, second and third level of positions regardless of employment status whether permanent, temporary, coterminous, casual, contractual or substitute, including Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)/Contract of Service (COS) workers and Job Order (JO) workers.
3. Safety – refers to the physical or environmental conditions of work or employment which substantially comply with the provisions of the OSH Standards (Department of Labor and Employment)
4. Wellbeing – is an active state of pursuing health and life skills with the aims of achieving physical, emotional health and financial security (Mercer, 2015); generally subjective, multi-element state that considers physical, material social emotional, developmental and activity dimensions (Waddell and Burton, 2006) to be determined primarily by work and can be influenced by workplace interventions (Juniper, 2011)
5. Wellness – refers to the the state by which the personnel is able to reach his fullest potential along physical, psychological, emotional, and social aspects in fulfilling his role expectations in the workplace (MC 13, s. 2013)
6. Workplace - means the office, premises or worksite, where the workers are habitually employed and shall include the office or place, where the workers who have no fixed or definite worksite regularly report for assignment in the course of their employment.

VI. Fundamental Principles

EMPOWER is guided by the following fundamental principles in its implementation:

1. Proactivity — being able to take action and have a foresight to the essential and fundamental needs and concerns of employees, and not just being reactionary to their pressing and exigent needs.
2. Involvement of Stakeholders — all stakeholders, especially the DSWD employees, employee interest groups, the DSWD public and their organizations, must be engaged and represented in the crafting of the programs and other future initiatives to be undertaken in line with the EMPOWER.
3. Supportive Culture — the success of the programs to be undertaken in line with the EMPOWER entails a supportive culture wherein both the Management and the employees are receptive to each other's ideas and initiatives and be able to work towards a common goal of improving the Department's organizational performance.

4. Collaboration — the promotion of employee wellbeing is a shared concern; it entails the participation of both the Management and the employees, as well as the different offices/bureaus/services/units of the Department.
5. Fairness and Equality — consistent with equal opportunity principles being espoused by the Department, it seeks to support the enabling environment promoting non-discrimination on the bases of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, civil status, disabilities, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, or membership in indigenous cultural community.

All DSWD employees are encouraged to manifest fairness in day-to-day operations, putting their working hours of productive, responsive, caring, and competent work contributing significantly to the realization of DSWD vision and mission.

6. Inclusivity and Diversity — consistent with affirmative action measures in statutes being espoused by the Department such as those on Gender and Development (GAD), EMPOWER aims to promote the rights and empowerment of women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) the respect and tolerance of all faiths, the respect of one's cultural traditions and customs, etc.
7. Gender Sensitivity and Responsiveness — provides for non-discriminatory and pro-gender equality and equity measures to enable DSWD women personnel's participation in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programs and services.
8. Building Capabilities for Performance — the EMPOWER aims to contribute to the improvement of employees' performance that will keep their vigor and motivation for work.
9. Rights-based Approach to Human Development – normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to the promotion and protection of human rights while applying the integration of the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the plans, policies and processes of development.
10. Ethical Conduct – professional and ethical behaviour shall be maintained at all times; likewise, handling sensitive information and cases of personnel shall be dealt with utmost confidentiality.

VII. Description of the EMPOWER Framework

The EMPOWER is a rights-based, holistic and integrated framework of several existing and proposed standards, programs and initiatives that promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of DSWD personnel towards the delivery of quality service. As a comprehensive employee welfare program, it seeks to rationalize the needs of the DSWD personnel based on the intervening factors in the workplace and the environment. It provides an array of programs that would address concerns affecting work performance and employee productivity.

As an overarching framework based on the DSWD vision, mission and core values and grounded on the fundamental principles, it comprises three implementing but integrated components as follows:

Component 1: Physiological Health and Psychosocial Wellness Management

This seeks to improve the efficiency and productivity of employees by providing and maintaining their general health and proactively determining possible risks that may affect their physiological wellness. This also seeks to build a working environment that

entails undertaking initiatives that reinforce psychosocial dimensions enabling personnel to achieve work-life balance.

Component 2: Comprehensive Assistance and Response to Employees in Special Situations

This entails creating a supportive organizational environment for employees with special needs and concerns such as those that would provide alternative support in difficult familial or personal situations that hamper their full functioning in the workplace.

Component 3: Occupational Safety and Health Management

This ensures a healthy and safe physical working environment for DSWD employees and instilling a culture of awareness and preparedness to disasters and potential occupational risks.

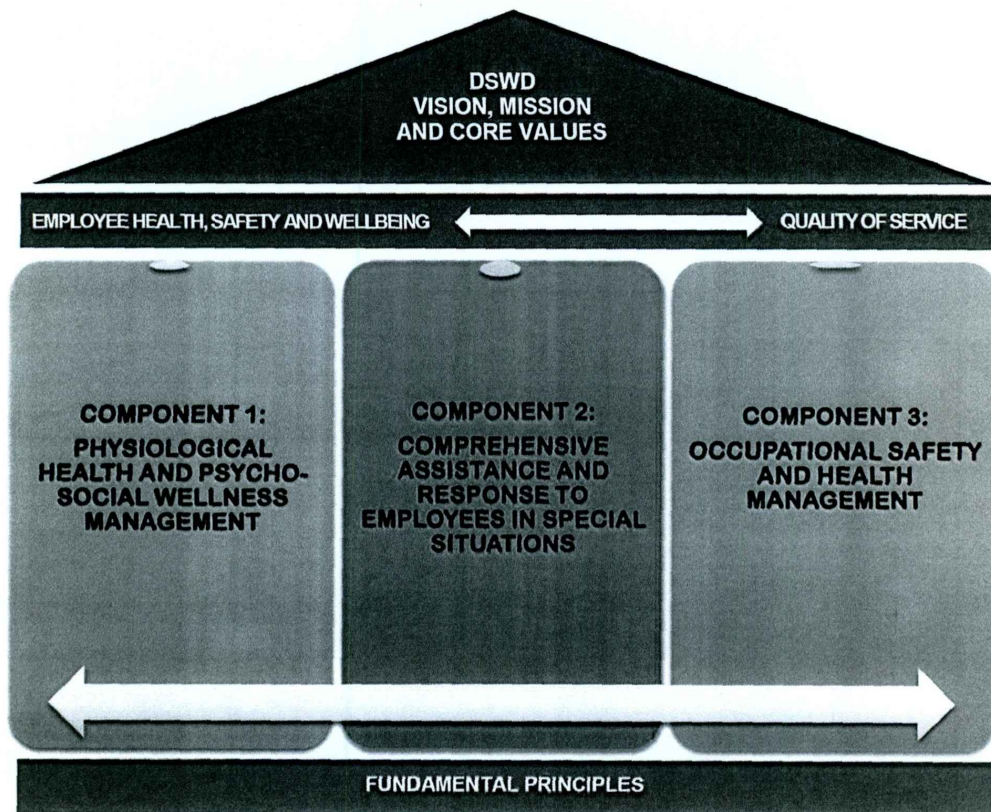


Figure 1: The 'Parthenon' Framework of the EMPOWER

EMPOWER intends to produce improved workforce productivity, superior work performance, excellent public service delivery, employee engagement, workforce retention, esprit de corps building, work-life balance, and alternative workplace learning and development opportunities. In addition, EMPOWER is for employee protection against the dangers of injury, sickness or

death, and workplace prevention of loss or damage to lives and properties. With these key results, DSWD's vision-mission and core values are emphasized. By having a dynamic organization with motivated and productive workforce, quality of service delivery is realized for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society.

VIII. General Implementing Guidelines

In operationalizing the framework, it is important to recognize the regional peculiarities and variances in the situation and needs of the DSWD personnel in different workplaces. It must be noted that the EMPOWER provides for a rationalized and over-arching framework in providing a comprehensive employee welfare program. Hence, supplemental programs, initiatives, policies and guidelines, akin to this Administrative Order, may be crafted in the future as deemed relevant to the dynamic needs of the DSWD personnel. The approach shall be systematic and integral to the management and development of human resources systems and processes.

1. The Central and Field Offices shall rationalize the development of its health, safety and wellbeing programs guided by the EMPOWER framework that is responsive and relevant to the dynamic needs of its personnel. Continuous improvement for appropriate workplace programs and initiatives shall be met and sustained through this.
2. In order to identify the priority issues and needs of the office and personnel, a needs assessment shall be conducted. The needs assessment may include:
 - a. A workplace profile i.e. demographic information, health status of the workforce, the physical workplace, and management structures;
 - b. A workplace analysis which combines the workplace profile and an internal analysis of operations, procedures, processes and workplace environment; and
 - c. Prioritization of workplace health, safety and wellbeing issues based on personnel needs.

A number of methods for gathering information may be used for the needs assessment such as but not limited to review of organizational data, survey instruments, focus-group discussions, and key informant interviews.

3. A three-year operational plan shall be developed to respond to the priority issues and needs. Said plan shall consider the following:
 - a. Determination of goals and objectives that shall reflect the key priorities and issues identified from the needs assessment.
 - b. Identification of strategies, resources and the responsible focal person/key work unit/s.
 - c. Ensuring the alignment of programs, initiatives and policies with applicable policies, rules and regulations.
 - d. Creation of a support system that would champion and provide the necessary logistical and administrative support.
4. Strategies shall be implemented to address the priorities as identified in the operational plan. Active involvement of persons/unit concerned shall be ensured.
5. The progress of implementation of the identified programs, initiatives and activities to identify and address potential barriers and issues shall be monitored during implementation. Meanwhile, an evaluation shall be conducted to determine the outcomes and impact to the personnel and organization.

IX. Institutional Arrangements

All concerned offices, bureaus, services and units (OBSUs) in the Central and Field Offices are enjoined to implement programs and activities towards the institutionalization of the EMPOWER framework.

- A. Association-Management Consultative Committee (AMCC) and the Regional Monitoring Committees (RMCs)
 1. The AMCC in the Central Office shall spearhead the integration of programs and related policies.
 2. Together with the RMCs in the Field Offices, they shall monitor, assess and evaluate the implementation of the EMPOWER for its enhancement in relation to the pertinent provisions of the CNA.
- B. At the Central Office
 1. The General Administration and Support services Group (GASSG) shall ensure an objective programming of activities and other related initiatives for a given calendar year which shall be monitored if effectively undertaken in keeping with the spirit and intent of EMPOWER. It shall ensure that funding and logistical EMPOWER-related activities and initiatives shall be included in the Annual Work and Financial Plan (WFP).
 2. The Human Resource Development Service (HRDS) shall ensure the implementation of the components that ensures employee's health, safety and wellbeing. It shall coordinate with the concerned OBSUs on the implementing mechanisms to operate the EMPOWER framework. Likewise, it shall periodically monitor and evaluate its implementation as well as undertake the crafting of reportorial requirements and documentation. It shall conduct researches and studies related to the improvement of employee welfare and retention mechanisms as necessary. Technical assistance and adequate necessary support shall also be provided by the HRDS to the Field Offices to ensure efficient implementation.
 3. All other OBSUs shall actively engage and participate to ensure its promotion and institutionalization and shall provide the adequate and necessary support to aid its implementation. They shall coordinate with the HRDS on the possible programs, activities and initiatives deemed necessary to advance the overall wellbeing of DSWD personnel. They shall report issues and concerns needing policy or operational recommendation to improve its implementation.
- C. At the Field Offices
 1. Each Field Office shall proactively promote and implement the components in support of EMPOWER. Field Offices shall allocate appropriate funds in their annual WFP and logistical requirements.
 2. The Human Resource Development Division (HRDD) shall coordinate all components of EMPOWER. It shall submit a three-year operational plan to HRDS and periodically monitor and evaluate its regional implementation. Said work unit shall also draft the annual accomplishment report to be submitted to the HRDS for consolidation in accordance with timelines to be prescribed for the purpose.
 3. Documentation and submission of good practices in the implementation of EMPOWER are also encouraged to be undertaken by the Field Offices.

X. Funding Requirement

Funding requirements for the implementation of the EMPOWER shall be provided by the Department. Further, it shall also form part of the yearly budget appropriations of the Central and Field Offices.

The AMCC and RMCs, as one of the primary stakeholders, shall endeavour to look for means to fund EMPOWER. This shall include tapping possible fund sources such as the GAD fund, Provident Fund, Savings Productivity Fund, and 30% of the annual agency savings for improvement of working conditions in the implementation of provisions of the CNA in accordance with applicable budget, accounting and auditing policies and regulations.

XI. Effectivity

This issuance shall take effect immediately upon its approval.

Let copies of this Order be issued to Central and Field Offices for their information and guidance.

Issued in Quezon City this 12th day of October, 2018.



VIRGINIA N. OROGO
Acting Secretary

Certify True Copy:



MYRNA H. REYES
OIC-Division Chief
Records and Archives Mgt. Division

Component 1: Physiological Health and Psychosocial Wellness Management

This component involves standards, initiatives and activities, which entail the maintenance of the physiological health and psychosocial wellness of the DSWD workforce. This complements the current Guidelines in Promoting Wellness per DSWD MC No. 13, series of 2013. The results of annual physical and medical examination shall be maximized as a baseline for the creation of health programs along this line. In addition, the results of Occupational Health and Safety inspections and audits, and risks assessments to determine possible occupational risks for DSWD personnel shall be used as an evidence-based approach towards developing appropriate programs and initiatives. Medical services with corresponding medical staff shall be provided in accordance with applicable regulations. Private or non-government organizations may be tapped as partners to provide free services for DSWD personnel. Existing partnerships with hospitals, NGOs, the academe, and other health organizations shall likewise be maximized for the benefit of the employees. Moreover, this component entails undertaking initiatives that seeks to address both practical needs of women and men in the workplace towards a reinvigorated workforce. Having an enabling policy and healthier workplaces ensure a healthy workforce; thus creating work-life balance.

The HRDS at the Central Office and the HRDD at the Field Offices shall ensure responsive and needs-based programs for DSWD personnel such as but not limited to the following:

1. Basic Occupational Health Services

Occupational Health Services are services entrusted with essentially preventive functions and responsible for advising the requirements for the establishment and maintenance of a safe and healthy working environment which will facilitate optimal physical and mental health in relation to work and the adaptation of work to the capabilities of workers in the light of their state of physical and mental health.⁴ (Rule 1961.02).

2. Workplace Mental Health

Due to the complexities and demands in the delivery of programs and services to the public, mental health of personnel are taken into consideration as interplay of biological, psychological, social and environmental factors that may contribute to mental health problems in the long run. The Workplace Mental Health provides assistance and support in improving the mental health of the workforce, particularly those involved with disaster operations and direct work with clients such as in Crisis Intervention Units, community-based programs, and residential care facilities.

3. Promotion of Good Nutrition, Food Safety, Sanitation and Hygiene

The promotion of good nutrition in the workplace aims to achieve and sustain increased organizational productivity, which is in line with the physical and mental fitness for personnel. This involves individual health habits assessment, routine sanitary inspection of centers' facilities, canteen food plan evaluation and nutrition education program.

4. Workplace Wellness

Esposued by the DSWD Memorandum Circular No. 13, series of 2017, the promotion of wellness in the Department provide opportunities and avenues to promote and uphold the wellbeing of personnel in the areas of health and interpersonal relationships

⁴ Rule 1960, Occupational Safety and Health Standards, as amended, 1989

by offering wellness packages designed to boost *esprit de corps* or morale and the ability to cope with the challenges in the workplace.

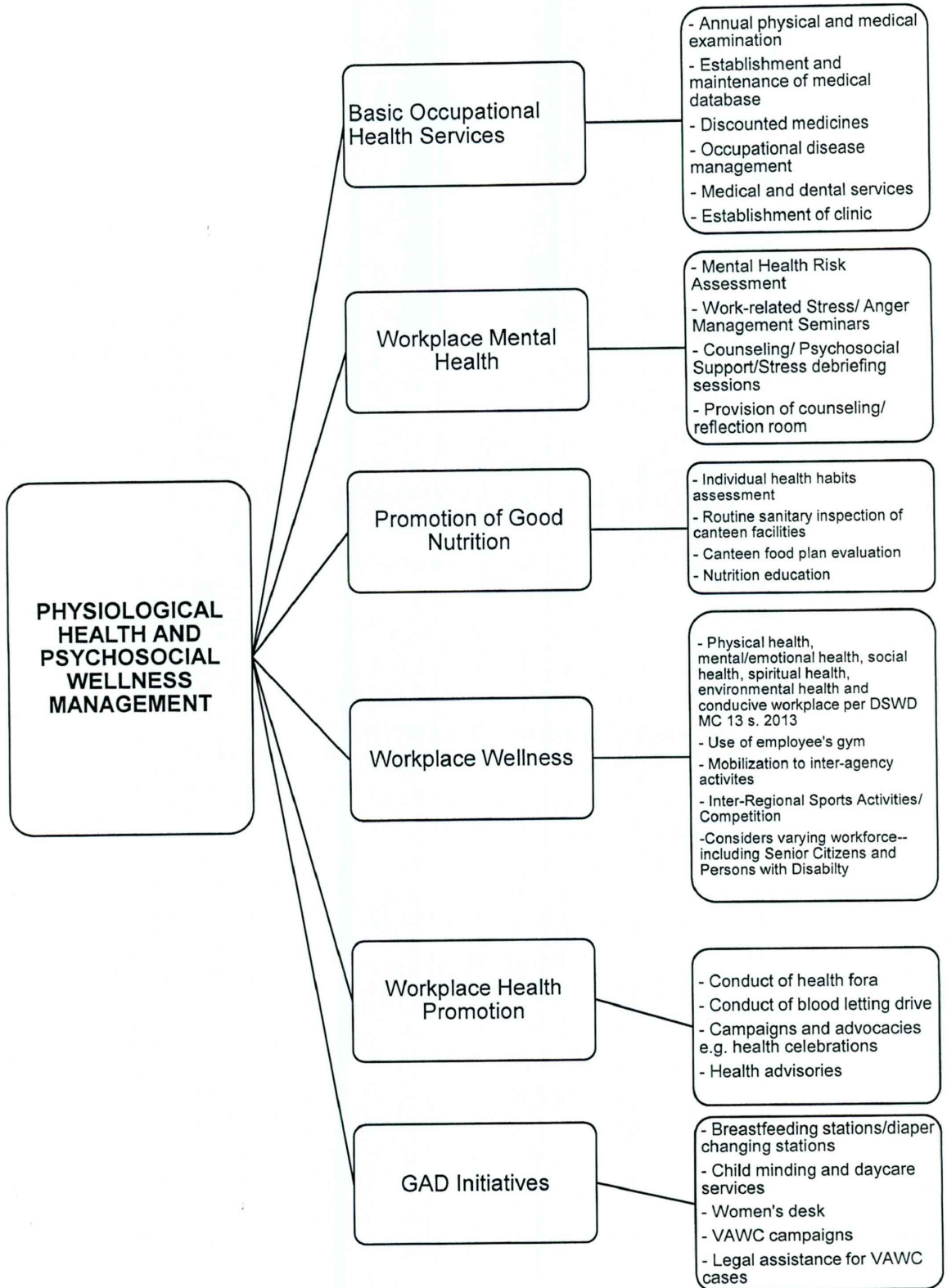
Said workplace wellness programs shall also consider the needs of DSWD's personnel, including those of the practical and strategic needs of members of the DSWD workforce who are senior citizens and who are persons with disability.

5. Workplace Health Promotion

Health promotion is prioritized at the workplace where the active participation of personnel in terms of health advocacies and prevention are promoted as well as personal development is encouraged. This seeks to educate and inform the personnel of healthy lifestyle. Age-appropriate health advocacies and well-being initiatives shall be particularly considered in order to retain the DSWD workforce and keep them actively engaged.

6. GAD Initiatives

Aside from the recognition of equal opportunities for both men and women in the workplace, related GAD initiatives shall also be designed to foster gender responsiveness among the personnel and provide decent work conditions for women, particularly pregnant and lactating mothers. DSWD's Gender and Development plan/s shall also reflect such initiatives.



Component 2: Comprehensive Assistance and Response to Employees in Special Situations

This component entails providing responsive alternative support or workplace interventions to employees who are in difficult familial or personal situations that hamper their full functioning in the workplace. While DSWD as an agency delivers the needed social welfare and development programs and services to the public, its personnel are also susceptible to socio-economic risks and may experience hardships and challenges such as financial, medical and emotional among others. It is necessary therefore for the Department to care for its own human resource as one of its valuable assets through interventions that may provide economic relief, restore their social functioning and regain their strength and confidence, thereby lessening adverse impact on work efficiency, commitment and performance.

Thus, the HRDS and HRDD as the DSWD work units mandated to ensure the wellbeing of DSWD staff shall coordinate with concerned Offices, Bureaus, Services and Units (OBSUs) such as but not limited to Protective Services Bureau (PSB), Community Programs and Services Bureau (CPSB), Social Welfare Institutional Development Bureau (SWIDB), and Disaster Response Assistance and Management Bureau (DReAMB) and their regional counterparts in providing the needed support to DSWD personnel.

1. Assistance and Intervention for Distressed Employees

This aims to assist DSWD personnel in crisis situation⁵ and cope with their needs and concerns by providing timely and appropriate intervention. It shall provide financial assistance to the personnel and/or their dependents who are undergoing crisis situations such as but not limited to sickness, death, natural and man-made calamities, socio-economic difficulties among others. Likewise, it will enable the personnel and/or their dependents to minimize stress and anxiety through the provision of psychosocial support to include counselling and psychological first aid and psychosocial services. The HRDS/HRDD shall facilitate such requests and needs to be endorsed to the appropriate OBSU.

2. Care Program for Sickly Employees

Absences due to sickness have high cost for both the personnel and the Department⁶. The Care Program offers assistance and support to personnel particularly those with prolonged illnesses who may need medicine assistance, hospital assistance and psychosocial support.

3. Caring for the Caregivers

DSWD personnel, particularly those in hazardous work conditions, disaster response operations, residential and non-residential care facilities, community-based implementation of programs and services, field operations and direct service work with clients i.e. Crisis Intervention Unit, who are the primary caregivers and provider of frontline services to the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and communities, shall be given the utmost care and support they need. These may

⁵ Crisis situation pertains to a condition whereby an individual, family or group of persons face a difficult and stressful situation resulting to the impairment of their psychosocial functioning, requiring immediate or urgent interventions (DSWD MC No. 5, series of 2008)

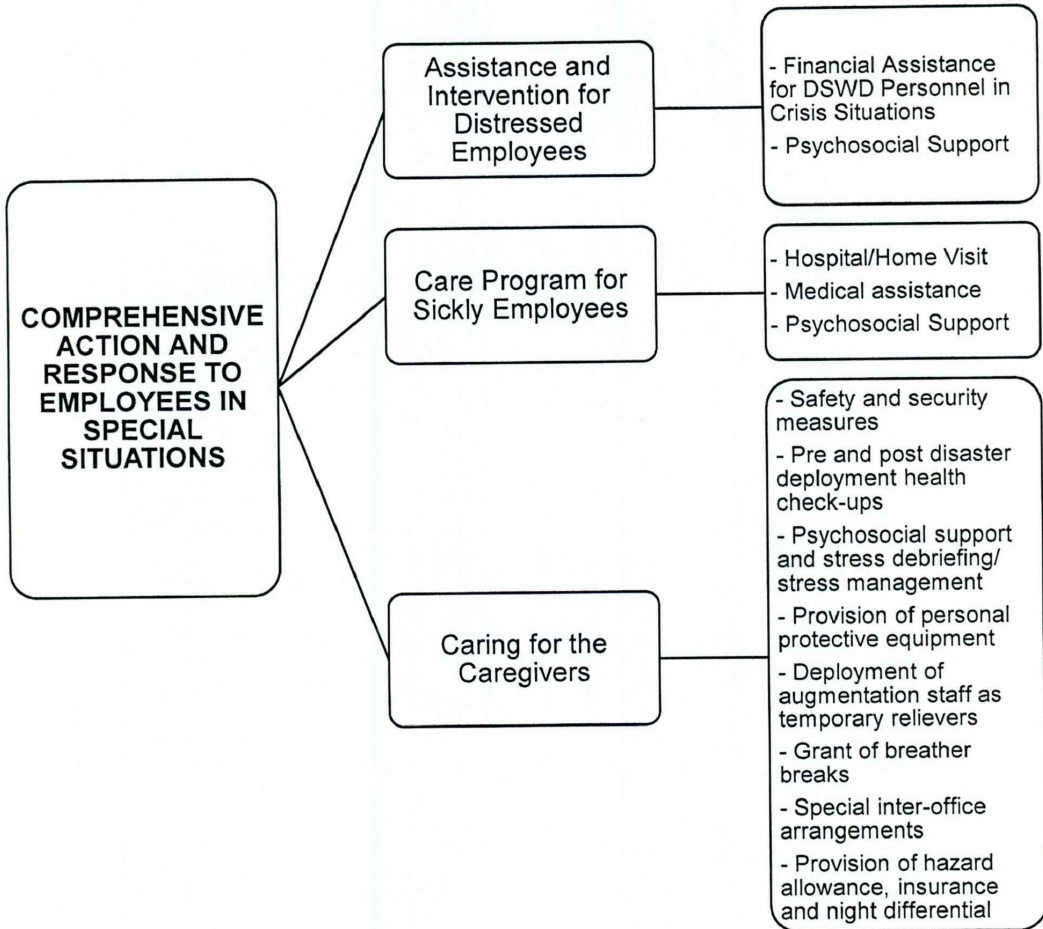
⁶ Health and safety issues in the workplace are also root causes of absenteeism which redounds to high medical costs, reduced productivity, health and safety issues, among others.

include, such as but not limited to, safety and security measures, pre and post disaster deployment health check-ups, psychosocial support and stress debriefing/ stress management, provision of personal protective equipment, deployment of augmentation staff as temporary relievers, grant of breather breaks, special inter-office arrangements, and provision of hazard allowance, insurance and night differential as provided for by applicable rules and regulations.

Moreover, a program(s)/policy/ies shall also be drawn up as an affirmative action measure for DSWD workers who have special needs such as Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and other interest groups with certain special needs as defined under existing statutes and policies. This may include such programs that promote a humane work environment for Persons with Disabilities.

This may also entail the crafting of such programs and policies that will ensure that cross cutting concerns such as those involving PWDs' practical and strategic needs are addressed especially that DSWD is the primary agency engaged in addressing and alleviating the needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Concomitantly, in recognizing the varying ages of DSWD's workforce, age-appropriate initiatives to include the practical and strategic needs of Senior Citizens in the workplace shall also be considered in designing such initiatives, including that which would prepare retiring personnel for active ageing and meaningful retirement.



Component 3: Occupational Safety and Health Management

Primarily, DSWD must comply with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Standards and provide the DSWD personnel a place of employment free from hazardous conditions that are likely to cause death, illness or physical harm to include safe and healthy workplace, appropriate work schedule, and reasonable rendition of disaster duty.

This component includes initiatives that would entail cross functionality between the HRDS, Administrative Service and DReAMB in the formulation and implementation of appropriate occupational safety and health standards as provided by law.

1. Health and Safety Management

To proactively institutionalize a Health and Safety Management System for DSWD that would provide for an enabling policy framework to manage health and safety issues at the workplace, a Health and Safety Committee shall be organized at the Central Office and Field Office; the members of which shall play significant roles in eliminating work hazards with the following functions:

- Establishes administrative policies on safety in conformity with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Standards.
- Reports to the DSWD management the health and safety policies adopted and carry out the appropriate safety and health programs.
- Reports to the DSWD management at least quarterly, the health and safety program of the organization outlining the activities undertaken including its safety performance, health and safety committee meetings and its recommendations and measures taken to implement such recommendations.
- Acts on recommended measures by adopting the elements of the health and safety program in the workplace.
- The special needs of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens in the workplace shall also be considered in the agency's health and safety management measures. Such measures should include but not be limited to integrated the needs of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens in crafting and implementing disaster-preparedness plan of action in the workplace.

Moreover, Safety Action Plans shall be institutionalized as well as enhancement of safety and security protocols for DSWD personnel. Interest and participation in the planning and development of safety program of personnel shall be encouraged in the Department through advocacies, fora, and seminars.

2. Facilities and Structure Management

The overall structural integrity and safety of DSWD facilities shall be maintained in adherence to the Occupational Safety and Health Standards, National Building Code of the Philippines and similar laws. The annual health and safety inspections and necessary rehabilitation of the workstations relative to the standard workspace, lighting, ventilation, etc. and sanitation as well as provision of shuttle services shall be considered to improve working conditions.

The appropriate facilities which promote accessibility and mobility in the workplace such as those with specifications for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens as reflected in existing laws and applicable rules and regulations are considered and adhered to, as far as practicable. Such facilities are those that are Persons With Disability-friendly/Senior-Citizen-friendly—those that safeguard the health and allows safe mobility of PWDs in accessing transportation, communication, recreation, and other applicable services available in the workplace.

3. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

Though DSWD is one of the responders in times of disasters and calamities, it is also apt for the Department to manage and reduce risks within its jurisdiction. It is important that hazards are reduced and their potential impacts are mitigated to provide a safe working environment for DSWD personnel.

