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The Malaysian Reserve



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by ALIFAH ZAINUDDIN

MOST construction sites in the country will remain closed with less than 10% having resumed operations since lockdown measures on the industry were partially lifted in mid-April.

Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, citing figures from a survey by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), said only 344 building sites out of 3,735 projects checked complied with strict health guidelines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

About 3% or 122 sites have been warned for failure to comply with health rules, while four have been forced to shut down. The rest, amounting to 3,265 construction sites, have yet to reopen.

"The conditions set out by CIDB are very strict. They include a requirement to have a safety and health officer present at the site," Ismail Sabri said at his daily briefing yesterday.



Construction firms allowed to operate are required to provide thermal screenings on site and keep health reading records of all workers for at least 3 months as reference

The government in April moved to partially reopen some parts of the economy amid prospects of negative growth and mass retrenchment this year.

Apart from essential services, other sectors allowed to operate include projects and services related to construction work.

Companies, however, must

adhere to strict guidelines on health precautions and movement provided by the Ministry of Health.

Those allowed to operate are required to provide thermal screenings on site and keep health reading records of all workers for at least three months as reference.

The government has made it compulsory for all workers to

undergo Covid-19 screening prior to their return to work at any health clinics recognised by the Social Security Organisation.

Since the start of the Conditional Movement Control Order on May 4, several new clusters involving migrant workers at construction sites have been identified, including in Setia Alam, Selangor;

Jalan Ampang in Kuala Lumpur; and Pedas in Negeri Sembilan.

In a separate development, Ismail Sabri said permanent residents (PRs) or foreigners on social visit passes in Malaysia will have their immigration privileges revoked if they do not pay for their lodging during quarantine.

The government has made it compulsory for foreigners and spouses with PR status returning from abroad to pay for their own accommodation during the mandatory two-week isolation period.

Hotel costs borne by the government are only applicable for Malaysian nationals only.

"For spouses with PR status or on long social visit passes who just returned from overseas, they must bear the hotel cost themselves," Ismail Sabri said, adding that the Attorney General's Chambers will monitor the situation.

Meanwhile, spouses living in different states will be allowed to travel interstate to reunite with their families.

However, they must have a permit to travel from the police, Ismail Sabri said. Applications can be made through the Gerak Malaysia app or at the nearest police station.