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Civil servants get deadline (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - All 950,000 civil servants must sign the letter of undertaking on good conduct with the Government by March 30 while those recruited after Jan 1 will have to do so within a month of their appointment.

It is learnt that those who fail to do this are liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Public Officers (Conduct and Discipline) Regulations 1993.

Public Service Department director-general Datuk Seri Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri said the General Orders (Appointments and Promotions) 1973 had been amended to include the provision.

Civil servants appointed on a temporary or contract basis, too, are required to sign the agreement.

Jamaluddin said the objective was to create awareness among government employees of the importance of carrying out their tasks professionally.

"This is in line with the Government's efforts to have an efficient and credible civil service which will allow the country to be continuously developed in a peaceful and harmonious environment," he said in a service circular.

Among the violations stated in the agreement were abetting the country's enemies, leaking government secrets, belittling government policies and actions, misusing government vehicles and doing personal/family business during working hours.

Going on leave when services are extremely needed, not reporting offences committed by subordinates, getting into heavy debts, deliberately delaying the issuance of licences and verbally abusing those seeking counter services were also on the list.

Apart from pledging loyalty to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the country and the Government, the agreement required government employees:

- * not to subordinate their public duties to their private interests;
- * not to conduct themselves in a manner which could bring their private interests into conflict with their public duties;
- * not to conduct themselves in a manner likely to bring the public service into disrepute or to bring discredit thereto; and,
- * not to insubordinate or conduct themselves in such manner as is likely to be construed as being insubordinate.

On Oct 9, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Cabinet had made it compulsory for civil servants, lecturers and undergraduates to sign an agreement on good conduct since some public sector employees did not abide by the General Orders.

Dr Mahathir had said the agreement was necessary to deter them from negative activities.

The agreement was proposed only for lecturers and undergraduates to ensure they did not get involved in attempts to poison the minds of students against the Government but was later extended to all government employees.

Jamaluddin said the new clause in the General Orders required public sector employees to adhere to all directives issued by the Government.

All employees, he said, would be required to sign the document in front of their head of department.

"Those on attachment and those reappointed on a contract basis will also be required to sign the agreement."

Jamaluddin said all heads of department would use a standard agreement provided by the PSD.

They are not allowed to amend the pledge.

However, for the benefit of statutory bodies and local authorities, some amendments are allowed as service conditions for their employees differ from other civil servants.

The particulars of those signing the agreement, which include the day it is signed, must be entered into their personal record.

Jamaluddin said civil servants must sign two copies of the document, one to be kept by the Government and the other by the employee.

The authorities in charge of recruitment have also been told to include the agreement as one of the conditions for appointment.

"Heads of department must ensure these procedures are carried out and the signed documents are not misused. They will also have to explain the contents of the agreement to the employees and the reason for its implementation," he added.