

# Not licence to return to old ways

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) which was imposed on May 4 to allow almost all economic and social activities to be resumed does not mean that the people can return to their old lives.

The Movement Control Order (MCO) which was imposed for 47 days beginning March 18 to curb the spread of Covid-19 and has gone through four phases with tight regulations has been successful in bringing down the number of infections.

The CMCO provides much leeway but the standard operating procedure (SOP) set by the Health Ministry must be observed.

The decision by the government was based on guidelines drawn up by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and advice from the Health Ministry and the National Security Council with emphasis on compliance with the SOP by employers, workers and the general public.

Director of the Office of Occupational Safety and Health in

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), associate professor Dr Mohd Rafee Baharudin said the leeway given by the government under the CMCO for companies to resume operations is not a licence to return to old ways.

"The management must have a mechanism to monitor all their employees and ensure they comply by the Health Ministry's SOP. The management must provide evidence to the authorities of checks on this compliance.

"This is very important as the level of awareness and knowledge among employees vary. Attention must be given to the awareness and need for hygienic practices," he told Bernama.

Mohd Rafee said every employee must be given awareness training and take an oath to observe the preventive measures against the spread of Covid-19.

"Non-compliance could lead to a new cluster at the workplace," he said.

He also advised employees to be self-disciplined and be honest

in declaring their health status everyday, and if they have fever, cough, sore-throat and breathing difficulties, they should inform the management and get medical treatment.

Meanwhile, deputy director of the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research (MIER) Prof Dr Jamal Othman, said the CMCO will balance the need for economic activities to be resumed to generate income, and the need to curb the spread of Covid-19.

"This pandemic will be with us for a long time. But the economy must be allowed to function within limits for the sake of the community. If the MCO goes on, for instance for another two weeks, without economic stimulus, the country will suffer losses of up to two per cent of the Gross Domestic Product," he said.

He added that it was time for the government to impose the CMCO after taking into consideration the health indicators and the need to open the economy to generate income for the people. - Bernama