

Tests for red zone office workers 'highly recommended', not mandatory

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Covid-19 swab tests are mandatory for foreign workers working in the construction sector and as security guards in red zones, said Senior Minister (Security) Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

In his daily live briefing on Facebook, Ismail added that workers who are symptomatic are also required to undergo mandatory swab tests.

"For workers from red zones who need to work in an office, it is also highly recommended that they undergo a swab test," he said.

"This is to ensure early detection of Covid-19 infection to prevent the formation of new clusters in the workplace," he added.

Ismail said yesterday that those who need to go to the office in red zones under the conditional movement control order (CMCO) were required to take swab tests.

In making the announcement, Ismail said that Social Security Organisation (Socso) would cover the costs of swab tests for contributors.

Today, Human Resources Minister M Saravanan confirmed that the Socso Prihatin Screening Programme will be extended to all contributors in the CMCO areas of Selangor, Sabah, and the federal territories of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan, effective tomorrow.

Eligible employers can conduct free Covid-19 swab tests for their staff through panel clinics appointed by Socso. They just need to make an appointment for screening and submit their complete information to the panel clinics, said Saravanan.

"The screening process can be done in the clinic/laboratory or carried out at work premises. Only expenses for screening done in panel clinics will fully be borne by Socso," he said.

Meanwhile, for employers who choose the subsidy route, Covid-19 screening can be done in any laboratory aside from the panel clinics.

However, the screening cost must be funded by the employer first before the employer can claim the subsidy payment online by including payment receipts.

Following the approval of such claims, Socso will make a subsidy repayment of up to RM150 for each employee who has undergone Covid-19 screening, Saravanan said.

Yesterday, the government issued a work-from-home directive to a total of one million workers in the industry and public sectors in Selangor, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, and Labuan.

The order is aimed at limiting movement and contact among workers to cut the chain of Covid-19 infections.

Sabah's order is until Oct 26 while the order for Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, and Putrajaya ends on Oct 27. In Labuan, the order will end on Oct 30.

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