

Workers reluctant to return, demand more pay

By [Teh Athira Yusof](#) - April 30, 2020 @ 9:07pm



**PERSEKUTUAN MAJIKAN-MAJIKAN MALAYSIA
MALAYSIAN EMPLOYERS FEDERATION**

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) is the reluctance of employees to return to work by using the MCO as an excuse. -NSTP File pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Employers are facing a new set of problems following the Movement Control Order (MCO) as the government mulls to reopen the nation's economic sectors.

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) said among the issues is the reluctance of to return to work by using the MCO as an excuse.

MEF executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said this group comprises those who are not desk bound and from the manufacturing sector.

"They are aware of the MCO and that they are being fully paid, even though they are not at work.

"When the employers request them to come to work, they used the MCO as an excuse to stay ome.

"Some even asked for additional pay during the MCO, if they are called back to work," he said when contacted by the New Straits Times.

Shamsuddin said to overcome this, the government should introduce a guideline for employers faced with such an issue.

Earlier, today, Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said companies and factories that had been allowed to operate at full scale need to adhere to regulations issued by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (Miti).

During the first two phases on the MCO, only factories involved in essential services were allowed to operate, but with 50 per cent capacity.

Meanwhile, in the construction sector— even with green light given to return to full capacity—companies are facing problems in purchasing building materials.

Penang Master Builders and Building Materials Dealers Association president Datuk Lim Chee Tong said construction sites might be facing a lack of materials from their existing supply chain.

"If the material required is sand and the only way to get it is by transporting it from another state ... or if it means sourcing it from locations which are under the (Covid-19) red zone, then more time is needed for the sand to be transported.

"Time taken for construction work to complete would also depend on when all supply chains involved resume work," he said.

Lim estimates that for the construction sector to operate smoothly again, it would take between two to three months.

He also emphasised that the most important thing in the construction sector was speedy cash flow.

He is hopeful that developers would be able make payments on time, as any delay would in turn affect subcontractors' work.

Meanwhile, contractors and the MEF is agreeable on one issue; there is a need to resolve the delay in making Covid-19 test kits available.

Malaysian Bumiputera Contractors Association president Datuk Azman Yusoff said employers in the construction sector should be able to provide the necessary support to their workers in the face of the pandemic.

"We must take precautionary measures such as adhering to social distancing, providing sanitisers, and sanitising the (construction) site and labour hostels, as well as providing medical assistance to workers, if and when required.

"As part of the government standard operating procedure (SOP), employers would also need to screen and test all workers.

"I hope the Covid-19 test kit to screen workers is made available at construction sites as soon as possible," he said.

Azman said the construction sector at the moment still requires foreign workers, and the government should look into the Industrialised Building System (IBS) for a long term solution to reduce this dependence.