

A rise civil service won't like

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KUALA LUMPUR: This is one increase the civil service can do without.

In the first three months of this year, police have detained 42 government employees who tested positive for drugs.

This is almost half of the 88 civil servants caught for the same offence the whole of last year.

For drug possession, the number, though, is not that alarming.

In the first quarter of the year, only 14 were caught compared with 130 last year.

According to statistics released by federal police, those arrested this year included staff from the Education, Agriculture, Health and Home Affairs Ministries.

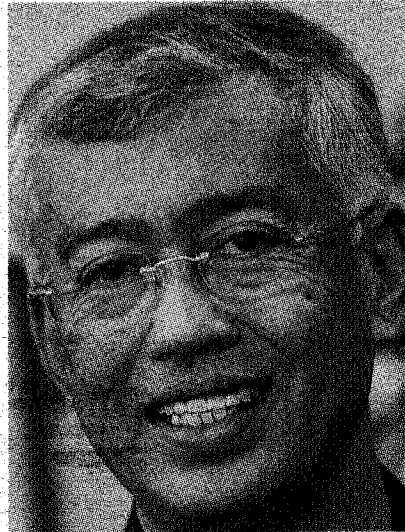
Federal Narcotics Department director Datuk Abang Abdul Wahap Abang Julai said police had notified the ministries and agencies of their staff's misdemeanour.

"If a civil servant is tested positive or illicit drugs are found in his possession, a letter will be sent to his superior," he said.

Under the regulations, the Public

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*Datuk Abang Abdul Wahap
Abang Julai
Federal Narcotics Department
director*



Service Department (PSD) can terminate the service of any civil servant taking, or in possession of, illicit drugs.

Abdul Wahap said the civil servants had also been charged in court.

Some cases have been disposed with

finer imposed while others were freed on police bail while awaiting sentence.

He said many of those who failed the urine test had taken ganja and amphetamine-type stimulants like Ecstasy or Erimin 5.

"This is something to be viewed seriously as police have a battle on two fronts, against traffickers and within the civil service."

Almost all those arrested were casual users but Abdul Wahap said this did not diminish the seriousness of their action.

He said several policemen had also tested positive for drug abuse, adding the police disciplinary committee had meted out the appropriate action.

A PSD spokesman said disciplinary action would be taken by department heads against employees involved in drugs.

"Copies of the action taken will be forwarded to us and the chief secretary to the government," he said.

On Tuesday, deputy Sabah police commissioner SAC (I) Sidin Abdul Karim expressed worry over the growing number of civil servants arrested for drug-related offences in the state.

The first quarter of this year has seen the arrest of 16 civil servants compared with only one case in the same period last year.

The number of those arrested for possession has also tripled with 15 picked up this year compared with five last year.