

MEF urges govt to defer reduction in weekly working hours

By [Mohamed Basyir](#), [Dawn Chan](#) - August 12, 2022 @ 6:22pm



MEF President Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the deferment would give employers enough time to adjust their operational hours to meet the new requirements of the 45-hour work week. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged the government to defer the reduction in weekly working hours under the amended Employment Act 1955, which comes into effect on Sept 1.

MEF President Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the deferment would give employers enough time to adjust their operational hours to meet the new requirements of the 45-hour work week.

Though the implementation of the reduced working hours had been announced, he said, the human resources minister's order on the implementation date and the First Schedule of the Employment Act had yet to be gazetted.

Without the implementation order, provisions of the amendment could not be implemented, he said.

"The reduction in working hours from 48 hours to 45 hours per week needs to be implemented smoothly and should not disrupt the operations of a company.

"Employers and employees need to discuss and understand fully the reduction in working hours," he told New Straits Times today.

He said employers who run their businesses continuously normally run them on a two- or three-shift cycle, and this was possible as the maximum hours of work allowable in a week was 48 hours.

With the reduction of working hours per week to 45 hours, he said, it was no longer possible to run businesses continuously without incurring at least three hours of overtime payments.

He said if employers were not willing to incur the overtime payments or do not have the financial capacity to absorb the overtime costs, they needed to reduce the working hours per week to 45 hours.

"Employers that operate for more than 45 hours per week need to adjust their working hours to ensure compliance with the reduction in working hours.

"Employers will be liable to pay for overtime if they require employees to work more than 45 hours per week."

The weekly working hours in Malaysia will be reduced from 48 to 45 hours effective Sept 1, Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Awang Hashim told the Dewan Negara earlier this week.

This followed amendments to the Employment Act 1955, which aimed to safeguard workers' welfare, in line with the International Labour Organisation Convention.

The amendments also allowed employees to work flexible hours, where they get to choose the location, time and days of work.

This would include flexibility to work from home during emergencies, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.