



**Majlis Peguam  
Bar Council Malaysia**

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**Circular No 061/2020  
Dated 16 Mar 2020**

To Members of the Malaysian Bar and pupils in chambers

### **Measures to be taken by the Courts and Members of the Bar in Relation to the COVID-19 Outbreak**

In light of the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in Malaysia, the President of the Malaysian Bar, Salim Bashir, has engaged with the Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Malaysia, YAA Tan Sri Tengku Maimun binti Tuan Mat, with the view of taking steps to protect members of the judiciary, lawyers, and the public at large.

#### **(1) Courts be on Lockdown**

The Bar Council has suggested that the Courts be on lockdown for two weeks, with provisions made for urgent matters to be heard. The Courts have issued a COVID-19-related standard operating procedure ("SOP"). It is noted that the High Court and Subordinate Courts have implemented procedures pertaining to conducting case management and mentions in open court, and that all mediation cases be adjourned pending further directions.

#### **(2) Hand Sanitisers and Face Masks in Court**

The Bar Council is aware of the severity of COVID-19, and strongly advise Members to take the necessary precautions to maintain their health and safety when they attend Court proceedings. Such measures include the use of hand sanitisers and face masks. Hand sanitisers and face masks need to be provided by the Courts for the well-being of Members of the Judiciary and the Bar.

In recognition of the severity of the situation, the Bar Council has set up a hotline for Members to inform the Bar Council if hand sanitisers and face masks are not available at particular Courts. The hotline details are: (tel) 03-2050 2101; (email) [pad@malaysianbar.org.my](mailto:pad@malaysianbar.org.my). Once the Bar Council receives such information, we will work with the State Bars to overcome the issues concerned.



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In order to ensure the safety of their employees, Members and law firms are referred to the Ministry of Health website, [here](#); or its Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre, viewed in Telegram, [here](#); for helpful guidance on ways to control the spread of COVID-19.

### **(3) Law Firms to be Mindful and Prepared**

We also urge Members to be sympathetic to requests for extensions of time, subject to the consent and instructions of their clients. Law firms should also be mindful of the likelihood of infection among their own employees, and note that this will likely have a substantial impact on the operation of their businesses. Should such a situation arise, law firms need to consult with their Building Management on the steps needed for disinfection of their workplace and how long the process would entail. Firms should also be prepared with a contingency plan, and make arrangements to cope accordingly.

### **(4) Cancellation of Events**

The Bar Council has cancelled all events until 30 Apr 2020, and will not be scheduling any new events until the COVID-19 situation improves. This will also include any continuing professional development (“CPD”) courses.

### **(5) Working from Home**

We advise law firms to consider allowing their employees to work from home for a period of two weeks to minimise the risk of contracting the virus. Any issues arising from this crisis differs from firm to firm, be it in the sort of work and the base of clients. In light of the above, we remind Members who plan to work from home to consider the Rules and Rulings of the Bar Council.

For any law firm that choose to remain open, the Bar Council calls for the following precautions to be seriously taken at their workplace:

- (a) Individual temperature screening of employees and clients to be implemented at the entrance of the workplace;
- (b) Sick employees should self-quarantine and seek medical treatment immediately, and to report their condition to their Human Resources Department;
- (c) Employees to inform their Human Resources Department if they have been overseas to countries badly affected by COVID-19, or known to be in contact with an individual infected by COVID-19;
- (d) Law firms to provide and encourage the use of hand sanitisers at the workplace;
- (e) Employees to use face masks when meeting clients; and
- (f) Employees to adopt greater hygiene practices, including the frequent washing of hands.

We understand that we are currently facing a public health crisis of troubling proportions. However, we are confident that with sufficient measures put in place, we will be able to overcome these tumultuous times together and emerge stronger in the face of this pandemic.

Thank you.

**A G Kalidas**  
**Secretary**  
**Malaysian Bar**