

March 11, 2020

Covid-19 Health & Legal Advice

Thailand: Covid-19 Public Health Countermeasures

Covid-19 (“*Coronavirus*”) has now spread across the globe, reaching every habitable continent with at least 105,000 confirmed cases and raising. Responding to the crisis, the Thai government have made critical efforts to quell this viral threat. To prevent further outbreaks, public health countermeasures were implemented to reduce the impact of Covid-19, of which include: restriction, containment, surveillance and prevention protocols. Effective from March 1, 2020, Covid-19 has been officially classified as “*dangerous communicable disease*” by the National Communicable Disease Committee (“*NCDC*”). Proceeding this, the Ministry of Public Health has issued an announcement under Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558 (2015) (“*CDA*”), effectively enforcing public health countermeasures against Covid-19.

CDA Need-to-Know:

As of Mid-March 2020, coincide with epidemiological evidence and the World Health Organisation (WHO) travel recommendations, the following countries are considered “*Covid-19 high-risk*”, *China, Hong Kong, Italy, Iran, Japan, Macau, South Korea and Taiwan*. The list is likely to grow in the coming weeks or even days.

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1). Personal Right and Responsibility

Under the CDA, it is expected that all, whether be locals or foreigners, must observe social responsibility. As such, all should comply with the following:

- Avoid traveling to high-risk countries;
- Travelers arriving/returning from high-risk countries should undergo a 14-day self-quarantine;
- Suspected infection or sign of related respiratory symptoms such as: coughs, sneezing, fever or any flu-like symptoms should be reported immediately (call "1422");
- Follow appropriate health and hygiene guideline (i.e. regularly washes hands etc.); and
- Do not panic and refer to official health guideline/announcement.

2). Authorities of Officials

In compliance with the CDA, related authorities/officials communicable disease control officer have the following authorities:

- To summon and question suspected individuals;
- May request health examination and quarantine specific to the disease's incubation period (14 days for Covid-19);

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- May enter domicile, dwelling or buildings (from sunrise to sunset or business hours) for the purpose of inspection, the inspection may continue until it is satisfied;
- May request to remove or destroy all suspect contaminated objects/properties;
- May order a temporary closure of a place of business, such as: market places, factories, theaters or educational institutions; and
- May request examination and quarantine those entering the Kingdom of Thailand.

To Sum-Up

Failure to comply with the order of a communicable disease control officer will result in fine, imprisonment or both.

In the absence of vaccines and antiviral drugs, our society faces many difficult challenges, to which transcend legal, scientific or ethical implications. Public health countermeasures are of utmost important to keep Covid-19 under control and ultimately end Covid-19 pandemic.

We will keep you posted as the situation continues to unfold.

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