



# BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Government of Belize Enacts Safety Measures**

*Belmopan. March 26, 2020.* The Government of Belize, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and in an effort to mitigate the negative impacts that could result from a potential community spread of the deadly virus enacted Statutory Instrument Number 38 of 2020 on March 25, 2020.

This Order made by the Quarantine Authority of Belize, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 6 of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 41 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, outlines a set of immediate measures to be implemented by the Government that are deemed as necessary to safeguard public health and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This Order shall apply to the country of Belize with the exception of Ambergris Caye, which is governed by the Belize Constitution (Emergency Powers) (Ambergris Caye) Regulations, 2020, provided, however, that on the expiration of the period of emergency pursuant to the Proclamation declaring a state of public emergency in Ambergris Caye, this Order shall apply to the entire country of Belize.

These measures, referred to generally as the QUARANTINE (COVID 19 EMERGENCY MEASURES) ORDER, 2020 include the following:

#### **1. Limitation of gatherings of ten persons or less**

Subject to the provisions of this Order, no person shall gather in numbers of more than ten persons at a time, anywhere in Belize, whether in any public place, public space or on private property provided that a gathering of ten or

more persons on private property is allowed where persons are residents of that property. Except for residents of private property, persons in a gathering of ten persons or less shall maintain a distance of no less than three feet between each person.

## **2. Social distancing**

For the purposes of this Order, every person shall practice social distancing.

## **3. Transportation**

- Notwithstanding the restriction and limitation on public gathering, the provision of public transportation by bus is limited to the seating capacity of the bus.
- Every bus operator arriving at a terminal in Belize shall park the bus, instruct the passengers to disembark and oversee the sanitization of the bus by personnel on site at the terminal.
- Prior to boarding any bus at a terminal, every passenger shall wash and sanitize his hands at the conveniences provided at the terminal.

## **4. Closure of businesses**

The following establishments shall close until further notice—

- casinos and gaming establishments;
- spas, beauty salons and barber shops;
- gymnasiums (gyms), sporting complexes;
- discotheques, bars, rum shops and night clubs;
- restaurants, saloons, diners, and other similar establishments, provided that restaurants, saloons diners and other similar establishments may operate to offer take out services only;
- any other establishment or business designated by the Quarantine Authority by Notice published in the Gazette.

## **5. Social distancing protocols**

Every business establishment allowed under this Order to operate shall:

- ensure that all customers and staff maintain physical distancing of no less than three feet (3ft.) in or outside their business;

- determine the number of persons that may be permitted in the establishment at any one time;
- within twenty-four hours of the commencement of this Order, place distance markers three feet apart, indicating where each customer must stand on a line at a check out point;
- within twenty-four hours of the commencement of this Order, place distance markers three feet apart on the outside of the establishment, indicating where customers must stand while waiting to enter the establishment.

## **6. Restriction on social activities**

No person shall host nor attend—

- a private party which includes any person from outside of the immediate household of the house occupant;
- a recreational or competitive sporting event;
- a wedding which hosts ten or more persons other than the bride, bridegroom, official witnesses and the marriage officer;
- a banquet, ball or reception;
- any social event;
- any other ceremony of public worship in any facility or public place which involves the participation of any member of the general public or a congregation;
- a funeral, except ten members of the immediate family and at least one officiant and essential mortuary staff; or
- a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organization.

## **7. Closure of markets and other public places**

In the interest of public health and safety, the Quarantine Authority may by Notice published in the Gazette, declare the closure of any market or other public place.

## **8. Reporting of suspected COVID 19 to Ministry of Health**

A person who develops flu-like symptoms and who reasonably suspects he may have had contact with someone who has travelled to a country affected by COVID 19 or is infected with COVID 19

- shall immediately inform the Ministry with responsibility for health; and

- go into self-isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry responsible for health.
- Every person, upon entry into Belize from any port of entry, shall (1) immediately inform the Ministry with responsibility for health of their entry into Belize; and (2) go into self-isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry with responsibility for health.

#### **9. Employers to grant permission**

- An employer shall have a duty if satisfied that an employee is able to discharge the duties of that employee from the employee's place of residence, to grant the employee permission to do so without imposing any adverse consequences to the employee in respect thereof.
- An employee whose assigned tasks can only be discharged at the place of employment is required to attend for work at that place unless otherwise permitted by the employer as a part of the employer's measures to combat the risk of transmission of the COVID 19 at the place of employment. The grant of permission to an employee under this paragraph shall not count against the leave entitlements of that employee unless otherwise agreed between the employer and the employee.

#### **10. Offence and Penalty**

A person who contravenes or incites a person to contravene any provision of this Order, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of one thousand dollars or to imprisonment for six months or to both fine and imprisonment.

#### **11. Duration of order**

The Order shall be valid until revoked by the Quarantine Authority.

Anyone having any questions regarding this Order, may contact the Ministry of Health in Belmopan at 0-800-MOH-CARE (0-800-664-2273), or visit [www.covid19.bz](http://www.covid19.bz) for more information.

**Ends**