

## 'Strategise how to work in new office environment'

By [Dawn Chan](#), [Kalbana Perimbanayam](#) - May 2, 2020 @ 12:36pm



Strategising a new working environment, figuring out a new layout for offices and observing social distancing and ascertaining how many staff should be working are some of the issues employers will have to address before Monday. (Image for illustration purposes only)

---

KUALA LUMPUR: Strategising a new working environment, figuring out a new layout for offices and observing social distancing and ascertaining how many staff should be working are some of the issues employers will have to address before Monday.

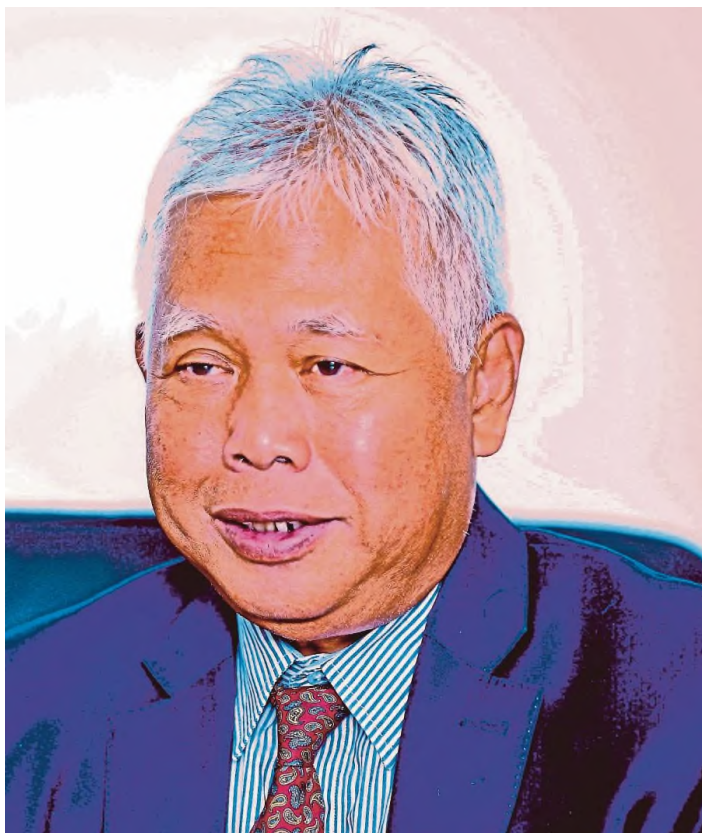
Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said his counterparts would have to adopt the new norms at the workplaces as the government had allowed certain economic sectors to restart after almost two months under the Movement Control Order (MCO).

He said it was impossible for offices to go back to full gear as new office policies needed to be sorted out such as social distancing, sanitisation and disinfection of common areas to avert the Covid-19 infection.

"Changes in the office environment need to be done. There is also a need to strategise how we work — how many per cent of employees should be in the office and how many will work from home, and whether there is a need to reconfigure sitting arrangements.

"All these need to be done to comply with the standard operating procedure under the Conditional Movement Control Order.

"We want to ensure measures are strictly implemented."



Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan

---

Shamsuddin said employees, too, needed to get adjusted to resume work at the office after being away for over a month, adding that it could be a culture shock for some.

The government, said Shamsuddin, needs to stipulate the number of workforce that was allowed to return to office.

"This remains unclear – is it 100 per cent, 50 per cent or lower than that? Otherwise, there will be interpretation issues within the employers' community. Some would think it is 100 per cent but the government is still concerned about social distancing. We need further clarification on this."

He said MEF welcomed the government's move to restart almost all economic sectors, which allowed companies to put their businesses on track.

This, he added, would assist companies to mitigate some of the issues they faced such as the requirement to pay wages to their employees while not gaining any revenue.

"Employers must be cautious. They should not resume their operations in full, but in stages. They should go all out only when they are ready. Increase operations only when the situation gets better."

Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (Cuepacs) president Adnan Mat urged department heads to take the initiative to determine flexible work hours for their staff.

He said this would replace the current practice where staff were free to choose if they wished to clock in at 7.30am or 8.30am.

"Perhaps the department head can decide who comes in earlier or later. This can also apply to the alternate-day work from the office schedule. This is to limit the number of staff working in the office.

"This is a new norm civil servants will have to accept but they should never compromise on their services. The delivery system and services to the rakyat must be efficient, regardless of working from home or office."



Adnan Mat

---

Adnan said department heads in charge of core services must ensure they provide efficient services to boost the economy.

He said business operators, contractors, manufacturers, those involved in industries such as transportation and supply chain, even farmers and fishermen, should be given swift assistance.

"They are the most affected by the MCO and they are the key drivers of our economy. Their activities will speed up the process of rebuilding our economy."