

## Stricter SOP needed to curb Covid-19

Social distancing must be practised at all times no matter where people are, says MMA president

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**PETALING JAYA:** Health experts have called for strict enforcement of the standard operating procedures (SOP) and special focus on Sabah and Selangor to stop the runaway increase in Covid-19 infections.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Datuk Dr M. Subramaniam said social distancing must be practised at all times, even in malls.

“When people queue up to get into a mall, they observe the social distancing rule but once inside, it is ignored,” he told theSun.

“It is therefore up to the management of these malls to ensure that shoppers obey the rules,” he added.

Subramaniam said mall workers, who are constantly in direct contact with shoppers, should be screened for Covid-19 regularly.

“A Covid-19 test can be expensive so it is up to the government and mall operators to come up with a win-win solution that will be for everyone’s benefit, including shoppers.”

Subramaniam added another issue was the speed of community infection in Sabah, which has prompted authorities to call for volunteers to help out there.

“They must ensure these volunteers are trained to deal with the pandemic. One way is for the government to recruit those who are waiting to do their housemanship,” he said.

“They have completed their studies and know what to do. It will also teach them how to deal with such emergencies,” he added.

He said the government must also ensure there is adequate investment in equipment and manpower to deal with the rapid outbreak in Sabah.

Respiratory physician Dr Helmy Haja Mydin said there was a need to carry out more tests, isolation and treatment in Selangor and Sabah as these two states were the hardest hit.

“For individuals, the best thing to do is assume that anyone you come into contact with may be carrying the virus,” he said.

However, Helmy added there was no cause for panic.

“It is just a reminder of the need to avoid the 3Cs ... close contact, confined spaces and crowded areas,” he said.

“If everyone observes this rule, it will help flatten the infection curve.”

Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan is all for testing frontliners.

“Most companies, malls and shops do adhere to the SOP strictly, but the risk will always be there,” he said.

To ease the burden on workers, the Social Security Organisation should step in to conduct the tests, he added.