

MEF echoes hybrid work model

Group also supports call for employers to have stricter SOP in place

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PETALING JAYA: Calls for companies to continue to implement work from home (WFH) and other related policies to contain the pandemic are supported by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said MEF also backed the government's call for employers to introduce stricter standard operating procedures besides WFH.

"These efforts should be supported by all stakeholders to enable the government to delicately balance the life and livelihood of the *rakyat*," he said.

Beside WFH, he said employers could also implement staggered shifts to limit the number of workers at the office at any given time.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) deputy president Mohd Effendy Abdul Ghani said there is no need for employers to push the panic button.

He noted the present situation is different compared to when the pandemic first emerged two years ago.

"More Malaysians are now fully vaccinated and 'boosted' unlike before and employers should be given the discretion to decide if they want to implement WFH or rotation for their non-essential workers," he said when contacted.

He noted some workers preferred to work in the office.



Safer option:
Senior marketing executive Chan You Li, 28, working from her home in Taman Hijau in Ampang. — AZHAR MAHFOF/ The Star

"Employers could also implement staggered shifts to limit the number of workers at the office at any given time."

Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman

"It has been two years since the outbreak and we are now in the endemic phase.

"Initially, most employees were happy working from home but based on past experiences, some feel that they are more productive and provide better quality work in the office," he said.

Employers, he added, must ensure safe working environments for their workers who opt to come into the office, including providing face masks and self-test kits.

On Monday, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin encouraged employers to implement WFH or rotate their non-essential workers to curb the spread of the Omicron variant.

This followed a spike in daily new infections which had surpassed the 10,000 mark over the past few days.

Meanwhile, Effendy acknowledged there will be some employees who may try to shirk their responsibilities when WFH.

"Most employees are generally honest when it comes to their work and health condition.

"However, there will be a small number who may try to escape work when WFH or claim to be ill due to their booster shots.

"My advice to them is not to look for such opportunities during hard times," he noted.

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai said that most industries already have their SOP in

place which includes bi-weekly testing of their workers.

"In this regard, the choice of implementing WFH or even a rotational work system is best left to the individual employers to assess and implement based on their respective risk assessments," he said when contacted.

Soh said that FMM was against further full lockdowns as it would have dire impact on recovery efforts.

"Only affected companies where high cases of Covid-19 cases are detected should be instructed to either close or partially close.

"This is for them to conduct the necessary contact tracing, testing and treatment of the employees including cleaning and sanitisation," he added.