

28 September 2020

## **PRESS STATEMENT –COVID-19 INFECTIONS IN SHOPPING MALLS**

We wish to stress that shopping malls have the safety and well-being of shoppers as top priority at all times and have indeed taken all possible measures to prevent Covid-19 infections. There have not been any infections for the past 6 months, and it is now very unfortunate to note that there have been recent cases of covid-19 infections in a few shopping malls.

Full sanitation, thorough dis-infection and deep-cleaning of the areas visited by the Covid-19 patients have been carried out in full compliance with guidelines set by the Ministry of Health with close contacts being advised to self-quarantine. Therefore, shopping malls are allowed to remain open to provide essential services for the public.

The very nature of Covid-19 infections, where asymptomatic people who are not even aware that they have been infected and cannot be detected by temperature checks, makes it even more difficult to prevent any infections although malls comply with the full Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and implement even more extensive measures on hygiene and cleanliness.

Safety for all staff, tenants, patrons, visitors and shoppers etc is of primary concern and shopping malls are all following the accepted SOPs. These include contact tracing, monitoring temperature, wearing of masks, providing hand sanitisers at mall entrances & other strategic spots for shoppers and also for staff. Once shoppers get through the entrances, retailers again practice the same procedure with contact tracing and hand sanitization at their outlet entrances (with temperature checks being optional as the implementation of QR Code scanning enables effective contact tracing to be conducted) – so there is double screening for public confidence and safety.

### **Cleanliness and Sanitation**

Enhanced cleanliness procedures in malls have been in place since February, with more regular cleaning with sanitisers and disinfectants at public utilities and other frequent touch point areas eg escalator hand-rails, lifts, balcony railings, balustrades, sitting areas, e-Directories, washrooms, baby rooms, concierge stations, wheelchairs, baby strollers, and scooters etc. and all others that involves human contact.

These enhanced cleaning procedures also include back-of-house thorough cleaning and disinfecting of M&E installations like components of the air-conditioning system, pipes, ducts etc.

### **Physical Distancing**

Shops have implemented physical distancing rules with floor markings and limiting the number of shoppers in the shop at any one time to avoid congregation density. In F&B outlets where dine-in is allowed, dining tables have been reconfigured to cater for a minimum of 1m between diners as well as floor markers at entrances 1 m apart while they queue to enter.

## **Persatuan Pengurusan Kompleks Malaysia (PPK)**

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Physical distancing also applies to malls' common areas like seats being placed minimum 1m apart, bench seating to only accommodate shoppers to be seated minimum 1m apart and/or removed as well as the reconfiguration of concourse stalls/booths at the concourse for safe distancing. There are also clear demarcations on the floor or physical barriers to remind and deter shoppers getting too close to each other for queues to customer service stations, parking machines, ATMs etc.

Malls also practice physical distancing at lifts with queue markers and which will now allow less passengers in lifts while shoppers have to stand at least 3 steps apart on escalators.

In addition, some malls have also set up designated areas for the parking of food delivery vehicles as well as centralized locations where food delivery riders may wait safely with social and physical distancing.

### **Public Announcements and Education**

In true community spirit, malls have embarked on more frequent public announcements to remind shoppers of the need to practice social distancing with signages and notices to advise on social distancing, hygiene etc.

Malls also engage social media to keep shoppers informed on what's going on in the mall and to disseminate documented SOPs to both shoppers and tenants on commitments to the above practices.

We would also like to remind everyone to be aware of fake news resulting in negative perceptions of malls and to only take heed of information released by the relevant authorities.

### **Safety is a Community Effort**

Fighting Covid-19 needs close community effort by everyone who need to comply with the set SOPs including the proper wearing of masks and hand sanitisation - amongst shoppers, workers, all departments in shopping malls including operations, marketing, and of course, the shops where we deeply appreciate tenants who are generally complying with their respective SOPs.

As all malls continue to monitor the situation, we strongly encourage and urge everyone to continually embrace strict personal hygiene and cleanliness and to be alert of your surroundings.

Shopping malls constantly and regularly strive to ensure safety and cleanliness at all times. With all these additional hygienic and safety efforts implemented, it is gratifying to feel that confidence is rapidly appreciated with the growing footfall and visitations. We are confident that with the stringent and coordinated attention being made by our Government, the public and the business community, this unprecedented pandemic will be overcome in the near future.

We are confident that shopping malls will remain resilient and with prudent management, we shall overcome these hurdles together.

Thank you.