

## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

26 JANUARY 2021

### INDUSTRY TO STRICTLY COMPLY WITH THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES TO HELP REDUCE THE COVID-19 CASES

The Ministry of International Trade and industry (MITI) met with the representatives from the manufacturing sector on 22 January 2021 to discuss the efforts to reduce the COVID-19 cases and the dependency on foreign workers.

1. The Government has expressed their concerns about the spike in COVID-19 cases within the workplace. MITI has been informed that the Ministry of Health (MOH) had identified the manufacturing sector is one of the major breeding ground for COVID-19. **Currently, approximately one third of the Covid-19 clusters are related to the manufacturing sector, out of more than 300 clusters nationwide.**
2. **The Government will be very strict on companies failing to comply with the SOPs.** Currently, the Government is in the process of issuing orders to several companies, both local and MNCs which failed to comply with the SOPs to shut down their operations.
3. **Members are advised to do their part, by taking additional proactive and preventive measures to tighten the existing SOPs at their workplaces and the living quarters of their employees.** The additional measures recommended include:
  - i. **An urgent need for employers to provide greater attention to the living conditions for all workers and ensure they comply with strict SOPs, including the requirement for physical distancing in their living environment.** This would also include imposing the same requirements on the living conditions of sub-contract workers.
  - ii. **Comply with the Government's directive for all foreign workers to be Covid-19 screened** and endeavor to get this concluded soonest by the deadline set by the Government.
  - iii. Employers and employees to **comply to the COVID-19 preventive measures at workplace.** The new norm strategy of border controls, movement controls, physical distancing and self-protection needs to be adhered.
  - iv. **The capacity of the vehicles or busses to ferry workers to be kept at 50% or below to ensure physical distancing** is maintained in these vehicles while transporting workers including all other SOPs and precautional measures.
  - v. **Appoint senior management members of the company** to oversee that the SOPs are strictly complied while at the workplace, at the workers' accommodation, and during transportation of workers.
  - vi. **Isolate suspected or positive COVID-19 cases** at a dedicated point similar to self-quarantine away from other workers and immediately notify the nearest state or district health departments.
  - vii. Advocating a "safe work bubble" for employees by **monitoring and limiting employees' movements** to the minimum and on need basis only.

**viii. Employees should inform the employer immediately if the swab results are positive. Positive workers are prohibited from being in the workplace.**

**ix. Members are also advised to request their respective supply chain partners for compliance.**

These additional measures could be another major challenge in terms of the operational cost and logistics arrangement. Nonetheless, MPMA **strongly** encourages its members and the industry to do whatever it takes to reduce the infection so as to break the Covid-19 chain and keep the economy functional.

**DATUK LIM KOK BOON**

President