



BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

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Summary of Statutory Instrument No. 111 of 2020

Effective August 7, 2020

TO WHICH PARTS OF THE COUNTRY DO THE NEW REGULATIONS APPLY?

The new Regulations/SI relates specifically to Ambergris Caye, Santa Martha Village, Shipyard Village and Guinea Grass Village.

CAN I TRAVEL TO ANY OF THESE VILLAGES OR TOWNS?

X No. Under these news regulations, no one can enter or exit any of the aforementioned villages or towns, unless you have the specific prior approval of the Ministry of Health, National Security - and only in an emergency.

IS THERE A CURFEW IN THESE VILLAGES AND TOWNS?

✓ Yes. The curfew begins at 8:00 p.m. and ends at 4:59 a.m. This means that you cannot be outside your house or on any public road during these hours, unless you are on duty as a member of the security forces, Customs and Excise, Immigration Services, a frontline health care worker or an essential worker who has been issued a badge by the Minister responsible for National Security.

CAN I GO TO THE SUPERMARKET DURING THESE NON-CURFEW HOURS?

✓ Yes. You can leave your home in order to purchase essential needs; to go to the doctor or vet, for emergencies; if you are an essential worker or an employee of an approved business and on your way to or from work; a home health care provider of services to the sick, disabled or elderly persons or children and you are on your way to or from work.

IS THERE A CURFEW FOR CHILDREN?

✓ Yes. In the villages of Santa Martha, Shipyard, Guinea Grass and in Ambergris Caye children **cannot** be outside their homes between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 4:59 a.m. If a child is outside their home between 6:00 p.m. and 7:59 p.m. they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

CAN A MEMBER OF THE SECURITY FORCES STOP AND QUESTION ME IF I AM OUT OF MY HOME OR WORKPLACE DURING THESE CURFEW HOURS?

✓ Yes. If you cannot give a reasonable explanation, then you are committing an offense.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN GATHER AT ANY ONE TIME?

Under these new Regulations, **no more than 10 persons can gather** in a public or private place in the villages, unless you are residents of that private property in Santa Marta, Shipyard or Guinea Grass villages or Ambergris Caye.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN OPERATE UNDER THE NEW REGULATIONS AND WHAT ARE THEIR OPERATING TIMES?

7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

- ✓ Fuel stations, fuel depots, LPG suppliers. LPG depots and LPG distributors.
- ✓ Agro-processors, food manufacturers and factories
- ✓ Agricultural and aquaculture farms
- ✓ Fishing for livelihood and sustenance, but sport and leisure fishing.
- ✓ Essential services
- ✓ Markets that sell agricultural produce, fish and meat)
- ✓ Bakeries and tortilla factories
- ✓ Pharmacies
- ✓ Convenience stores, food stores, supermarkets, meat shops, butchers, distributors of carbonated beverages including spirits, potable water and food.
- ✓ Street food vendors (operating from home or takeout/delivery only)
- ✓ Banks and financial institutions such as money transfer institutions and pawnshops.

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

- ✓ Take out, delivery and drive-thru food/restaurants, saloons, diners and similar establishments.
- ✗ Any other business not mentioned in the above shall be **closed**.

WHAT ARE THE REGULATIONS FOR the REST OF BELIZE (excluding Ambergris Caye, the villages of Santa Martha, Shipyard and Guinea Grass)?

- Curfew: from Sunday to Thursday from 10:00 p.m. to 4:59 a.m. and on Friday and Saturday from 12:00 a.m. to 4:59 a.m.
- These curfew hours do not apply to those who are on duty and are members the security forces, Customs and Excise, Immigration services, frontline health care workers or an essential worker who has been issued a badge by the Minister responsible for National Security.

HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN GATHER AT ANY ONE TIME?

Under these new Regulations, **no more than 25 persons** can gather in a public or private place in the districts mentioned above (excluding Ambergris Caye, and the villages of Santa Martha, Shipyard and Guinea Grass where only 10 people can gather at one time – using social distancing).

CAN BARS, RUM SHOPS, NIGHT CLUBS AND DISCOTHEQUES OPERATE?

✗ No.

CAN CASINOS OPERATE?

- ✓ Yes, but no smoking or drinking allowed.

WHEN SHOULD I USE A FACE MASK?

- All persons in the entire country of Belize, must at all times and in every place, whether in private or in a public place, wear a face mask or other covering that properly covers your nose and mouth.
- Children under six years old are not required to wear a face mask or other covering.
- You are not required to use a face mask if you are at a private residence; exercising, engaging in any sporting activity; swimming, driving alone or driving with immediate family, riding a motorcycle or bicycle, the priest, pastor, member of the choir, or other person conducting the service or sermon of a church or other place of worship; or seated at a restaurant where dining-in is allowed.
- You must wear your mask as you enter a business or establishment.

WHAT ABOUT BPOs?

Every BPO allowed to operate under these Regulations must install or appoint a special internal auditor for COVID-19. The special internal auditor must submit a written weekly report to the Ministry of Health detailing the following:

- a. The number of employees of the BPO and the number of employees who reported to work during the reported week
 - b. The number of flows used for the operation of the BPO
 - c. The number of supervisors per floor during the reported week
 - d. The number of employees who call in sick and who are working on a rotation basis
 - e. The protocols being implemented and observed by the BPO
 - f. Any other information required by the Ministry responsible for Health
- The Ministry responsible for health may carry out spot checks and inspections of any BPO to ensure compliance with these Regulations.
 - **Failure to comply with any provision of these Regulations may result in immediate closure of the BPO by Notice served on the BPO under the hand of the Director of Health Services.**

ARE SCHOOLS GOING TO REOPEN?

X No. For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing, and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, schools will remain closed.

IS A PERSON ABLE TO WORK REMOTELY?

- ✓ Yes. Employers must implement measures to allow their employees to operate remotely where that business is one which the duties of the employee are capable of being performed from the employee's place of residence.
 - If an employee is allowed to work remotely, what are his/her responsibilities?
 - a. Be available for work during normal working hours
 - b. Stay at home and observe social distancing protocols and curfew impositions
 - c. Report to employer as required or instructed

WHAT IF A PERSON IS UNABLE TO DISCHARGE HIS/HER DUTIES REMOTELY?

That employee must report to work unless instructed by the employer not to report to the place of work in order to try to contain the spread of COVID-19.

WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?

- a. Every person travelling on public transportation must wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering for the duration of the travel; and
- b. No person who is not wearing a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering, must be allowed by the operator of a public transportation to board any means of public transportation.
- c. Public transportation by any means is limited to seating capacity
- d. Every operator of public transportation must have a hand sanitizer for use by every passenger
- e. Every person travelling on a bus is required to purchase a ticket which will entitle the holder to queue up, observing social distancing of six feet between persons, for an orderly boarding of the bus
- f. Every operator of public transportation arriving at a terminal in Belize shall instruct the passengers to disembark and oversee the sanitization of the said means of public transportation by personnel on site at the terminal.
- g. Before boarding the public transport at a terminal, every passenger must wash and sanitize his hands at the conveniences provided at the terminal
- h. If the passenger is picked up elsewhere than the terminal, every passenger boarding must sanitize hands using hand sanitizer provided by the operator
- i. All passengers and public transportation providers shall abide by guidelines issued by the Ministry with responsibility for health, prior to boarding or disembarking from any means of public transportation utilized.
- j. Social distancing of six (6) feet is not to be observed on any public transportation

ARE THE BORDERS STILL CLOSED?

- ✓ Yes. All ports of entry into and exit out of Belize remain closed.

PORTS OF ENTRY INTO AND EXIT OUT OF BELIZE ARE NOT CLOSED TO:

- a. Cargo flights and cargo shipments;
- b. Commercial courier flights;
- c. Emergency medical travel approved by the Director of Health Services in consultation with the Minister; and
- d. Emergency flights approved by the Minister in concurrence with the Department of Civil Aviation

WHO IS ALLOWED ENTRY TO BELIZE AT ANY PORT OF ENTRY?

- a. Belizean or Permanent Resident returning from abroad with proof of having received urgent medical care;
- b. Belizean or Permanent Resident required to be in Belize to assist health officials in Belize in urgent medical situations;
- c. A returning Belizean student or Permanent Resident student enrolled at, or a graduate of an educational institution abroad;
- d. A returning Belizean national or Permanent Resident;
- e. A Belizean diplomat; and
- f. A foreign diplomat resident in and accredited to Belize

Note: These persons will be placed into immediate mandatory quarantine or self-isolation at the discretion of the Quarantine Authority.

Persons desiring to return to Belize must apply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or to the nearest consulate or embassy for authorization to enter before arriving at any port of entry of Belize.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON ENTERING OR EXISTING BELIZE CONTRARY TO THE ABOVE?

The person commits an offence and is liable to:

- a. Mandatory quarantine; AND
- b. Six (6) months imprisonment

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON IS CONVICTED FOR A SECOND OFFENCE OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE?

The person is liable to:

- a. mandatory quarantine; AND
- b. imprisonment for a period of one (1) year

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO IS LIABLE TO MANDATORY QUARANTINE AND IS CONVICTED UNDER THESE REGULATIONS?

- a. The person will be quarantined for a period of time as directed by the Quarantine Authority; AND
- b. Will quarantine at a place to be determined by the Quarantine Authority

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN ARRESTED AND CHARGED BUT NOT CONVICTED?

- a. The person is liable to mandatory quarantine at the person's own expense, at the direction of and for a period of time as directed by the Quarantine Authority and in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry responsible for health.
- b. Upon completion of the time period of quarantine, if the person exhibits no flu-like symptoms, the person may be released from quarantine at the direction of the Quarantine Authority.
- c. If the person kept under quarantine develops flu-like symptoms, the Quarantine Authority will direct that the person be put into immediate isolation at a designated hospital or other isolation centre.

WHAT PROCEDURES WILL BE FOLLOWED AFTER A PERSON IS ARRESTED AND CHARGED FOR ENTERING OR EXITING BELIZE ILLEGALLY?

- a. The person will be immediately be presented to the Ministry responsible for Health for testing;
- b. The person will be taken to court to be arraigned after testing;
- c. The person will be placed in quarantine for the period directed by the Quarantine authority, regardless if the person has been granted bail.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN ARRESTED BUT CANNOT BE IMMEDIATELY CHARGED OR IF THE PERSON HAS BEEN CHARGED BUT CANNOT BE TAKEN TO COURT AFTER BEING TESTED BY THE MINISTRY RESPONSIBLE FOR HEALTH?

- a. The person will be placed in an isolated cell at the police station in the judicial district where the offence was committed and
- b. The person will be taken before the court at its earliest sitting.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN ARRAIGNED AFTER HE/SHE COMPLETES THE PERIOD OF QUARANTINE AS DIRECTED BY THE QUARANTINE AUTHORITY?

- a. The person will be released pending trial if that person is granted bail; OR
- b. The person will be remanded awaiting trial if that person was not granted bail.

A person, whether found guilty or not of entering or exiting Belize illegally by the magistrate, will serve a period of mandatory quarantine before being remanded to prison or released.

A person who is found guilty of committing the offense will serve the term of imprisonment as directed by the magistrate after completing the period of mandatory quarantine as directed by the Quarantine Authority.

WHAT SHOULD A PERSON WHO DEVELOPS FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND WHO REASONABLY SUSPECTS THAT HE/SHE IS INFECTED WITH COVID-19 OR THAT HE/SHE MAY HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELLED TO OR FROM A COUNTRY AFFECTED BY COVID-19 DO?

- a. The person must immediately inform the Ministry with responsibility for health; and
- b. At the person's own expense, must be put into immediate mandatory quarantine at the direction of, and for a period of time as directed by, the Quarantine Authority and in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry responsible for Health.

WHAT MUST BE GIVEN TO A PERSON WHO HAS BEEN DIRECTED BY THE QUARANTINE AUTHORITY TO QUARANTINE?

The person must be given, in writing and addressed to him/her, a directive to quarantine and this must include any guidelines or additional measures of the Ministry with responsibility for health.

WHAT MUST THE QUARANTINE AUTHORITY DIRECT?

- a. The Quarantine Authority must direct that a log be kept of every person placed in quarantine under these regulations;
- b. Details must be recorded of the persons' progress during the period of time under quarantine.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE PERSON COMPLETES THE TIME PERIOD OF QUARANTINE AND DOES NOT EXHIBIT ANY FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS?

The person may be released from quarantine at the direction of the Quarantine Authority.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON UNDER QUARANTINE DEVELOPS FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS?

The Quarantine Authority must direct that the person be placed into immediate isolation at a designed hospital or other isolation centre. The Quarantine Authority may issue any directives or institute any administrative measures necessary in carrying out the mandate of this regulation.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO DEVELOPS FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND WHO REASONABLY SUSPECTS THAT HE/SHE IS INFECTED WITH COVID-19 OR THAT HE/SHE MAY HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELLED TO OR FROM A COUNTRY AFFECTED BY COVID-19 AND FAILS TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE REGULATIONS?

The person commits an offence.

- a. The person is liable to mandatory quarantine; AND
- b. The person is liable to six (6) months imprisonment.

The person is liable, in addition to the imposition of mandatory quarantine, to imprisonment for a period of one (1) year if he/she is convicted of a second or subsequent offence.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON ESCAPES OR LEAVES MANDATORY QUARANTINE BEFORE THE PERIOD OF TIME AS DIRECTED BY THE QUARANTINE AUTHORITY?

The person commits an offence.

- a. The person is liable to mandatory quarantine; AND
- b. The person is liable to six (6) months imprisonment.

The person is liable, in addition to the imposition of mandatory quarantine, to imprisonment for a period of one (1) year if he/she is convicted of a second or subsequent offence.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PERSON IS FOUND WITH ANY GOODS PROHIBITED OR RESTRICTED UNDER THE CUSTOMS REGULATION ACT?

The person will be treated as having entered or exited Belize illegally and will be liable to:

- a. Mandatory quarantine for a period of time as directed by the Quarantine Authority at a place to be determined by the Quarantine Authority; AND
- b. Six (6) months imprisonment

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO CONTRAVENES ANY OF THE PROVISIONS OF THESE REGULATIONS OR INCITED OR ATTEMPTS TO INCITE ANY OTHER PERSON TO CONTRAVENE ANY OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS?

The person commits an offence.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO CONTRAVENES ANY OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS FOR WHICH NO PENALTY IS SPECIFIED?

The person is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$5000.00 or imprisonment of two (2) years.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A PERSON WHO IS CONVICTED OF A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCE ON ANY OF THE ABOVE REGULATIONS FOR WHICH NO PENALTY IS SPECIFIED?

The person is liable to imprisonment for a period of two (2) years.

WHOSE DUTY IS IT TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THESE REGULATIONS AND WITH ANY ORDER, RULES INSTRUCTION OR CONDITION LAWFULLY MADE?

It is the duty of every member of the security services to enforce, using force if necessary, compliance with these regulations. For these purposes, any member of the security forces can enter any premises, board any ship or aircraft, without a warrant.

Any member of the security forces may arrest, without a warrant, any person whom he/she has reasonable cause to believe to have committed any offence against these regulations or any order, rules instruction or condition lawfully made, given or imposed by any officer or other person under the authority of this regulation.

WHEN DO THESE REGULATIONS COME INTO FORCE?

On 7 August 2020.

WHO ARE CONSIDERED AS ESSENTIAL SERVICES?

1. Medical and auxiliary services
 - a. including veterinary services;
 - b. services by private medical institutions including private clinics; and
 - c. ambulance services
2. private security services
3. public utility workers and auxiliary staff responding to emergencies
4. social workers authorized to respond to emergencies
5. sanitation workers and auxiliary staff
6. productive sector industries, personnel and auxiliary workers (potable water production, agricultural workers)
7. The National Fire Service
8. Belize Electricity Limited
9. Belize Water Services Limited
10. Belize Telemedia Limited
11. Speednet Communications Limited (Smart)