



# BELIZE PRESS OFFICE

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## SUMMARY OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 136 OF 2020

**Quarantine (Prevention of the Spread of Infectious Disease) (COVID-19) Regulations,  
2020  
Effective Thursday, 2 October 2020**

### TO WHOM DO THESE REGULATIONS APPLY?

These regulations apply to the **entire country** of Belize.

### WHO IS REQUIRED TO WEAR A FACE MASK AND WHEN?

- Every person **MUST** wear a face mask or other face (**nose and mouth**) covering at all times, in every place, whether public or private.
- Children under the age of six (6) years old are **not required** to wear a face mask or other face (**nose and mouth**) covering.
- No establishment will allow anyone to enter that business, office or establishment without wearing a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.
  - At any proceedings under these Regulations, management of a business must show that he/she took all reasonable measure to ensure compliance of a face mask
  - The management can prescribe the type of face mask allowed into that business

### WHO IS EXEMPTED FROM WEARING A FACE MASK OR FACE COVERING (NOSE AND MOUTH)?

You are exempted from wearing a face mask when you are:

- at a private residence;
- exercising;
- swimming;
- driving alone or driving with immediate family members;

### DO YOU HAVE TO PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING?

**YES.** For the purposes of preventing, controlling, and containing and suppressing the spread of COVID-19, **every person must practice social distancing.**

## **WHO IS EXEMPTED FROM PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING?**

- Persons of the same party swimming;
- 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. **However, all such employees must at all times wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.**

## **WHO MUST ABIDE BY SOCIAL DISTANCING PROTOCOLS IF THE SQUARE FOOTAGE OF THAT BUSINESS OR OFFICE ALLOWS FOR PERSONS TO MAINTAIN A DISTANCE OF SIX (6) FEET FROM OTHER PERSONS?**

- Every business and office, including government offices, must abide by social distancing protocols if the square footage of that business or office allows for persons to maintain a distance of six (6) feet from other persons.

## **WHAT SHOULD A BUSINESS OR OFFICE, INCLUDING A GOVERNMENT OFFICE, DO IF THE SQUARE FOOTAGE ALLOWS FOR PERSONS TO MAINTAIN A DISTANCE OF 6 FEET FROM OTHER PERSONS?**

You must:

- Ensure that all customers and staff maintain a social distance of six (6) feet inside and outside your business
- Determine the number of persons who may be allowed in your business or office at any given time. The determined number must be proportionate to the square footage of the business or office and the social distancing protocols must be observed.
- Place distance markers of six (6) feet apart, indicating where each customer must stand in a line at a check out point and while waiting to enter the business or office.

## **EVERY BPO MUST:**

- Maintain, at any given time, a number of employees that is proportionate to the square footage of the establishment; and
- Observe social distancing protocols
- Every BPO shall install or appoint a special internal auditor for COVID-19. MUST submit a written weekly report to the Ministry of Health detailing:
  - The number of employees of the BPO and the number of employees who presented themselves to work during the reported week;
  - The number of floors being utilized for the operation of the BPO;
  - The number of supervisors per floor during the reported week;
  - The number of employees who call in sick and who are working on a rotational basis;
  - The protocols being implemented and observed by the BPO;
  - 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.

A BPO 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.

#### **WHICH RECREATIONAL NON-CONTACT SPORTS ARE ALLOWED?**

- Tennis
- Golf
- Table Tennis
- Any other similar non-contact sports

All persons while engaged in the sporting activity, are exempted from practicing social distancing or wearing a face mask or other face (mouth and nose) covering.

#### **WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE IS ALLOWED AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS?**

- Walking
- Running
- Cycling

**All persons** must practice **social distancing** protocols and **maintain a minimum of six (6) feet distance** while exercising. **All cyclists** must ride in **single file only**.

#### **WHICH ESTABLISHMENTS MUST REMAIN CLOSED?**

- Bars, rum shops, discotheques, and night clubs;
- Casinos and gaming establishments; and
- Gymnasiums.

#### **NO PERSON SHOULD HOLD OR 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 10 or more persons other than the bride, bridegroom, official witnesses and the marriage officer;
- a banquet, ball or reception;
- any social event;
- a funeral, except 10 members of the immediate family and at least one officiant and essential mortuary staff;
- a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organization; or
- a church service or other service of worship which hosts 10 or more persons other than the person officiating the service and two auxiliary personnel.

## **WHAT ABOUT SPAS, BEAUTY SALONS AND BARBER SHOPS?**

Spas, beauty salons and barber shops are allowed to operate under the following conditions:

- Services by appointment only
- Only two (2) customers are to be allowed at any one time (only the customer being attended to and the customer who is waiting).
- If social distancing protocols of six (6) feet cannot be observed, then only one customer is allowed at any given time.
- If social distancing protocols of six (6) feet can be observed, the spa, beauty salon or barber shop can determine the number of persons proportionate to the square footage who can be inside the establishment and must observe social distancing at all times.

## **WHAT ABOUT RESTAURANTS, SALOONS, DINERS AND OTHER SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS?**

- These establishments holding a restaurant license may operate for dining-in services.
- No more than 10 customers are allowed to dine-in at any given time.
- Dining-in must be made by reservation only.

**Street food vendors** can only offer **take-out or delivery** from a **private property**.

## **WHAT ABOUT SCHOOLS?**

Schools remain closed but may operate online.

## **ARE PERSONS ABLE TO WORK REMOTELY? WHAT ARE THEIR OBLIGATIONS?**

Employers must implement measures to allow their employees to operate remotely if the employees are capable of performing their duties at their place of residence.

Employees who are allowed to work remotely must:

- Be available during normal working hours;
- Stay at home and observe social distancing protocols; and
- Report to the employer as required or instructed.

If the employee's duties can only be discharged at the place of employment, that employee must report to work unless instructed otherwise by the employer.

## **WHAT ABOUT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?**

- Every person travelling on public transportation **must wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering for the duration of the travel.**
- Public transportation by any means is **limited to seating capacity.**
- 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 (6) feet** between persons, for an orderly boarding of the bus.
- Prior to boarding any means of public transportation at a terminal, every passenger **must wash and sanitize their hands** at the conveniences provided at the terminal,

and where passengers are picked up elsewhere than at a terminal **must sanitize their hands** using hand sanitizer that is provided by the operator.

- Without prejudice to the foregoing, all passengers and public transportation providers must abide by guidelines issued by the Ministry with responsibility for health, prior to boarding or disembarking from any means of public transportation utilized.

#### **WHAT ARE OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OPERATORS AND CONDUCTORS OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?**

- Persons who are not wearing a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering, **will not be allowed by the operator or conductor of public transportation to board any means of public transportation;**
- The **operator and any conductor must at all times** during the travel, **wear a face mask or other face (nose and mouth) covering.**
- While social distancing of six (6) feet does not have to be observed on any public transportation, **every operator of public transportation must have a hand sanitizer for use by every passenger.**
- Every operator of public transportation arriving at a terminal in Belize must instruct the passengers to disembark and that operator shall oversee the **sanitization of the said means of public transportation by personnel on site at the terminal.**
- It will 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.

#### **WHO CAN COME INTO BELIZE VIA THE AIRPORT AND HOW DO I APPLY?**

##### **Persons with business concerns in Belize**

- Apply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the nearest Embassy or Consulate for approval to travel by air.
- Provide proof of ownership of, or investment in a business or company and an itinerary containing all scheduled activities while in Belize.

##### **Foreign homeowners**

- Apply to the Belize Tourism Board for approval to travel to Belize by air
- Provide a copy of the title to property or other form of proof of ownership
- Provide a recent utility bill in the name of the applicant

##### **Long-Stay non-nationals**

- Apply to the Belize Tourism Board for approval to travel by air
- Provide the lease agreement
- Provide a recent utility bill in the name of the applicant

Please note that you need to get written approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Belize Tourism Board in order to enter Belize, and:

- Strictly adhere to the approved itinerary; and

- Not make any changes to the itinerary without the prior written approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Foreign Tourists**

- Reserve or book your stay at an approved hotel or tourist accommodation.
- Make arrangements with the hotel or tourist accommodation at which you are staying to be transported to the hotel or tourist accommodation using their transportation.
- Provide to a designated officer, upon being requested to do so, documentation of your hotel reservation.
- If you are unable to provide a copy of your reservation, you may be denied entry to Belize and may be asked to return to your port of origin at your own expense.
- You are to use only the transportation provided by your hotel at which you are staying.

### **All Persons**

- Download the app on an electronic device
- Input the information required by the app
- Comply with all terms and conditions for use of the app

### **Foreign tourists**

- Ensure that the app remains downloaded on your mobile device for the duration of your visit in Belize
- Keep your mobile device with you at all times

### **DO I HAVE TO HAVE A NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST TO ENTER BELIZE?**

Yes. It needs to have been taken within 72 hours before you arrive in Belize.

You may also be subject to a random test conducted by Ministry of Health officials.

Any person who is not a Belizean who fails to comply with these requirements shall be denied entry into Belize and will be asked to return home immediately. If you are unable to return home immediately, you will be placed into mandatory quarantine at your own expense.

### **WILL I HAVE TO SELF ISOLATE?**

Yes, for a period of 10 days.

### **WHAT IF I TEST POSITIVE UPON ARRIVAL AT THE AIRPORT?**

You will be placed in quarantine at your own expense for a period of time determined by the Ministry of Health.

### **WHAT SAFETY PROCEDURES DO I HAVE TO FOLLOW WHILE IN BELIZE?**

You will have to wear a mask and practice social distancing.

### **IS IT AN OFFENSE NOT TO ABIDE BY THESE REGULATIONS?**

Yes. You will be subject to a \$5,000 fine and/or six (6) months in jail.

## **ARE LAND A SEA BORDERS OPEN?**

Land and sea borders remain closed unless for cargo shipments, emergency medical travel approved by the Director of Health Services, and for those returning to Belize under these regulations.

## **WHO CAN ENTER BELIZE VIA LAND OR SEA?**

- A Belizean or Permanent Resident returning from abroad with proof of having received urgent medical care
- A Belizean or Permanent Resident required to be in Belize to assist health officials in Belize in urgent medical situations
- A returning Belizean student or Permanent Resident student enrolled at, or a graduand of, an educational institution abroad
- A returning Belizean national or Permanent Resident
- A resident Belizean diplomat
- A foreign diplomat resident in, and accredited to, Belize
- A holder of a valid work permit
- A consultant or specialist technician required to be in Belize to assist in an emergency or on a needs basis
- A businessperson with investments in Belize

## **WILL I NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE OR QUARANTINE?**

Yes. At the discretion of the Ministry of Health.

## **NOTE: YOU WILL NEED TO APPLY TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR PERMISSION TO ENTER THE COUNTRY**

## **WHAT ARE THE PENALTIES IF I DO NOT FOLLOW THE REGULATIONS?**

- Mandatory quarantine
- Three (3) months imprisonment
- If you are convicted of a second or subsequent offence, you will be liable to one (1) year in prison.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM ARRESTED FOR NOT FOLLOWING THE REGULATIONS?**

- You will immediately be tested by the Ministry of Health.
- After testing, you will be charged and taken to court to be arraigned.
- After arraignment, you will be quarantined for the period directed by the Quarantine Authority, whether or not you have been granted bail.

## **WHAT IF I DEVELOP FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS?**

- Immediately inform the Ministry with responsibility for health.
- You will be immediately put into mandatory quarantine at your own expense and for a time determined by the Quarantine Authority.

- Upon completion of the time period of quarantine under this regulation, if you do not exhibit flu-like symptoms, you may be released from quarantine at the direction of the Quarantine Authority.
- If while in quarantine you develop flu-like symptoms, the Quarantine Authority shall direct that you be put into immediate isolation at a designated hospital or other isolation centre.

**These Regulations came into effect on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.**