

Can't charge RM10 more for haircuts if Covid-19 disposable kits cost less, domestic trade minister tells hairdressers

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BY IDA LIM



Hairkunst Hijabis salon workers perform a demonstration on other workers posing as customers at the hair salon in Melawati Mall on June 7, 2020. — Picture by Hari Anggara

KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 — Hair salons can only impose additional charges on customers based on the actual cost for the disposable protective equipment that are changed for every customer, and cannot impose an extra RM10 if such Covid-19 prevention kits cost less than such an amount, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi said today.

Alexander said he was informed that the Malaysian Hairdressing Groups Association's representative had said an additional fee of between RM5 to RM10 would be imposed on every customer of hair salons when they reopen next Wednesday onwards, due to the increase in operating costs with the use of Covid-19 prevention equipment to comply with standard operating procedures.

The minister however cautioned against excessive additional fees and said customers could lodge complaints against hair salon operators who charge unreasonable extra fees.

“However, the ministry wishes to remind that the new rate for haircuts must be in line with additional costs that operators are forced to bear.

“As an example, if the process of cutting hair only involves the use of face covers, disposable aprons, new gloves and hand sanitisers, then only the cost of these equipment involved can be charged on the customers, apart from the original cost for hair cut services,” he said in a statement today.

He then went on to give a hypothetical example where it would not be appropriate for hair salons to charge an additional RM10.

“I wish to give an example once more with the assumption that the additional equipment involved are plastic aprons to cover the consumer’s body at the price of RM3, cost of gloves RM0.50 and hand sanitisers RM0.30, then the total additional costs that can be imposed is only RM3.80. Hair salon operators cannot impose additional charges of up to RM10,” he said.



Hairkunst Hijabis salon workers sanitise the equipment at the hair salon in Melawati Mall on June 7, 2020. — Picture by Hari Anggara

The minister went on to suggest that hair salons and beauty salons display a list of prices for each additional equipment as well as service charge for hair cuts, noting that such price lists would enable customers to check prices in advance and avoid “confusion”.

The minister also said customers could lodge reports to the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry towards any hair salons or beauty salons that impose additional charges that were not reasonable through the website, by emailing e-aduan@kpdnhep.gov.my, by Whatsapping 019-2794317, via the call centre at 1 800 886 800 or the Enforcement Command Centre at 03 — 8882 6088/ 03 — 8882 6245, or through the ez Aduan KPDNHEP smartphone app.

He said such complaints can be investigated under Section 14 of the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011, adding that the ministry's enforcement personnel will be carrying out inspections at hair salons and beauty salons to ensure that no customers would be burdened by operators seeking to take advantage of the situation.

"However, the ministry understands the current situation where everyone is still trying to adapt themselves to the new normal due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The ministry is prepared to hold discussions with industry players to receive feedback and find 'win-win' solutions for both sides," he added.

Information on standard operating procedures for hair salons and beauty salons can be found at the ministry's website www.kpdnhep.gov.my and its official Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts, with Alexander saying that these SOPs include having employees wear face covers and disposable aprons, customers wearing gloves and disposable aprons, as well as two-metre gap between seats.

"I also take note of proposals calling for operators to prepare different disposable aprons for each customer and not allowing the use of shared towels," he said earlier in the statement.

In the same statement, Alexander noted that the hair salon and beauty salon sector contributes RM13.5 billion annually to the country's GDP and involves a workforce of 74,500 individuals from 160,728 registered businesses.

Hair salons have been closed for more than two months under the movement control order and conditional movement control order imposed in the country to curb the spread of Covid-19, causing a loss of income to the salons, hairdressers and their employees.

Yesterday, the government announced that barbers, hairdressers and personal grooming businesses would be allowed to resume business from June 10 but with tight standard operating procedures required, including the single-use of disposable safety gloves and aprons for both hair stylists and customers that must be changed after every patron's visit.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/06/07/cant-charge-rm10-more-for-haircuts-if-covid-19-disposable-kits-cost-less-do/1873328>