

New safety rules for labour camps

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Labour and Social Development Ministry Under-Secretary Sabah Al Doseri

EMPLOYERS have been urged to ensure that labour accommodations do not house more than five workers in a room, in line with the government's efforts to contain the spread of the Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19).

The workers should also be at least three metres away from each other in a room, said Labour and Social Development Ministry Under-Secretary Sabah Al Doseri.

He confirmed that work at construction sites can continue as normal, adding that employers should ensure precautionary measures are being taken at the workplace.

“We have to be extremely careful about our personal hygiene and labour accommodations are our major concern,” Mr Al Doseri told the GDN.

“Labour inspectors are continuing their checks at the camps and the employers are being asked to follow the health guidelines strictly.

“We are aware that most labour camps have more than five people living in a room, but in this situation it can be dangerous.

“So we ask every employer to make sure their workers are given enough space, and not more than five to a room.

“Moreover, we have put in practice social distancing, so there should be at least three-metre space separating individuals.”

The GDN reported earlier this month that the ministry had asked all labour accommodations to be disinfected and sanitised.

Every labour camp should also have an isolation facility to treat any worker if tested Covid-19 positive.

The directive came after two labourers tested positive in a camp in Salmabad on March 6.

Mr Al Doseri admitted that it was possible that there could be more than five people at a construction site.

“We cannot limit this, but what we can do is ask employers to make sure that the workers follow health guidelines, and that the place is provided with sanitisers.

“The workers should not gather even during breaks and maintain social distancing as much as possible.

“Anyone with symptoms should be notified; there is nothing shameful about this, it is our responsibility to society that we don’t harm more people by spreading the virus.

“This is a difficult time and we will overcome, provided we all stand together,” said the official.

He added that the labourers

in the Salmabad camp had completed the quarantine period and none were tested positive.

The Health Ministry had quarantined almost 400 employees in the labour camp after one of them had come in contact with a virus-infected person.

Mr Al Doseri noted that the employer was supportive in the process and all employees were fully paid while they were in quarantine.

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