

## Covid-19: Ministry reminds Malaysians not to eat out, clarifies what may open in hypermarts and malls

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BY IDA LIM



A Pelita Nasi Kandar worker hangs up a sign detailing the dine-in restriction in Bangsar March 18, 2020. — Picture by Miera Zulyana

**KUALA LUMPUR, March 18** — The government released today guidelines for outlets such as bakeries, food courts and businesses that may open at shopping malls, hypermarkets and airports during the country's two-week shutdown of non-essential businesses and services.

In a March 17 list of 20 frequently-asked questions for the retail sector released today, the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) outlined the strict rules for the limited operations of restaurants, bakeries, and food courts and also prohibited anyone from trying to eat at these locations.

"Restaurants, Ready-to-Eat/ bakeries can stay open but only for food that is takeaway and drive-through only or through delivery services by certain companies such as Grab Food or Food Panda. Dine-in and eat-in are not allowed," it said.

As for food courts in hypermarkets, the ministry said: "Food court operations can stay open but only for food that is taken home or through delivery services by certain companies such as Grab Food or Food Panda. Dine-in and eat-in are not allowed."

The ministry also said the only tenants that are allowed to continue operations in hypermarkets during these two weeks are those in the pharmaceutical and clinical services.

As for grocery stores in shopping malls such as anchor tenants, the ministry said: "Retail operations (food and daily necessities only) in shopping malls can be continued subject to the negotiations between the tenant and the premise owner."



For specialty stores, the ministry said the only outlets allowed to operate there are food outlets, grocery stores and convenience stores, but again with the condition that the food is to be brought home or for food delivery services, with the same ban on dine-in and eat-in.

For department stores that have multiple components such as fashion, food court, home equipment and supermarket, the ministry said: "Only the supermarket department that sells food and daily necessities are allowed to operate in department stores."

As to whether pasar malam or night markets and pasar tani or farmers' markets are allowed to operate these two weeks, the ministry's answer was a short "No."

The Kuala Lumpur mayor had yesterday also issued a notice to order the temporary two-week closure of businesses in Kuala Lumpur such as night markets, roadside stalls, food trucks and shopping complexes, with only essential services allowed to continue operating in the capital city.

In the same list of FAQ, the ministry asked the hypothetical question of whether stores at airports would also be affected with all shopping malls closed, before then saying that only certain stores are allowed.

“Only tenants that operate in the pharmaceutical and clinical industry, supermarkets, grocery stores and convenience stores that sell daily necessities only are allowed to continue operating in airports. Dine-in and eat-in are not allowed,” it said.

### **Will there be purchase restrictions?**

Asking the question of whether the ministry would be issuing statements to restrict the purchases of every consumer, KPDNHEP instead said that it “encourages supermarkets to do their own controls to handle the purchases of food and daily necessities in an unreasonable amount by consumers.”

### **Other services allowed**

Other than confirming that security guards and rubbish collection services can still go on at supermarkets, the ministry also answered the question of whether third party service providers are allowed to continue to operate to help in the supply chain and operations to ensure business continuity.

The ministry replied: “Services that give a direct impact on security and supplies are allowed. Consumers and also third-party have to take into account the health factor by using face masks and hand sanitisers.”

The ministry confirmed that the headquarters of grocery stores are allowed to operate as usual, but said that the company management has to identify the divisions or units that are categorised as essential services and allowed to work from the office, while the other employees which are part of non-essential divisions or units have to work from home.

As for whether rice, sugar, oil and flour can be kept exceeding licence quotas, the ministry said companies are required to adhere to any licence quotas issued by any supervising agency, but said these could be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The same FAQ list by the ministry also says self-service laundry shops must close for these two weeks, and also confirms e-commerce or online shopping is an essential service.

The KPDNHEP’s list of FAQ today is on top of the National Security Council’s separate list of FAQ yesterday addressing the do’s and don’ts during this two-week period, where all non-essential activities and public gatherings are not allowed in order to prevent Covid-19 from spreading around.

The full official list of essential services that can continue operations during the two-week period was gazetted this morning by the government, and can be found in this report.

# RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ORDER

## DOS & DON'TS

PERIOD: MARCH 18 - 31, 2020

SCOPE: MALAYSIA

ENFORCED UNDER THE PREVENTION & CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACT 1988 & THE POLICE ACT 1967

### 1 Celebrations/weddings/feasts

- Marriage ceremonies with a small number of attendees permitted
- Receptions etc. should be deferred

### 2 Running low on necessities

- Permitted to go to the store, but must return home promptly

### 3 Malaysian married to a non-citizen

- Permitted to return, spouse must show marriage registration document, couple must undergo a medical test & self-quarantine

### 4 Malaysian student overseas

- Permitted to return, must undergo a medical test & self-quarantine

### 5 Long-term pass holder who left Malaysia before the order was issued

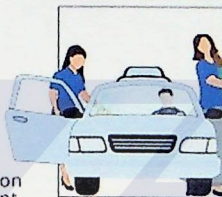
- Only foreign workers involved in the provision of essential services permitted to enter Malaysia
- Must present employment verification letter to the Immigration Department officer at port of entry

### 6 Malaysian working in Singapore

- Individuals working in Singapore but living in Malaysia are prohibited from leaving & entering each day

### 7 Paid up holiday in Malaysia

- Travel destinations are off limits unless for matters of national importance



### 8 Airport pickup

- Allowed, but must be swift

### 9 Replacement classes for school students

- Not required

### 10 Classes/activities at public & private higher learning (IPT)/skills training institutions

- Subject to the restriction of movement order

### 11 Students, especially foreign students, in IPT accommodation

- Advised to return home/to country
- Foreign students not allowed to come back until the order is lifted
- Foreign students who choose to stay in Malaysia & IPT accommodation must report themselves to the IPT administrator
- Are subject to the restriction of movement order

### 12 Restaurants (fast food joints, stalls etc.)

- Will remain open, but only for takeout & food deliveries (e.g. GrabFood, Foodpanda)

### 13 Public transport (bus, train, LRT, MRT)

- Allowed to continue operation

### 14 Refund for hotel booking

- Request to discuss with the hotel

### 15 Prayer for a deceased person (non-Covid-19) & tahlil gathering

- Allowed sans tahlil
- Only conducted by close relatives & mosque/surau congregants

Source: National Security Council (MKN)

Bernama Infographics