

Press Release

Employers stumped by contradicting statements on SOP during CMCO

MEF strongly urged the government to urgently implement and communicate a clear, consistent and transparent administrative protocol for employers to prevent the spread of Covid-19 during the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) period.

“At the moment there is much confusion and anxiety caused by the conflicting statements issued by the various government agencies and this has made it very difficult for employers who are already struggling to restart their operations,” said MEF Executive Director Datuk Hj. Shamsuddin Bardan in Petaling Jaya today.

“For instance, on 4th of June it was reported in the media that Senior Minister YB Datuk Sabri Yaakob said companies were not allowed to make their employees undergo mandatory 14-day self-quarantine after interstate travel.

“This contradicts the SOP that was issued by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry which allows only workers who reside in the same area/zone as the company to work. Workers from outside the company's geographical zone need to be free of Covid-19 and must undergo 14 days of quarantine before being allowed to enter the company premises.”

“With the establishment of a clear, consistent and transparent administrative protocol, the employer and the employee would be assured that they will be treated fairly.

He said such protocol would also remove conflicting instructions on directives and work procedures from the various government agencies, including the National Security Council, Ministry of Health, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Human Resources, Department of Occupational Safety and Health as well as the various local authorities.

“Employers are committed to stop the spread of Covid-19 but this could only be achieved with the full and coordinated support of the government.”

In compliance with the CMCO, employers have implemented strict procedures in not allowing employees to travel inter-state or on some occasions inter-district especially to yellow and red zone areas to ensure that there is no risk of Covid-19 infection to the other employees within the company.

Such strict procedures are indeed required and imposed by most employers considering the fact that the company's operations will be forced to shut down if any of the employee is infected with Covid-19, and having to bear the full cost of disinfecting the workplace premises.

Thus, many employers require employees to undergo quarantine of 14 days in the event the employee travel interstate/inter-district.

In cases where the inter-state/inter-district travel was on company business, the quarantine period will be fully paid by the company.

However, in the event the inter-state/inter-district travel was for personal reasons then the company will clearly state that 14-day self-quarantine would be required and employee has the option of utilizing the annual leave or unpaid leave during the period.

The employee has the option whether to proceed with the inter-state/ inter-district travel with the conditions as specified by the employer. If the employee decided to proceed with his travel then he would be bound by the employer's conditions.

MEF is indeed surprised by the statement by the Senior Minister (Security Affairs) that the requirements by the company for the employee to undergo quarantine at his/her own cost for travelling inter-state / inter-district is against the law.

Is the government then prepared to compensate the losses incurred by the employer for the forced closure of the company in the event the employee who come back to work immediately after interstate/ inter-district travel due to personal reasons is tested positive for Covid-19?

Is the government also prepared to bear the cost of disinfecting the work premises?

MEF is of the view that requiring the employee who travel inter-state/inter-district to undergo self-quarantine is a precautionary measure that is not in breach of any legislation and is a reasonable step to be taken to avoid the high cost of closure and disinfection in the event employee travelling inter-state/inter-district for personal reasons is infected with Covid-19.

For further information, contact the MEF Secretariat at 03-7955-7778 or fax 03-7955-9008 or email mef-hq@mef.org.my.

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