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JAWATANKUASA PEGUAM PULAU PINANG PENANG BAR COMMITTEE

Circular 16/20

8 May 2020

To Members of the Penang Bar.

Standard Operating Procedures for Penang Bar Secretariat, Penang Bar Library and Penang Legal Aid Centre during Conditional Movement Control Order and post-Movement Control Order

In view of the ongoing Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) and during the post-Movement Control Order (MCO) period, the Penang Bar Committee has put in place a series of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) with immediate effect for the Penang Bar Secretariat, Library and Penang Legal Aid Centre until further notice.

The salient points of the SOP for members' information and attention are as follows:

Penang Bar Secretariat

1. The Secretariat operating hours will be 8:30 am to 5:00 pm (Mon to Fri).
2. No visitors will be allowed into the Secretariat (including but not limited to dispatch riders, courier service representatives, postmen, pupils in chambers, members of the public, lawyers, etc).
3. All documents/correspondence/payments/packages, etc sent to the Secretariat must be placed in a box at the grill door landing area top of staircase for the PBC staff to collect without personal contact with the sender.
4. Any documents/correspondence/payments/packages, etc which are to be collected from the Secretariat will be handed over by the PBC staff at the grill door landing area top of the staircase without personal contact with the recipient.
5. The Secretariat Conference Room will not be available for Disciplinary Committee Proceedings or any meetings.

Library

1. The Penang Bar Library will only be made available to members and pupils with prior appointment.
2. Lawyers and pupils are required to notify the Secretariat beforehand (via e-mail or phone call) of the date and time of intended use.
3. Use of the Library will be limited to a maximum of 2 users at a time only.
4. All library users must wear face masks before they are admitted into the Library. Anyone not wearing a face mask will be refused entry.
5. Temperature checks will be carried out on all library users at the entrance.
6. Anyone with a temperature reading of 37.5°C and above will not be allowed to enter and use the Library.
7. The date, time-in, time-out, name, firm, Identity Card number and temperature reading of all library users will be recorded.
8. Library users must observe and practice good hand and personal hygiene at all times.
9. The Library Conference Room will not be available for Disciplinary Committee Proceedings or any meetings.

Auditorium

1. The Penang Bar Auditorium will remain closed until further notice.
Note: The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and other Subcommittees will be looking into conducting webinars. Details will be provided in due course.

Legal Aid Centre

1. The Penang Legal Aid Centre operating hours will be 8:30 am to 5:00 pm (Mon to Fri).
2. The Legal Aid Centre Meeting Room will not be available for Disciplinary Committee Proceedings or any meetings.
3. Pupils in Chambers
 - a. No pupils will be rostered for duty until 18 May 2020.
 - b. When eventually rostered, a maximum of 3 pupils will be scheduled for duty in a day.
 - c. Temperature checks will be done and recorded when pupils enter the Centre for Legal Aid Duty.
 - d. Pupils with a body temperature of 37.5°C or more and/or have respiratory symptoms e.g. cough, running nose, cold, etc will not be allowed into the Centre.
 - e. Pupils must wear face masks, wash their hands with soap and water frequently and sanitise each time before and after registering and collecting documents from clients.
 - f. Pupils must practice social distancing and be seated at least 1 metre away from each other and the staff.
 - g. When registering/interviewing clients, pupils must remain behind the counter and keep a distance of at least 1 metre from the clients at all times.
 - h. All external programmes e.g.. Tenaganita, Prison Visits and Legal Aid Clinics in Courts are put on hold until further notice. Dock Brief in Courts may resume after 18 May 2020 subject to the Bar Committee's approval.
4. Volunteer Lawyers
 - a. Only 2 lawyers are allowed at a time for collecting/returning assignment files or submitting YBGK claims.
 - b. Lawyers must wear face masks and will have their temperature checked and recorded. Hands must be sanitised upon entering and before interacting with the staff.
 - c. Lawyers with a body temperature of 37.5°C or more and/or have respiratory symptoms e.g. cough, running nose, cold, etc will not be allowed in.
 - d. Upon entering, lawyers will be guided to the Interview Room and shall remain there. They will not be allowed access to other areas of the Centre, including the staff office area, meeting room and washrooms, etc.
 - e. The staff will acknowledge and collect the files/claims from the lawyers and the lawyers must leave the Centre immediately thereafter. If there are any discrepancies in the paperwork, the staff will contact the lawyer to collect their files/claims and they must make the relevant corrections away from the Centre and re-submit it later.
 - f. Lawyers are not permitted to use the Centre to prepare YBGK claims.
 - g. Lawyers who intend to visit the Centre must give prior notice by phonecall.

In addition to the SOPs stated above, additional measures have also been put in place for the staff of the Secretariat, Library and Legal Aid Centre to observe and comply with as required by the Ministry of Health, National Security Council and other relevant authorities.

We therefore request for members' cooperation, understanding and compliance of the above.

Kindly take note that the above information is subject to change or variation depending on whether any further directives or announcements are issued by the relevant authorities.

Lee Guan Tong
Chairman