

Standardised operating hours for all

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Economic sectors allowed to operate during CMCO in Sarawak can do so from 7am to 10pm, says Uggah



Uggah addresses the press conference, as Dr Sim looks on.

KUCHING: The operating hours for economic sectors that are allowed to operate in Sarawak from yesterday onwards under the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) have been standardised to 7am to 10pm, says Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah. Uggah, who is State Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) chairman, said the different operating hours as stated in Sarawak's standard operating procedure (SOP) according to sectors, had caused some confusion.

"All economic activities in the state will adjust back to the normal operating hours.

"For instance, electrical goods stores can operate from 8am to 5pm, it's up to them. But the earliest to open is at 7am and the latest to close is at 10pm," he told a press conference here yesterday.

He also said hotels could also start operating from yesterday, adding the SOP for this sector is still being finalised and will be issued by the state Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture soon. Uggah said for economic sectors which have reopened, the notification by SDMC is intended to ensure that operating sectors can adopt the guidelines and SOP which aim to balance the economy and public health.

"This is important because we want to determine that even when economic activities have resumed, we also make sure that public health is taken care of.

"That is why social distancing and personal hygiene must be practised at all times."

He added that enforcement teams will continue to monitor the situation and assist in the smooth implementation of the SOP.

On a related matter, Uggah said SDMC is now working out its policies to ensure that the second wave of Covid-19 does not hit Sarawak.

"We hope the second wave does not arrive in Sarawak but even if it does, we hope it's not as bad as in other countries," he said.

Noting that countries such as Singapore, South Korea and Germany have each experienced a second wave of Covid-19, he said that in order to ensure the same does not happen to Sarawak, all Sarawakians including students who are returning from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Labuan will be quarantined at home for 14 days under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342), and will be required to wear QR-coded wristbands for monitoring purposes.

"We understand that quarantine will be an inconvenience but it must be complied with as this is one of the ways for us to break the chain of Covid-19 infection," he said, while expressing hope for continued cooperation from the people.

Meanwhile, Local Government and Housing Minister Dato Sri Dr Sim Kui Hian said Sarawak had done quite well in managing the first phase of the Covid-19 outbreak.

“We need everyone’s help to prevent the second wave of Covid-19. If not for the imported cases, Sarawak would not have Covid-19 cases in the first place,” he said.

Dr Sim hoped that Sarawakians would not abuse or flout home quarantine rules like what had occurred in Sabah recently, where returning students and individuals who flouted home quarantine rules contributed to its new Covid-19 cases.

“In order to make sure that people wouldn’t abuse or breach their quarantine order, Sarawak has allocated wristbands, which are basically to trace and know the individual’s location,” he said.

Dr Sim also said the use of the wristbands would be gazetted for the CMCO, which had been extended to June 9.

“If you tamper with the wristband and you go out, you would be breaking the law,” he warned.

Dr Sim stressed that the Covid-19 quarantine should not be viewed as a punishment, as it is for the benefit of the people.