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Follow SOP, contractors warned

Fadillah: Those who fail to do so will not be allowed to start their operations

PETALING JAYA: Contractors who fail to follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) of the conditional movement control order (MCO) at construction sites and workers' accommodation will not be allowed to start their operations, says Senior Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

"It is the responsibility of contractors to ensure their construction sites and workers' accommodation follow the SOP and minimum standards as required by law to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

"I am concerned regarding the latest cases of Covid-19 involving construction workers.

"The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) has been informed by the Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory and Putrajaya Health Department of the 44 Covid-19 positive cases at a construction site in Kuala Lumpur on May 24.

"These positive cases were discovered after the contractor sent 400 workers for Covid-19 clinical tests as preparation to start work, as required under the Construction Industry conditional MCO SOP.

"The construction site had not



started operations when the positive cases were discovered," said Fadillah, who is also the Works Minister, in a statement.

The construction project is a 19-storey office block.

About 228 out of the 400 workers had stayed at a "kongsi" next to the construction site.

Out of the 44 workers who tested positive, 43 were foreigners while one was a local security guard.

From the 43 foreign workers, 42 of them stayed at the kongsi while one stayed in Selangor Mansion.

The construction site has since been ordered to close and the site as well as the workers' accommodation were ordered to be sanitised.



Risky condition: A kongsi is usually cramped with too many labourers, making social distancing impossible.

More than 200 workers will be quarantined at a nearby location and the 44 positive cases have been warned in Hospital Sungai Buloh.

Fadillah said Covid-19 infection could happen at workers' accommodation that was cramped with too many labourers, making it impossible to practise any form of social distancing.

He said one of the main initiatives of the Construction Industry Transformation Programme (CITP), which began in 2016, was to ensure workers' accommodation in the construction industry follow the minimum standards required by law.

In 2016, CIDB, in collaboration with Standards Malaysia, intro-

duced the Malaysian Standard for Construction Site Workers Amenities and Accommodation (MS 2593:2015).

Last year, the Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act (Act 466) under the Human Resources Ministry was amended to include workers from all industries, including construction.

"The law makes it the responsibility of employers to ensure workers stay in proper accommodation with adequate amenities," he said.

With the conditional MCO, this requirement is further strengthened with other SOPs to ensure worker's accommodation is safe from Covid-19.

The minister said contractors who fail to adhere to the requirements under Act 466 could face action.

"If contractors fail to abide by any written law, CIDB can take disciplinary action against them, which includes suspension or cancellation of a contractor's registration.

"The best way for the construction industry to move forward post-Covid-19 is to ensure it is no longer dependent on cheap foreign labour," he said.