

# MEF: Not effective to carry out Covid-19 swab tests for workers twice a week

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By CLARISSA CHUNG

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PETALING JAYA: Regular Covid-19 swab tests for workers in the manufacturing sector in enhanced movement control order areas will be costly and ineffective, says the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

Its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the latest directive by the authorities for manufacturers to test their workers twice a week for the virus should not be implemented.

“It does not make sense to swab the workers twice every week, since most manufacturers operate five-day weeks, which would leave only three days a week for business operations.

“The high costs of the swab tests are also to be borne by the employers and would be too much for the manufacturers, especially in the present challenging economic situation.

“With the cost of swab tests at RM70 each, a manufacturer with 1,000 employees would have to pay RM140,000 to test all employees every week.

“In four weeks, the cost would be a whopping RM560,000 a month just for swab tests,” he said in a statement on Friday (July 9).

Syed Hussain added that repeated swab tests on employees may also increase the risk of injury to the workers’ nasal area and surrounding tissues.

“Furthermore, the World Health Organisation’s updated guidance does not recommend widespread screening of individuals without symptoms due to its high cost and ineffectiveness.

“We are of the view that such tests should not be made a mandatory condition for manufacturers to continue business operations,” he said.

A more effective approach, he added, would be to focus on vaccination efforts targeting industry players and workers.

“A more effective strategy would be to focus on the National Immunisation Programme on industries and we propose a special task force be set up to carefully manage and monitor this effort,” he said.

Syed Hussain added that there were also serious concerns with unregistered factories that continue to operate without being made to adhere to any regulations.

“Instead of penalising employers who have complied with all the standard operating procedure and requirements, the authorities should focus on these illegal factories that are abundant in Selangor and the Klang Valley.

“These illegal factories also utilise illegal foreign workers who are not subject to all the established SOP and protocols.

“This is the most opportune time to clamp down on the illegal operations and authorities should take the necessary action,” he said.

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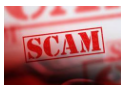
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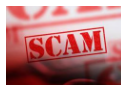
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
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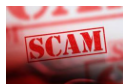
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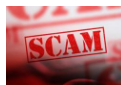
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