



Republic of the Philippines  
Supreme Court  
Manila

OFFICE OF THE 2022 BAR CHAIR

**BAR BULLETIN NO. 8, S. 2022**

**COVID-19 PROTOCOL  
FOR THE 2022 BAR EXAMINATIONS**

This Bar Bulletin sets forth the COVID-19 Protocol in **all** local testing centers for the 2022 Bar Examinations.

*Before the Examinations*

1. **Self-Quarantine.** Examinees are **strongly urged** to undergo self-quarantine starting October 26, 2022, or at least two (2) weeks before the Bar Examinations, and until the last day thereof. Examinees should limit non-essential movement. They are also advised to avoid staying in hotels and dormitories where there may be higher risks of exposure to COVID-19, unless the examinee lives in an area outside the city or municipality where the Local Testing Center (LTC) is located. “Bar operations” or gathering of individuals as a form of support to the examinees are similarly prohibited. For the health and safety of all persons inside the LTCs, examinees may be barred from taking the examinations if it is later known that “Bar operations” activities were conducted by their law school or organizations in the hotel where they are staying.
2. **Liability Waiver.** Due to the strict protocols implemented by both the Office of the Bar Chair and the LTCs, examinees and personnel will be required to sign a waiver releasing the Supreme Court and the LTC from any liability if they contract COVID-19 during any of the days of the Bar Examinations. The waiver

shall be sent to each examinee's email address by the Venue Examinee Supervisors of the examinee's assigned LTC, and submitted by the examinee to the Head Proctor on the first day of the Bar Examinations.

**3. Entry to the LTC.** For every examination day, all examinees must present the applicable documents upon entry to their assigned LTC.

**3.1.** For *fully vaccinated examinees*, they shall be required to present their COVID-19 vaccination cards, subject to Item 3.3 below.

Valid vaccination cards may either be the original vaccination cards issued by their local government units, digital vaccination cards or certificates, vaccination passports, or the Bureau of Quarantine-issued International Certificate of Vaccination. Proof of vaccination in digital form **MUST** be printed out for presentation in the security check area.

One is considered fully vaccinated only after having received the second dose in the case of a two-dose vaccine (such as, but not limited to, Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, or Sinovac), or after having received the sole dose of a single-dose vaccine (such as Johnson & Johnson).<sup>1</sup>

**3.2.** For *unvaccinated* examinees, they shall be required to present either a negative RT-PCR test result or a negative antigen test result, subject to Item 3.3 below. The test must be conducted by any Department of Health (DOH)-accredited testing facility, the cost of which will be shouldered by the examinees. The list of DOH-accredited testing facilities can be found at: <https://doh.gov.ph/licensed-covid-19-testing-laboratories>.<sup>2</sup>

The specimen for the **RT-PCR test** should be collected within 48 hours before 4:00a.m. of November 9, 13, 16, and 20, 2022, as applicable. For each Bar Examinations day, unvaccinated examinees should print out their corresponding RT-PCR test result and submit the same at the security check area, before entering their LTC.

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<sup>1</sup> As previously advised, examinees assigned to LTCs located in Pasay City and Davao City are considered fully vaccinated only after having received at least one (1) booster dose of any vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

<sup>2</sup> All of the testing facilities listed therein provide antigen testing services, this despite the "Type of Test" column only indicating "RT-PCR" and "Cartridge Based PCR".

The specimen for the **antigen test** should be collected within 24 hours before 4:00a.m. of November 9, 13, 16, and 20, 2022, as applicable. For each Bar Examinations day, unvaccinated examinees should print out their corresponding antigen test result and submit the same at the security check area, before entering their LTC.<sup>3</sup>

Unvaccinated examinees are required to present either a negative RT-PCR test result or a negative antigen test result, subject to Item 3.3 below, even if the local government unit of their LTC no longer requires COVID-19 testing.<sup>4</sup>

3.3. *Recovered Cases.* Examinees who have contracted COVID-19 from **October 9, 2022 to October 30, 2022**, and **no longer show any symptoms** (*i.e.*, body temperature of over 37.5 degrees Celsius, heavy cough, shortness of breath) shall be allowed inside the testing sites if they are able to present:

3.3.1. a negative RT-PCR test result or a negative antigen test result, in accordance with Item 3.2 above; or

3.3.2. a certification of the completion of the required isolation/quarantine period issued by the Rural Health Unit, *or* the Barangay Health Emergency Response Team, *or* the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit, *or* the Emergency Operations Center, *or* a hospital for confined cases, as the case may be.

4. **Affiliates of DOH-accredited testing facilities.** Test results issued by facilities affiliated with DOH-accredited testing facilities and laboratories will be honored for purposes of Item 3 above, including those issued by home service providers. However, negative results from self-administered antigen test kits will not be honored.

5. **Positive COVID-19 Test Result.** Examinees who obtain a positive antigen or RT-PCR COVID-19 test result during the applicable periods set forth in Items 3.2. and 3.3 above, must inform the Office of the Bar Chair immediately at

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<sup>3</sup> As previously advised, unvaccinated examinees assigned to LTCs located in the City of Cagayan de Oro and Davao City are required to present a negative RT-PCR test result. Antigen test results, even if conducted by a DOH-accredited facility, will not be sufficient for purposes of entry to the LTC of unvaccinated examinees.

<sup>4</sup> Unvaccinated examinees assigned to LTCs located in Naga City and Cebu City are still required to present their negative RT-PCR test or antigen test result, despite the policy of these local government units to no longer require COVID-19 testing for all individuals - vaccinated or unvaccinated.

**barexams2022health@judiciary.gov.ph** with the subject “Submission of COVID Positive Result”, and with the body of the email stating their name and assigned LTC. A copy of the test result should also be attached to the email.

*During the Examinations*

6. **Venue Layout.** Ingress and egress points will be specifically marked for each LTC. Venue-specific guidelines will be sent to each examinee’s email address.
7. **No Loitering.** There shall be no loitering in the LTC’s entrance. Relatives, friends, and well-wishers will only be allowed to drop off or fetch examinees at the designated areas for this purpose. All external bar-related activities, such as school “Bar operations,” shall be prohibited within the perimeter of the LTC.
8. **Security Checks.** Clearly visible masking tape markers will be placed in each gate entrance and security check area to maintain the minimum 1-meter distancing between examinees. Examinees’ temperature will be checked upon entry. Examinees who exhibit *any* flu-like symptoms (*i.e.*, body temperature of over 37.5 degrees Celsius, heavy cough, shortness of breath) will be assessed by the medical staff onsite and may be required to undergo emergency antigen testing in accordance with Item 10 below. Examinees must place the items to be checked on the table provided and not directly handed to the bar personnel. Alcohol dispensers will be available at the security check area for disinfection.
9. **Positive Cases; Denied Entry.** Examinees who present a positive COVID-19 test result, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, will be denied entry to the LTC, subject to the requirement under Item 3.3.2 above. Examinees who are denied entry will be required to undergo quarantine based on the guidelines and protocols of the local government unit of their LTC.
10. **Symptomatic Examinees.** Regardless of vaccination status and negative COVID-19 test results, examinees who exhibit *any* flu-like symptoms (*i.e.*, body temperature of over 37.5 degrees Celsius, heavy cough, shortness of breath), at the security check area or at any time during the examinations, will be assessed by the medical staff onsite.

If they are required to undergo an emergency antigen test onsite, a positive result will prevail over any prior negative COVID-19 test result, and the examinee will be requested to leave the LTC immediately.

**Examinees who test positive in the emergency antigen test will be required to immediately undergo quarantine based on the guidelines and protocols of the local government unit of their LTC and will not be allowed to continue with the examinations.**

Once cleared by the medical staff or upon receiving a negative antigen test result, symptomatic examinees may be taken to a separate quarantine testing room where they will take their exams. Their ingress and egress will be monitored, and they will be kept separate from the rest of the examinees before, during, and after the examinations.

11. **Mandatory Wearing of Face Masks.** Examinees and personnel shall properly wear their face masks **at all times**, except when eating or drinking. Examinees may not take off their masks or wear poorly fitted ones for the reason that they experience discomfort or cannot breathe with more ease. Examinees may wear personal protective equipment (PPEs) but are warned that some LTCs may not have air-conditioning.

Masks must either be triple-layered cloth masks, surgical masks under cloth masks, N95 masks, KN95 masks, or KF94 masks. Copper masks, masks with valves, masks using Bluetooth, WiFi, NFC, or similar data-sharing technology, and poorly fitted surgical masks shall not be allowed. Examinees must ensure that mechanical components of their mask, if any, do not emit any light or sound that may disturb other examinees.

Face shields, when required by the local government unit of the LTC, must be fully transparent and must cover the face. Half shields shall not be allowed.

Examinees are strictly enjoined to properly and hygienically dispose of any used masks. Examinees may bring additional masks at their own convenience.

12. **Permitted Air Purification Devices.** Personal air purification devices worn around the neck shall be allowed only if they do not use Bluetooth, WiFi, NFC, or similar data-sharing technology. They will still be inspected during the security process. The charger and extra batteries for the device, however, will be deposited during the security process. Examinees must likewise ensure that these devices do not emit any light or sound or smoke that may disturb other examinees.

13. **“No Contact” Rule.** There shall be a strict “no contact” rule in place at the LTCs. At all times, examinees and personnel are required to be at least one (1) meter away from another person. They shall also refrain from speaking as soon as they enter the LTC.

13.1. Examinees are discouraged from congregating. After the security process, they must proceed to their assigned exam rooms. Clearly visible masking tape markers will be placed one (1) meter away from the Head Proctor’s table for the examinees to stand at while waiting for their Notice of Admission to be checked. Examinees must place their Notice of Admission on the table and not directly hand them to the Head Proctor.

13.2. Examinees are discouraged from talking to call the proctor’s attention, and are advised to raise their hands instead. Examinees will be seated at least one (1) meter away from each other, and will not be allowed to move their desks or armchairs closer to other examinees.

13.3. Head Proctors and proctors will be advised not to touch any of the examinees’ personal belongings unless: (i) absolutely necessary (*e.g.*, troubleshooting) and with the examinee’s consent, or (ii) authorized by the Area Team Leaders. A proctor who will accompany an examinee to the restroom must stay at least one (1) meter away from the examinee at all times. Regular handwashing is encouraged, and restrooms will be equipped with hand soap, running water, and paper towels or hand drying machines.

14. **Food and Drinks.** Examinees are required to bring their own food and drinks. They will not be allowed to go out of the LTC during lunch break or receive food or drinks from outsiders throughout each examination day.

Water dispensers or drinking fountains will be made available in all LTCs. Examinees must wash their hands and their tumblers or other water containers prior to the use of these equipment. Examinees must eat their lunch separately from all other examinees, during which talking to other examinees is discouraged.

#### *After the Examinations*

15. **Egress.** After finishing the afternoon exams, examinees must proceed to the queue at the security check to claim their deposited items. After claiming their

deposited items, they will not be allowed to loiter in the egress area and will be advised to leave the premises.

16. **Continuing Self-quarantine.** Examinees must monitor themselves for any symptoms and continue their self-quarantine after each examination day.

For your information and guidance.

October 4, 2022.



**ALFREDO BENJAMIN S. CAGUIOA**

Associate Justice

2022 Bar Examinations Chair