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Protect your building space, post-MCO to contain the virus

By [Kathy B.](#) - April 23, 2020 @ 12:05pm

80



Engage a professional disinfecting company to keep homes and buildings safe, post-Covid-19. File Photo

With a rising number of positive coronavirus or Covid-19 cases in Malaysia (5,532 as of April 22), people are understandably anxious about how to protect their space, post-MCO (movement control order).

Whether it is an office building, residential, shopping mall, hotel, hostel, factory, airport, seaport, public transport hub, convention centre, hospital, or education centre, they will have to sterilise and disinfect their space after the MCO is lifted to build confidence and safeguard their staff.

The MCO is expected to end on April 28 but talks have it that Malaysia may extend its travel curbs till early May to prevent the spread of the virus, but with more sectors open for business.



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TRENDING



Eversendai Corp Bhd executive chairman and group managing director Tan Sri AK Nathan said people must weather this unprecedented pandemic to come out stronger without panic. NSTP/MOHD KHAIRUL HELMY MOHD DIN

Eversendai Corp Bhd executive chairman and group managing director Tan Sri AK Nathan said the global Covid-19 pandemic has certainly changed the way large corporations, small business owners, and people do things, amid these highly uncertain times.

"They are responding in extreme ways, motivated by fear. We must weather this unprecedented pandemic to come out stronger without panic. Sterilising and swab test is essential to safeguard all workforce," Nathan told NST Property.

Post-MCO, there may be a rush with business owners and tenants looking to sterilise and disinfect their building before they go full force into work.

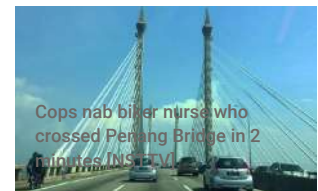
"Even if the MCO is lifted on April 28 or at a later date, it does not mean Covid-19 is no more. Post-MCO, employers, and employees will have to go back to work but many will be afraid as they don't want to catch the virus which may still be lingering around in some places," said a hotelier.

The hotel he works for in Kuala Lumpur employs around 400 people while occupancy rate on average is about 70 per cent.

"When the MCO is lifted, most of them will be going back to work and after the dust has settled, we can expect tourists to come back again. But to be safe, the management has decided to sterilise and disinfect the whole building post-MCO by appointing a professional disinfecting company even though we have no positive cases. Business owners will have to ensure the environment is safe and protected, even a few months after this Covid-19 pandemic is over," he said.

Big Tree Event & Supplies, who works closely with hotels, golf resorts, exhibition and convention centres, is proactively taking aggressive measures to contain the spread of the virus, said its founder Datuk Sunil Sachdev.

Sachdev said this unprecedented situation has created an extremely challenging business



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environment, affecting hundreds of thousands of people.

"We have to work together and manage this critical moment. Sterilisation and disinfection of office space and building are the most critical as people will have to return to work post-MCO and they want to move about in a safe environment. We are working closely with our respective partners, including a professional disinfecting company to keep the environment safe from Covid-19," he said.

Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Peter Chan said at The Haven in Ipoh, Perak, the objective is to attempt a record of zero contamination of the virus in the development premises and to keep all staff and residents safe.



Superboom Projects Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Peter Chan said The Haven in Ipoh attempts to record zero contamination of the Covid-19 virus in the development premises. Photo Courtesy of Superboom Projects

Chan said the company cleans common areas frequently, and disinfect 'frequently-touched areas' three times a day.

"We have been safe so far, and if we continue to be diligent and successful in our work, all will be well when the lockdown is lifted. But, of course, we will need to be as diligent in cleanliness after the official lifting," Chan said.

Keep homes, buildings safe, post-Covid-19

Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus. According to the evidence available currently, Covid-19 virus is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets and contact.

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Harpreet Kaur is a qualified infection preventionist and founder of Nexus Health Solution Sdn Bhd. File Photo

Transmission may also occur through fomites in the immediate environment around the infected person, says Harpreet Kaur, a qualified infection preventionist and founder of Nexus Health Solution Sdn Bhd.

"For example, a sick person who has been coughing and sneezing goes out for grocery shopping will pass the virus on to someone else at the store who may have touched the same surface that has been touched by the sick person. Therefore it is very important to wear a mask when you are not well and wash hands frequently," she told NST Property.

Harpreet, who is also the head of department for post-basic infection control at a private healthcare college in Klang Valley said that scheduled environmental disinfection is important to break the chain of infection.

"Many people are looking forward to going back to their old 'normal' especially going back to work and school once the MCO is lifted. But can we be 'normal' again? Social distancing will still need to be maintained at all times. The compliance of hand hygiene must be adhered to continuously to break the chain of infection. Masks need to be worn if you are not well and avoid crowded places. Cough etiquette should be observed and routine disinfection needs to be carried out by workplaces and schools to ensure their environment is safe," she said.

Engaging a professional disinfecting company

Harpreet said that organisations should procure a good disinfecting company to disinfect the building premises the right way, using the right disinfection that is recommended by Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia, and using the right principles of terminal disinfection.

She said since the outbreak of Covid-19, many companies have mushroomed overnight with untrained staff and using various types of disinfection, claiming that it can kill coronaviruses.

"The companies are not aware that this is a high-risk thing to do as it can endanger their staff and on the other hand it is hazardous to clients. People are being exposed to unknown hazards such as cross-contamination during disinfection exercise. There are principles of disinfection that need to be adhered to during terminal cleaning and disinfection," said Harpreet.

She said the process of doffing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is very important, and that the staff should not cross-contaminate and infect themselves with the disease.



A trained staff from Nexus Health Solution disinfecting a semiconductor factory in Klang Valley. Photo Courtesy of Nexus Health Solution

"Disinfecting staff must be trained intensively as they are not doing normal cleaning but performing disinfection procedures that are hazardous to them. The recommendation of disinfection that is being done by the World Health Organization (WHO) or by MOH is always based on clinical evidence and studies that have been conducted.

"Many false claims are done by these companies such as on the efficacy of the disinfectant products, especially on social media. Some even make claims that the disinfection effect can last for a certain time. By principle, any disinfected surface that has been contaminated has to be disinfected again to remove the bioburden.

"In conclusion, it is very important for organisations to procure guidelines adhering to a company rather than going for cheaper options as the disinfection process is done poorly is equivalent to disinfection not done at all or can make the contamination worse," she said.

Nexus Health Solution is the first and only infection prevention and control consulting company in Malaysia and Southeast Asia that emphasises on infection control and occupational safety.

The company has collaborated with MOH to organise various national and ASEAN level conferences and seminars in infection control.

Harpreet said it is currently working with various private and government organisations for better infection control practices and patient safety.

General prevention tips

1. Clean your hands often. Use soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub

2. Maintain a safe distance from anyone who is coughing or sneezing
3. Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth
4. Cover your nose and mouth with your bent elbow or a tissue when you cough or sneeze
5. Stay home while MCO is in force
6. If you have a fever, a cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention. Call in advance
7. Clean your house frequently using a disinfectant especially frequently touched items such as remote controls, door knobs, switches, chairs, refrigerator and others, including your mobile phones and laptops

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