Quarantine

BELIZE:

QUARANTINE (PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE) (COVID 19) REGULATIONS, 2020

ARRANGEMENT OF REGULATIONS

- 1. Citation.
- 2. Interpretation.
- 3. Application.
- 4. Wearing of face masks.
- 5. Social distancing, etc.
- 6. Social distancing protocols and other requirements for businesses and offices.
- 7. Restriction on social gatherings.
- 8. Exercising.
- 9. Closure of bars, rum shops, casinos, etc.
- 10. Restriction on social activities.
- 11. Restriction on spas, beauty salons and barber shops.
- 12. Restriction on restaurants, saloons, diners, etc. and street food vendors.
- 13. Closure of schools.
- 14. Operating remotely.
- 15. Transportation.
- 16. Ports of entry and exit.
- 17. Entry of persons returning to Belize.

Quarantine

- 18. Permission to enter Belize.
- 19. Offence and penalty for entering or exiting Belize contrary to regulation 16.
- 20. Procedure on arrest and charge of persons entering or exiting Belize illegally.
- 21. Mandatory quarantine.
- 22. Offences in relation to mandatory quarantine.
- 23. General offence and penalty.
- 24. Commencement.

BELIZE:

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT

No. 126 of 2020

REGULATIONS made by the Minister in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 4 of the Quarantine Act, Chapter 41 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 2011, and all other powers thereunto it enabling.

(Gazetted 2nd September, 2020.)

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the Minister the spread of COVID-19 in the country of Belize has escalated to an alarming degree;

AND WHEREAS, in the opinion of the Minister the spread of the disease COVID-19 is seriously threatening health and life in Belize;

AND WHEREAS, the imminent threat of the continued spread of COVID-19 as a result of the numerous cases present in the countries neighbouring Belize is of grave concern;

AND WHEREAS, it is crucial to contain, suppress and prevent the further spread of COVID-19 within the country of Belize generally and especially from persons arriving at any port by land or water;

NOW THEREFORE, in the interest of public health, public safety, public interest and in an aim to preserve life, the following Regulations are made.

Citation.

1. These Regulations may be cited as the

QUARANTINE (PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE) (COVID 19)

Interpretation.

2. For the purposes of these Regulations-

"BPO" means Business Process Outsourcing;

"COVID-19" means the Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov), which is an infectious disease caused by a virus which, having emerged during 2019, was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation on the 11th March, 2020;

REGULATIONS, 2020.

available to the public, which runs on fixed or established routes and charges a fare;

"social distancing" includes the practice of staying home,

"public transportation" means any form of transportation

"social distancing" includes the practice of staying home, avoiding crowds, refraining from touching one another and maintaining a distance of no less than six feet from other persons.

Application.

3. These Regulations shall apply to the entire country of Belize.

Wearing of face masks.

4.–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19 every person shall, at all times and in every place, whether public or private, wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering,

provided that children under the age of six years old shall not be required to wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.

- (2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1) a person shall not be required to wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering if that person is-
 - (a) at a private residence;
 - (b) exercising;
 - (c) swimming;
 - (d) driving alone or driving with immediate family members.
- (3) No owner or manager of a business, office or establishment shall allow any person to enter or remain in that business, office or establishment without wearing and keeping on, a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.
- (4) It shall be a defence to any proceedings under these Regulations for an owner or manager of a business, office or establishment to show that he took all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with sub-regulation (3).
- (5) Notwithstanding anything contained in subregulation (1), the owner or manager of a business, office or establishment may prescribe the types of face masks or other face (nose and mouth) coverings which are permissible for entry to that business, office or establishment.
- **5.**–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, every person shall practice social distancing.

Social distancing, etc.

- (2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1) the following persons shall not be required to practice social distancing–
 - (a) persons of the same party swimming;

(b) employees at a business or office allowed to operate under these Regulations, including a government office, where the square footage of the building in proportion to the number of employees, does not allow for the observance of social distancing protocols,

provided that all such employees shall at all times wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.

Social distancing protocols and other requirements for businesses and offices.

containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, every business, office or establishment allowed to operate under these Regulations, including government offices, shall abide by social distancing protocols if the square footage of that business or office allows for persons to maintain a distance of six feet from other persons.

6.–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling,

- (2) If the square footage of a business or office, including a government office, allows for persons to maintain a distance of six feet from other persons, that business or office, including a government office shall-
 - (a) ensure that all customers and staff maintain physical distancing of no less than six feet in or outside their business;
 - (b) determine the number of persons that may be permitted in that business or office, including a government office, at any one time, provided that the determined number is proportionate to the square footage of the business or office and the social distancing protocols to be observed;
 - (c) place distance markers six feet apart, indicating where each customer must stand in a line at a check out point;

- (d) place distance markers six feet apart on the outside of the establishment, indicating where customers must stand while waiting to enter the business or office.
- (3) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1), every BPO company or business allowed to operate under these Regulations shall-
 - (a) maintain, at any given time, a number of employees that is proportionate to the square footage of the establishment; and
 - (b) observe social distancing protocols.
- (4) Every BPO allowed to operate under these Regulations shall install or appoint a special internal auditor for COVID-19 who shall submit a written weekly report to the Ministry of Health detailing—
 - (a) the number of employees of the BPO and the number of employees who presented themselves to work during the reported week;
 - (b) the number of floors being utilized 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 rotational basis;
 - (e) the protocols being implemented and observed by the BPO;
 - (f) any other information required by the Ministry responsible for health.

- (5) The Ministry responsible for health may carry out spot checks and inspections of any business, office or establishment allowed to operate under these regulations to ensure compliance with these Regulations.
- (6) A business, office or establishment allowed to operate under these regulations found to be in contravention of any provision of these Regulations is liable to immediate closure of the BPO by Notice served on the BPO under the hand of the Director of Health Services.

Restriction on social gatherings.

7. For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, no person shall gather in numbers of more than ten persons at a time anywhere, whether in any public place or public space.

Exercising.

- **8.** For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, exercise by walking, running, or cycling shall be allowed subject to the following conditions—
 - (a) a person shall practice social distancing protocols and maintain a minimum of six feet distance between persons while exercising; and
 - (b) a cyclist shall ride in single file only.

Closure of bars, rum shops, casinos, etc.

- **9.** For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, the following shall be closed-
 - (a) bars, rum shops, discotheques, and night clubs;
 - (b) casinos and gaming establishments; and
 - (c) gymnasiums.

10. For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing

a private party which includes any person from outside of the immediate household of the house Restriction on social activities.

Restriction on spas, beauty

barber shops.

salons and

and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, no person shall host nor attend-

> occupant; **(b)** 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;

(d) a banquet, ball or reception;

(e) any social event;

(f) a funeral, except ten members of the immediate

family and at least one officiant and essential mortuary staff;

(g) a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organization; or

a church service or other service of worship.

11.-(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling,

containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, spas, beauty salons and barber shops shall be

allowed to operate, subject to the following conditions-

services offered shall be by appointment only;

and

only two customers shall be allowed to be in a spa, beauty salon or barber shop at any one time, the customer being attended to and the customer who is waiting.

8		Quarantine	[No. 126
	(2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1)-		
	(a)	if the square footage of a spa, or barber shop is such that soc protocols cannot be observed customers, there shall only be at a time; or	ial distancing between both
	<i>(b)</i>	if the square footage of a spa, or barber shop is such that soo protocols can be observed, that salon or barber shop may determine of customers permitted in the spator barber shop, provided that the number is proportionate to the soof the spa, beauty salon or barber shocial distancing protocols to	t spa, beauty ne the number , beauty salon ne determined quare footage per shop and
Restriction on restaurants, saloons, diners, etc. and street food vendors.	12. For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19–		
	(a)	restaurants, saloons, diners and establishments shall not operate services and shall offer only take-out, delivery or drive thru'	for dining in he service of
	(b)	street food vendors shall offer or	nly the service

restaurants, saloons, diners, etc. and street	suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19-		
food vendors.	(a)	restaurants, saloons, diners and other similar establishments shall not operate for dining in services and shall offer only the service of take-out, delivery or drive thru'; and	
	<i>(b)</i>	street food vendors shall offer only the service	

of take-out or delivery from a private property.

13. For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and Closure of schools.

suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, schools shall remain closed but may operate online. Operating **14.**–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, remotely. containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease

COVID-19, employers shall 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.

- (2) Employees who are permitted to work remotely under sub-regulation (1) shall-
 - (a) be available for work during that employee's normal working hours;
 - (b) stay at home and observe social distancing protocols and curfew impositions; and
 - (c) report to the employer as required or instructed.
- (3) Where an employee's assigned tasks at his place of employment can only be discharged at his place of employment, that employee shall 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.

15.–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19–

Transportation.

- (a) every person travelling on public transportation shall wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering for the duration of the travel;
- (b) no person who is not wearing a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering, shall be allowed by the operator or conductor of public transportation to board any means of public transportation; and
- (c) the operator and any conductor of, public transportation shall at all times during the travel, wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.
- (2) The provision of public transportation by any means is limited to seating capacity.

- (3) While social distancing of six feet shall not be observed on any public transportation, every operator of public transportation shall have a hand sanitizer for use by every passenger.
- (4) 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.
- (5) Every operator of public transportation arriving at a terminal in Belize shall instruct the passengers to dis-embark and that operator shall oversee the sanitization of the said means of public transportation by personnel on site at the terminal.
- (6) Prior to boarding any means of public transportation at a terminal, every passenger shall wash and sanitize his hands at the conveniences provided at the terminal, and where passengers are picked up elsewhere than at a terminal where proper sanitization of hands could not occur, every passenger boarding that public transportation shall sanitize his hands using hand sanitizer that is provided by the operator of the public transportation as required under sub-regulation (3).
- (7) It shall be a defence to any proceedings under these Regulations for an operator or conductor of public transportation to show that he took all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with his obligation under these regulations.
- (8) Without prejudice to the foregoing, 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.

Ports of entry and exit.

16.–(1) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, all ports of entry into and exit out of Belize shall be closed.

- (2) Notwithstanding sub-regulation (1), ports of entry into and exit out of Belize shall not be 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:
 - (d) emergency flights approved by the Minister in concurrence with the Department of Civil Aviation:
 - (e) persons allowed to return under regulation 17 and granted permission in accordance with regulation 18.
- 17.–(1) A person returning to Belize shall be allowed entry at any port of entry if that person–
- Entry of persons returning to Belize.
- urgent medical care;

 (b) is a Belizean or Permanent Resident required to

(a) is a Belizean or Permanent Resident returning from abroad with proof of having received

- be in Belize to assist health officials in Belize in urgent medical situations;
- (c) is a returning Belizean student or Permanent Resident student enrolled at, or a graduand of, an educational institution abroad;
- (d) is a returning Belizean national or Permanent Resident;
- (e) is a resident Belizean diplomat;

Ouarantine

(h) is a consultant or specialist technician required to be in Belize to assist in an emergency or on a needs basis;(i) is a business person with investments in Belize.

[No. 126

(2) For the purposes of preventing, controlling, containing and suppressing the spread of the infectious disease COVID-19, a person allowed entry pursuant to sub-regulation (1) shall

be put into immediate mandatory quarantine or self-isolation at the discretion of the Quarantine Authority.

18. A person qualified under regulation 17 who desires to return to Belize shall apply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or to the nearest consulate or embassy for permission to enter prior to arriving at any port of entry in Belize.

or to the nearest consulate or embassy for permission to enter prior to arriving at any port of entry in Belize.

19.–(1) Every person entering or exiting Belize contrary to regulation 16 commits an offence is liable to–

- (a) mandatory quarantine; and
- (b) six months imprisonment.
- under this regulation is liable, in addition to the imposition of mandatory quarantine, to imprisonment for a period of one year.

(2) A person convicted of a second or subsequent offence

- (3) A person who is liable to mandatory quarantine under
- this regulation shall, if convicted, be quarantined—

 (a) for a period of time as directed by the Quarantine

Authority; and

<u>12</u>

Permission to enter Belize.

Offence and penalty for entering or

exiting Belize contrary to regulation 16.

of or

- (b) at a place to be determined by the Quarantine Authority.
- (4) Where a person arrested and charged but not convicted under this regulation is liable to mandatory quarantine, that person shall be subject to mandatory quarantine under regulation 21.
- **20.**–(1) The following procedures shall be followed on the arrest and charge of a person who enters or exists Belize in contravention of regulation 17–
- and charge of persons entering or exiting Belize illegally.

Procedure

on arrest

- (a) upon arrest and charge, the person shall immediately be submitted to the Ministry responsible for health for testing;
- (b) after testing, the person arrested and charged shall be taken to court to be arraigned; and
- (c) after arraignment, the person shall be quarantined for the period directed by the Quarantine Authority, whether or not that person has been granted bail.
- (2) If a person who has been arrested cannot immediately be charged, or if charged, cannot immediately be taken to court after being tested by the Ministry responsible for health, that person shall–
 - (a) be isolated in a cell at the police station in the judicial district where the offence was committed; and
 - (b) be brought before the court at its earliest sitting.
- (3) After the completion of the period of quarantine directed by the Quarantine Authority, a person arraigned shall be-

- (a) released pending trial if that person was granted bail; or
- (b) remanded pending trial if that person was not granted bail.
- (4) Notwithstanding the pronouncement by the magistrate of the guilt or innocence of a person arrested and charged, that person shall serve the period of mandatory quarantine prior to being committed to prison or released, as the case may be.
- (5) Where a person charged under regulation 19 is found guilty of the offence, that person shall serve the term of imprisonment as directed by the magistrate after completing the period of mandatory quarantine directed by the Quarantine Authority.

21.-(1) A person who develops flu-like symptoms and who

Mandatory quarantine.

- reasonably suspects he is infected with COVID-19 or that he may have had contact with someone infected with COVID-19 or someone who has travelled to or from a country affected by COVID-19-
 - (a) shall immediately inform the Ministry responsible for health; and
 - (b) at the person's own expense, shall 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.
- (2) A directive by the Quarantine Authority to quarantine a person under this regulation shall be given in writing and addressed to the person being put in quarantine and shall include any guidelines or additional measures of the Ministry responsible for health.

- (3) The Quarantine Authority shall direct that a log be kept of every person put into quarantine under this regulation and that details be recorded of the person's progress during the period of time under quarantine.
- (4) Upon completion of the time period of quarantine under this regulation, if the person exhibits no flu-like symptoms, the person may be released from quarantine at the direction of the Quarantine Authority.
- (5) Where a person kept under quarantine develops flulike symptoms, the Quarantine Authority shall direct that the person be put into immediate isolation at a designated hospital or other isolation centre.
- (6) The Quarantine Authority may issue any directives or institute any administrative measures necessary in carrying out the mandate of this regulation.
- **22.**–(1) A person commits an offence if that person–
- relation to mandatory

Offences in

quarantine.

- (a) contravenes regulation 21; or
- (b) escapes or leaves mandatory quarantine before the period of time directed by the Quarantine Authority.
- (2) A person who commits an offence under this regulation is liable on summary conviction to-
 - (a) mandatory quarantine; and
 - (b) six months imprisonment.
- (3) A person convicted of a second or subsequent offence under this regulation is liable, in addition to the imposition of mandatory quarantine, to imprisonment for a period of one year.

offence and penalty.

General

23.–(1) Every person who contravenes any of the provisions of these Regulations or incites or attempts to incite any other person to contravene any of these Regulations commits an offence.

- (2) Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of these Regulations for which no penalty is specifically provided is liable on summary conviction to a fine of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) or to imprisonment for two (2) years.
- (3) A person convicted of a second or subsequent offence under these Regulations for which no penalty is specifically provided is liable to imprisonment for a period of two years.

Commencement.

24. These regulations shall come into force on the 4th day of September, 2020.

MADE by the Minister responsible for quarantine this 2nd day of September, 2020.

HON. PABLO MARIN Minister of Health

 $(Minister\ responsible\ for\ quarantine)$