

MEDIA RELEASE

Latest SOP for Phases 1, 2 and 3 of NRP perplexing

PETALING JAYA: Employers are perplexed over the latest Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) issued by the Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) for regions in Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the National Recovery Plan (NRP).

MEF President Dato Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman J.P. said the new SOP for Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the NRP does not make sense as it contradicted the government's policy to ease movement of vaccinated individuals and the critical need to address the priorities between the of saving lives and livelihoods.

"We are very concerned as we have received many complaints from MEF members regarding the latest SOP that is not only perplexing, but contradicts the government's policy to ease movement of fully vaccinated individuals and to help the economy to recover," he said.

"During the MCO 1.0 when vaccines were not fully rolled out, the quarantine period for staff to work offsite was only three days. However, based on latest SOP the quarantine period is now extended to 14 days and this applies to fully vaccinated employees.

"Employers in the manufacturing, construction, mining and quarrying sectors in the concerned regions are now required to test all employees once every fortnight including the fully vaccinated, and this is at the cost of the employers.

"Given the cost of RTK Antigen test kits at RM40 each, a manufacturer with 1,000 employees would have to pay RM80,000 to test all employees every two weeks. In a month, the cost would amount to RM160,000, just for test kits.

"Then there's the loss of productivity due to the unreasonable disruptions, the stress to logistic operators, and not to mention rising anxiety levels among staff who are required to provide samples every two weeks.

"We are also perplexed by the requirement to test all employees contrary to the policy to test symptomatic employees only, and to exclude asymptomatic individuals.

"Businesses are just opening up with no jobs yet in hand while having to deal with collection and cash flow issues. The latest SOP will just kill more businesses.

"Adding additional cost and stress to business at a time when business cannot even pay salaries and overheads is too much. This is not right."

Dato' Dr Syed Hussain said the SOP and related policies must be consistent with government objectives and business friendly.

"We urge the policy makers to place themselves in the business operation position before making additional cost decisions. Let's all be practical and safe and not just introduce policies that don't affect the policy makers, but harmful to business," he added.

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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