

## GE15: Employees must get reasonable time off to vote, says MEF

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PETALING JAYA: Employers have been told to facilitate voting time for employees during the 15th General Election (GE15).

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) said employers who do not observe polling day on Nov 19 (a Saturday) as a day off must grant reasonable paid time off to employees who are registered voters to cast their ballots between 8am and 5.30pm.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussin Syed Husman said there should be no time constraints as far as employees working conventional office hours are concerned, while those on shifts should experience little difficulty in fulfilling their obligations to vote outside their work periods.

"There may be instances where registered (voters) are on a 12-hour shift, and those on night shift should be able to vote during the time allocated with no paid time-off given," he said in a statement Friday (Oct 21).

Employees who are registered voters and scheduled to work during the day on a 12-hour shift should be given reasonable time-off to cast their votes on polling day.

"Employers may also consider different arrangements such as allowing them to report for work two hours late, for example, or granting them a two-hour extension to their lunch break, or releasing them two hours earlier," he said.

However, he said that for employees who were outstation voters and needed to return to their hometowns to vote, it was reasonable for employers to require them to apply for paid or unpaid leave to vote.

Syed Hussin said under the Election Offences Act 1954, employers are obliged to allow their employees who are registered voters a reasonable period of paid time off for voting.

In MEF's view, he said, the above was a fair and reasonable construction of the obligations imposed on employers to ensure that all employees who are registered voters are afforded a reasonable opportunity to vote.