



MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION MALAYSIA (MBAM)

Persatuan Kontraktor Binaan Malaysia (MBAM)

马来西亚建筑商总会 (MBAM)

No. 2, Jalan 2/109E, Desa Business Park,

58100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Website: www.mbam.org.my

Tel: 603-7984 8636

Fax: 603-7982 6811

PRESS STATEMENT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Give Priority to Construction Industry and Its Related Supply Chain for Vaccination and Reopening of Operations in Stages

Kuala Lumpur, 2 July 2021 – Vaccination priority should be given to construction industry workers and the building materials supply chain under Phase 2 of the National COVID-19 Immunisation Program (PICK) with a target of full vaccination or two doses by the third quarter of 2021, and the reopening of the construction industry in stages and by priority.

Following the government's announcement in maintaining the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of the Full Movement Control Order (FMCO) through Phase 1 of the National Recovery Plan (NRP), most economic activities are still not allowed, and the construction industry is one of the most affected sectors since the implementation of the MCO since 1 June 2021.

Currently, the operating rate of construction sites is low and most of the contractors currently in operation have taken note of the shortage of existing building material stocks and will most likely run out in the near future.

Therefore, the **Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) together with 35 associations in the construction industry** ([full list in attachment](#)) have sent a Joint Memorandum to the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Mahiaddin Bin Haji Md Yasin.

In general, we strongly support the efforts and initiatives of the Special Committee for Ensuring Access to COVID-19 Vaccine Supply (JKJAV) and the COVID-19 Immunisation Task Force (CITF) to date. However, we hope that the vaccine supply delivery schedule will be improved to achieve the set vaccination rates.

The industry is also pleased with the implementation of the Construction Industry Vaccination Program (CIVac) an effort by the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Malaysia, led by Ministry of Works to expedite vaccination among the construction workforce to achieve the appropriate percentage of herd immunity.

However, with the allocation of CIVac vaccines for only 40,000 workers in Phase 1 and 100,000 workers in Phase 2, which is 10% of the total construction industry workforce comprising about 1.4 million people, it is feared that the target of herd immunity networks will not be achieved according to government's planning.

At the same time, a more pragmatic and humane approach to foreign workers in the construction industry should be considered by the government, especially those who hold expired travel documents and/or work passes but are stranded in Malaysia to date due to lack of transportation back to their country of origin. Because the success of vaccination strategies at the national level is highly dependent on vaccination by as many Malaysians as possible, the exclusion of a large group can deliberately affect the timeline in achieving herd immunity.

While this is not an ideal solution, we are in the view that for now, priority should be given to national vaccination targets over mere enforcement of immigration rules.

In addition, we would also like to appeal for the vaccination process of construction workers to be carried out by mobile Vaccination Centres (PPV) which are deployed to dormitories or workers-centred residences, in order to reduce mass movement to static PPV and minimise the interaction between the workers and the local community, especially from the vulnerable group.

We also agree in the opinion that the reopening of the construction industry should start from now and not in Phase 3 of NRP, where the use of threshold values collectively at the national level as opposed to the use of specific local situations, is not very helpful in our members' planning. The extension of Phase 1 to July 2021 without a clear end date is also a sign that the transition to the next NRP phase remains subjective.

Therefore, we recommend that the reopening of the construction industry to be implemented in stages and in order of priority. Flexibility can be given to some sectors in the industry to resume operations when part of their workforce has been vaccinated. All companies or businesses allowed to operate must adhere to strict SOPs even among fully vaccinated employees.

It is appropriate to emphasize here that the supply chain of the construction industry which includes suppliers of building materials and professional services or consultants also requires permission to work according to the same timeline as contractors.

In the meantime, we also request that the SOPs for the construction industry and all related sub-sectors be issued early before the implementation date of any new restrictions or regulations, rather than being introduced at the last minute. This is to help contractors and all elements of the construction supply chain make adequate preparations in the implementation of the SOP.

The reopening of the construction industry can be assessed and implemented according to different timeframes and determined by factors that are objective as well as localised.

Among other issues and proposals included a study of expanding the operational coverage of Variation of Price (VOP) clause and automatic Extension of Time (EOT) to construction projects in private sector as well as amendments to the Temporary Measures for Reducing the Impact of Coronavirus Disease Act 2019 (COVID-19) 2020 to expressly include claims for time and cost sharing.

Construction industry players are very hopeful that the proposals in the Joint Memorandum will be duly scrutinised and subsequently accepted for implementation at an immediate rate.

TAN SRI SUFRI HJ MHD ZIN

President

Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM)

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Note to Editor:

Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM)
Persatuan Kontraktor Binaan Malaysia (MBAM)
马来西亚建筑商总会 (MBAM)

President Tan Sri Sufri Hj Mhd Zin
总会长 丹斯里 苏福礼

FOR INTERVIEWS OR MEDIA QUERIES:

Ms Chew Chee Yan, Senior PR Executive (mbam28@mbam.org.my / 012 377 6976)

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35. THE LIGHTHOUSE CLUB KUALA LUMPUR
36. THE MALAYSIAN LIFT AND ESCALATOR ASSOCIATION (MALEA)