

8 May 2021

PRESS STATEMENT – HOTSPOT IDENTIFICATION BY DYNAMIC ENGAGEMENT (HIDE)

This press statement represents the view of the following associations representing the shopping mall and retail industries nation-wide in Malaysia as follows:

- PersatuanPengurusanKompleks Malaysia (PPK) (or Malaysia Shopping Malls Association)<http://ppkm.org.my/>
- Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA)<https://mra.com.my/>
- Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA)<https://www.mrca.org.my/>
- Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO)

We would urgently urge the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) to immediately suspend announcing any more information derived from the Hotspot Identification by Dynamic Engagement (HIDE) system until clear, accurate and precise basis are accompanied with the information to be released.

Closure of HIDE Premises

Further to the press statement today by YB Dato Sri Ismail Sabri that premises listed under HIDE will be required to close for 3 days for sanitization, we believe that in view of the inaccurate information on the hotspot listing, this call to close for sanitization is PREMATURE and will cause irreversible damage to perception and business recovery and survival. This proposed closure should be held in abeyance until the data used in HIDE has been confirmed accurate and the hotspot locations are accurately identified.

Appeal for Clear Information

It is without doubt that the first release of the HIDE information have immediately and unfairly created more uncertainty, panic and fear. The data from Ministry of Health clearly show that the top 3 incidence of Covid-19 are factories (48.06 %), Community Spread (12.5%), Construction (11.56%) and Shopping/shop area only comprises 4.78%. Clarification needs to be accurately provided as to the incidence of infections between **shopping malls** and shopping area.

It is obvious the HIDE information is incomplete and skewed and portray a completely different picture than the real situation. The information is incomplete as only those premises and operations that diligently comply with the SOPs and MySejahtera recording are data-mined. Those sectors that do not comply and blatantly flout the SOPs are not evaluated for lack of data and thus do not appear as a hotspot, despite being so.

This absolutely inaccurate publication is dangerously misleading and clearly contains misinformation. This is tantamount to punishing those who are in compliance and hiding those who blatantly flout the system. If this situation persists and is not corrected urgently, it will lead to disobedience just like the deep discounts given to those who do not pay their fines on time, making a mockery of those law-abiding citizens who paid their dues on a timely basis thus making fools of those who are law-abiding.

We understand the compilation of potential hotspots is based on the absolute number and frequency of visits by non-low risk patrons entering the location. This number could be misleading because non-low risk patrons who have scanned the MySejahtera as they enter would have already been recorded although the mall subsequently denied them entry.

Merely listing premises in isolation of supporting information is baseless and is not useful in curbing the spread of the disease. There must be weightage in the listing based on population, density, ratio of infections as a percentage of the total visitations etc.

As the HIDE data uses information from the MySejahtera system, places and venues where higher incidents of patrons who are inclined more to use manual recording are automatically not taken into account and further distort the accuracy of the HIDE information on hotspots. Thus, those without records are even more risky locations and potential hotspots and these should be highlighted for public awareness. It would be a complete irony and a huge peril if HIDE is unable to identify these places, simply due to the lack of such data. Ironically, this will inadvertently direct and encourage the public to patronize such poorly regulated places with the misguided belief that these places are actually much safer.

Malls' Adherence to SOPs

We wish to emphasise and reiterate that the safety of shoppers is top priority at shopping malls and with all required SOPs in place including enhanced and regular cleaning and sanitisation measures, malls are safe places to visit.

The earnest and diligent adherence to the SOPs at shopping malls would appear to have, unfortunately, back-fired and inadvertently punished the malls. We opine that the HIDE assessment is grossly unfair to shopping malls and retailers who have invested so much on safety and control and adhere closely to SOPs as determined by the authorities.

We understand that the national infection rate is 1.3% and from our own statistics, shopping malls' infection rate is significantly below the national average.

Once again, we would, therefore, appeal to MOSTI to announce **adequately qualified** HIDE information so that the public have adequate precise information to make informed judgement and establish their level of comfort and confidence. We continue to strongly advocate that comprehensive prior consultation be conducted with industry stakeholders to arrive at practical and effective SOPs and policies to avoid unnecessary mis-information and unwarranted negative impact for the industry.

Collaboration between malls and retailers with CITF

Together with our industry partners from Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA) and Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA), we have also taken the initiative and pro-active step of working with the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force (CITF) to collaborate with private hospitals/ doctors in private practice to administer vaccination to our employees and staff on-site. This will enable mass vaccination in the shortest possible time without loss of productivity and unnecessary disruptions to business operations and contribute towards the national objective of herd immunity urgently.

LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS matter.

Thank you.