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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

FIRST SUPPLEMENT

LEGAL SUPPLEMENT

A.	ACTS — NIL	
B.	SUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION —	
	Notice – Covid-19 Emergency Measures (No. 15)	115
C.	BILLS — NIL	

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FRIDAY 26TH FEBRUARY, 2021

THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE 26TH FEBRUARY, 2021

LEGAL SUPPLEMENT – B

NOTICE

COVID-19 EMERGENCY MEASURES (No. 15)

The Government of Guyana has made a rapid assessment of the response to the COVID- 19 pandemic and has found that it was fragmented and incapable of administering the public health, economic and social measures needed to keep the population safe.

The Government has initiated a complete overhaul of the current public health response. The Government has looked at the approach used in other territories, especially in the Caribbean, and has resolved that a multi-sector and multi-faceted approach has been the most successful model, with an aggressive policy of detection, contact tracing and if positive, isolation. The Government will continue to engage each sector to develop clear protocols and guidelines based on the epidemiological evidence to keep the citizens of Guyana safe while allowing for a gradual reopening.

Accordingly, these current measures are extended for a limited period, to allow for further assessments and consultations as the Government continues to update protocols and guidelines.

These emergency measures are made pursuant to paragraphs (1) and (2)(b) of the Direction by the President, given under the Public Health Ordinance, Cap. 145, and published in the *Gazette*, Legal Supplement- B, 16th March 2020.

The measures shall take effect from the 1st March, 2021 and last until the 31st March, 2021 unless earlier terminated, extended or amended by notice of the Minister of Health after an assessment of the prevailing public health conditions.

1. Restriction to home

In accordance with the curfew under paragraph 4 and except as otherwise provided in this Notice, every person shall remain in the confines of his or her home and its yard space.

2. Restriction on social activities

(1) No person shall host, attend or visit-

- (a) a cinema except for a drive-in cinema;
- (b) a private party;
- (c) a banquet, ball or reception;
- (d) a public or hotel swimming pool or waterpark;

- (e) a wake or vigil;
 - (f) a club or discotheque;
 - (g) a meeting of a fraternal society, private or social club or civic association or organisation; or
 - (h) any other social activity.
- (2) No recreational activities shall be allowed on any river, creek, beach, swimming pool and internal waters.
- (3) Physical exercise is permitted only in parks, on roads, seawalls, beaches and by rivers and creeks and where group exercise is conducted persons shall maintain a physical distancing of six feet from each other.
- (4) Except for religious services and gatherings permitted under this paragraph and paragraph 11, where gatherings are allowed it shall not exceed ten persons.
- (5) Sporting events are permitted subject to the approval of the Minister of Health and compliance with any guidelines that the Ministry of Health may issue and every person or organiser hosting an approved sporting event shall be responsible for ensuring that the measures under this Notice as well as any guidelines that the Ministry of Health may issue are complied with.
- (6) (a) A gym or fitness centre may be opened but only at fifty percent capacity of the building and by appointments only to minimize the risk and spread of Coronavirus.
- (b) The operator of a gym or fitness centre shall be responsible for ensuring that their staff and customers comply with this Notice and any guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.
- (7) If any person, organiser or operator who is allowed to host an event or operate a business under this paragraph, fails to comply with this Notice or any guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Health may close the operation of that business or prohibit the event.

3. Restriction on visitation

- (1) No person shall visit or be permitted to visit-
- (a) any place of quarantine or an isolation facility;
 - (b) a prison or correctional facility;
 - (c) a patient in a hospital, nursing home, senior citizens' home or any other care facility.

- (2) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), where a person is not infected with the coronavirus, the respective institution may decide on a case by case basis whether to allow that person to receive visitors.

4. Curfew

A curfew is hereby imposed throughout Guyana from the 1st March, 2021 to 31st March, 2021 between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 4:00 a.m.

5. Public and Private Sector

- (1) All persons employed within the Public Service, a semi-autonomous agency, statutory body or State-owned enterprise shall work on rotation unless otherwise instructed by their respective Minister or Head of Agency to work from home.
- (2) Private sector entities may be opened but employees shall work on rotation as determined by their employer.
- (3) Every employer under this paragraph shall ensure that appropriate COVID-19 guidelines are prepared and implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus among workers.
- (4) The COVID-19 guidelines mentioned in subparagraph (3) shall include measures addressing-
 - (a) screening of workers;
 - (b) organisation of work;
 - (c) preventative measures before and after work;
 - (d) preventative measures while using transportation;
 - (e) procedures to be adopted when there is a suspected COVID-19 case at the workplace;
 - (f) dealing with stress at the workplace during COVID-19;
 - (g) employee education, training and capacity building in the area of COVID-19;
 - (h) cleaning and disinfecting protocols;
 - (i) use of personal protective equipment;
 - (j) physical distancing guidelines;
 - (k) clients and customers' interactions;
 - (l) communication materials;
 - (m) continuous monitoring to assess the COVID-19 pandemic at the workplace; and
 - (n) resumption of work after a period of quarantine or isolation that was approved by the Ministry of Health.

- (5) Every employer and employee shall comply with any guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health, in relation to the work environment, to prevent and reduce transmission of Coronavirus and maintain healthy work environments.

6. Essential and other Services

- (1) The following essential services may carry on operations for 24 hours each day-
- (a) hospitals, healthcare and medical services including pharmacies, drug stores and private veterinary services;
 - (b) nursing homes, orphanages, shelters and other related care centres;
 - (c) immigration;
 - (d) the Judiciary;
 - (e) the Parliament;
 - (f) the Diplomatic Corps;
 - (g) the Revenue Authority;
 - (h) the Maritime Administration Department;
 - (i) the National Emergency Operations Centre;
 - (j) water supply services including the collection, storage, purification and distribution of water for public use;
 - (k) the disciplined forces;
 - (l) prison services;
 - (m) solid waste management, sewerage and janitorial services including live-in domestic workers;
 - (n) National Drainage and Irrigation Authority;
 - (o) air traffic control;
 - (p) Demerara Harbour Bridge and Berbice River Bridge;
 - (q) medical, nursing and allied health schools;
 - (r) hotels and other accommodations, including interior lodges and resorts, and tour companies;
 - (s) electricity and energy services including the oil and gas sector and those who provide services to the oil and gas sector;
 - (t) businesses that ensure global continuity of supply of mining and petroleum materials and products (e.g. metals and minerals such as bauxite, gold and diamonds);
 - (u) mining and petroleum development operations, production and processing;
 - (v) mineral and petroleum exploration and development;
 - (w) mining and petroleum supply and services that support supply chains in the mining and petroleum industries;
 - (x) businesses and operations that engage in the cutting, processing and preparation of trees into lumber and ensure continuity of supply of forestry products;

- (y) security services including private security;
- (z) telecommunications providers including internet, telephone and call centre operators, media houses, broadcasting and the Guyana National Printers Ltd.;
- (aa) port operations limited to bulk marking operations and loading and offloading only, of marine vessels, petroleum vessels, ships, bulk and containerised vessels;
- (bb) port service logistics and freight services, including transportation and delivery services to and from wharves, terminals and ports;
- (cc) transportation of market produce, dry goods and beverages;
- (dd) public and private sector construction in accordance with the safety standards mentioned in paragraph 10(g);
- (ee) factories, manufacturers and distributors;
- (ff) services of Attorneys-at-Law;
- (gg) fisherfolk;
- (hh) seafarers;
- (ii) funeral homes;
- (jj) the Cheddi Jagan International and Eugene F. Correia International Airports;
- (kk) Guyana Tourism Authority;
- (mm) Guyana Civil Aviation Authority.

(2) The following services may be opened between the hours of 4:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. each day –

- (a) banks and other financial institutions defined in the Financial Institutions Act, Cap. 85:03, remittance services, and their support services;
- (b) markets, supermarkets, fruit and vegetable stalls, bulk food stores and neighbourhood grocery shops;
- (c) gas stations;
- (d) postal and shipping services;
- (e) beauty salons and barbershops;
- (f) operation, inspection, repair and maintenance of essential services including vehicles, vessels and aircraft and traffic signal maintenance;
- (g) automotive repair and maintenance facilities that provide direct support to essential businesses;
- (h) hardware, plumbing and electrical stores;
- (i) clothing, shoes and book stores;
- (j) services necessary for the maintenance of residences including plumbing, electrical and extermination services.

- (3) (a) Subject to sub-subparagraph (c), food services, restaurants and bars shall be opened only for delivery, drive-thru, curb-side pickup and take away services between the hours of 4:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- (b) Buffet dining is prohibited.
- (c) Indoor and outdoor dining at a restaurant and bar shall only be permitted between the hours of 4:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and where-
- (i) applicable, indoor dining at a restaurant and bar is restricted to forty percent capacity of the building;
 - (ii) tables are spaced six feet apart from each other; and
 - (iii) no more than four persons are seated at one table and at least three feet apart.
- (d) Staff at restaurants and bars shall wear a face mask fitted to cover the nose, mouth and chin at all times and shall sanitise dining tables, chairs and bar countertops after use by each customer.
- (e) The measures under paragraph 6(6) shall apply to all restaurants and bars permitted to operate in accordance with this Notice and the Guyana Tourism Authority shall be responsible for monitoring all restaurants and bars to ensure implementation of the measures under this Notice and any protocols or guidelines issued under paragraph 6(6) (b).
- (4) Where a Village Council, as defined in the Amerindian Act, Cap. 29:01, has determined that a public health threat exists in relation to any mining or forestry operation or any other activity conducted in accordance with subparagraph (1), the Village Council shall recommend to the Minister of Health that the operation be discontinued.
- (5) All services allowed to carry on operations under this paragraph shall comply with the measures under paragraph 10 relating to social and physical distancing.
- (6) (a) In addition to the requirement under this Notice, all services permitted to operate in accordance with paragraph 6 (1) (r) shall comply with any health and safety protocols issued by the Guyana Tourism Authority in order to minimise the risk and spread of the Coronavirus when hosting clients.
- (b) The operator of any service permitted to operate in accordance with paragraph 6 (1) (r) shall be responsible for ensuring that their staff and clients comply with this Notice, any health and safety protocols issued by the Guyana Tourism Authority and any guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.

(c) The Guyana Tourism Authority shall be responsible for monitoring the services under paragraph 6 (1) (r) to ensure implementation of the measures under this Notice and any protocols or guidelines issued under sub-subparagraph (b).

(d) If any service allowed to operate a business in accordance with paragraph 6 (1) (r), fails to comply with this Notice or any protocol or guidelines issued under sub-subparagraph (b), the Minister of Health may close the operation of that business or prohibit any activity.

7. Mining Operations

Mining operations are permitted and in addition to the measures under this Notice, mining operators shall comply with the COVID- 19 Advisory and Worksite Safety Plan for the Small and Medium Scale Mining Community in Guyana issued by the Ministry of Health.

8. Requirement of Identification

Any person permitted to go to work during the curfew shall have in his or her possession an official identification document and official work identification document or some proof of workplace, and shall produce the identification documents or proof of workplace if requested to do so by a member of the Police Force.

9. Preferential Treatment for Healthcare Workers

Where a healthcare worker has to do business in a service mentioned in paragraph 6(2) (a), (b), (c) or (3), the worker shall not join a line but shall be given preferential treatment on submission of proof of identification.

10. Social distancing and physical distancing protocols

Every employer or operator of a business, as the case may be, shall ensure that-

- (a) hand washing stations, or hand sanitising equipment, are placed and maintained at the entrance of the workplace or business premises, so that persons entering the premises have the opportunity to wash or sanitise their hands before entering the premises;

- (b) its employees, customers or visitors are directed to wash or sanitise their hands before entering the workplace or business premises;
- (c) all employee workstations and all equipment on the business premises are sanitised before each work shift;
- (d) as far as is reasonably practicable, that all employees, customers and visitors maintain a physical distance of six feet from each other in or outside of the workplace or business;
- (e) persons with flu-like symptoms or respiratory symptoms are not permitted to go to work, or if they are at work, are not permitted to remain at work, or enter the business premises and that the Ministry of Health is informed of the persons who have those symptoms;
- (f) every person is wearing a face mask fitted to cover the nose, mouth and chin of the person while in the workplace or on the business premises and shall not allow any person who is not wearing a face mask, as mandated under these measures, to enter the workplace or business premises;
- (g) as it relates to public and private sector construction, a COVID-19 officer is appointed and stationed at each site where there are five or more workers at the site who shall be responsible for the implementation of the safety standards to be prepared by each construction service and approved by the Ministers responsible for health and public works.

11. Places of Worship

- (1) Subject to paragraph 4, all places of religious worship may be opened for religious services and gatherings including the conduct of funerals and weddings.
- (2) Religious leaders shall ensure that –
 - (a) attendance at religious services and gatherings are restricted to forty percent the capacity of the building where the service or gathering is to be held;
 - (b) where there are multiple services, there should be no less than forty-five minutes between each service to allow for sanitisation and cleaning of facilities;

- (c) elderly persons should be given the option to attend services separately and apart from the normal services preferably early in the morning;
 - (d) the place of worship is cleaned and sanitised immediately before and after all gatherings and services;
 - (e) sanitisation or handwashing stations are provided for persons to use before and after the service or gathering and where persons enter the place of worship barefoot, ensure that feet washing facilities are provided;
 - (f) as far as is reasonably practicable and where persons are not from the same household, all persons whether sitting or standing maintain a physical distance of six feet from each other in or outside of the place of worship;
 - (g) every person is wearing a face mask fitted to cover the nose, mouth and chin of the person while in the place of worship;
 - (h) greeting practices are adapted to avoid handshakes, hugs and other forms of physical contact;
 - (i) individual pre-packaged boxes or servings of religious or ceremonial foods including communion, are used instead of shared portions from communal containers;
 - (j) where applicable, persons bring their own personal prayer rugs, coverings or fabric to place over the carpet for daily prayers;
 - (k) any person who has any flu-like symptoms or respiratory symptoms does not attend services or gatherings;
 - (l) a room or area is identified where a person could be isolated if he or she becomes ill or begins to develop flu-like symptoms or respiratory symptoms and ensure that the Ministry of Health is informed of any person who has those symptoms;
 - (m) where applicable, when attendees enter a place of worship barefoot, shoes and sandals are placed separately and in bags.
- (3) Subparagraph (1) does not prohibit any religious worship by virtual or electronic means.

12. Requirement to wear a mask

- (1) No person shall, without reasonable excuse, be without a face mask fitted to cover the nose, mouth and chin of the person when-
 - (a) the person is in public; or
 - (b) the person is travelling in a vehicle, vessel or aircraft.
- (2) Where the person under this paragraph is a child accompanied by an adult who has responsibility for the child, the adult shall ensure that the child has and wears a face mask as required by this paragraph.
- (3) Subparagraphs (1) and (2) do not apply-
 - (a) to a child who is under the age of eight;
 - (b) where the person is in the vehicle, vessel or aircraft alone;
 - (c) where a person is allocated a cabin, berth or other similar accommodation, at any time when the person is in that accommodation alone.
- (4) For the purposes of subparagraph (1), the circumstances in which a person has a reasonable excuse include where-
 - (a) the person cannot put on, wear or remove a face mask -
 - (i) because of any physical or mental illness or impairment;
 - (ii) because of a disability (within the meaning of the Persons with Disabilities Act, Cap. 36:05); or
 - (iii) without severe distress;
 - (b) the person is travelling with, or providing assistance to another person and that other person relies on lip reading to communicate with the first person;
 - (c) the person removes their face mask to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury to the person or others;
 - (d) the person is travelling to avoid injury, or to escape a risk of harm, and does not have a face mask with the person;
 - (e) if it is reasonably necessary for the person to eat or drink, the person removes the face mask to eat or drink;
 - (f) the person has to remove the face mask to take medication;
 - (g) the person needs to remove the face mask temporarily to comply with a request by a relevant person or another person acting in the course of their duties;
 - (h) a request is made of the person to remove the face mask temporarily for security and identification purposes if necessary for the purpose of receiving services.

- (5) Any person who contravenes this paragraph commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty provided for under section 152 of the Public Health Ordinance.

13. Domestic and International Travel

- (1) Any person who provides transport within Guyana whether by land, water or air may carry the number of passengers which the motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft is licenced to carry and shall comply with the measures under paragraph 12.
- (2) A motor vehicle, vessel or aircraft shall not be used for a purpose other than a purpose related to a service under paragraphs 5 and 6.
- (3) Medical evacuation flights shall be allowed with only the patient, one health official and, where necessary, one family member.
- (4) The Lethem Crossing shall be closed except on Thursdays and only to facilitate the crossing of essential goods and supplies.
- (5) The Moleson Creek Crossing shall be open three days per week and the Ministry of Public Works shall determine the days and times when the Crossing shall be open.
- (6) There shall be no flights to and from Brazil.
- (7) All airline operators and passengers shall comply with any port health measures issued by the Ministry of Health or any measures issued by the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority.

14. Testing for the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- (1) Testing for Coronavirus shall only be conducted by the National Public Health Reference Laboratory or any other laboratory issued a licence by the Minister of Health under section 7 of the Health Facilities Licensing Act, Cap. 33:03.
- (2) Where any laboratory referred to in subparagraph (1) tests any person for Coronavirus and the result of the test is positive, the laboratory shall immediately report and forward the name and address of the person and the result of the test to the Coordinator of the Health Emergency Operations Centre.

- (3) Any person who has tested positive for Coronavirus or identified for quarantine shall-
- (a) comply with all applicable directions given and requirements imposed by the Health Emergency Operations Centre including home isolation or quarantine or placement in an isolation or quarantine facility;
 - (b) provide information to the Health Emergency Operations Centre about any individual with whom the person may have had contact with, at least fourteen days before testing positive for Coronavirus; and
 - (c) not knowingly expose themselves, without proper and necessary precautions against spreading the Coronavirus, in any public place or to any person.
- (4) Every laboratory permitted to do testing pursuant to this paragraph shall comply with any testing protocol issued by the Ministry of Health.
- (5) Any person who contravenes this paragraph or aids, abets or facilitates a person in contravening this paragraph, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty provided for under section 152 of the Public Health Ordinance.

15. Hotline Calls to be Justifiable

A person shall not call a COVID-19 hotline number without a justifiable reason.

16. Re-opening of Schools

- (1) Schools may be re-opened by the Ministry of Education subject to compliance with the measures under this Notice and the Ministry of Education may issue guidelines or give any instruction to minimize the risks of Coronavirus transmission in schools.
- (2) All schools, in addition to complying with the measures under this Notice, shall comply with any guidelines issued or instruction given by the Ministry of Education in accordance with subparagraph (1).

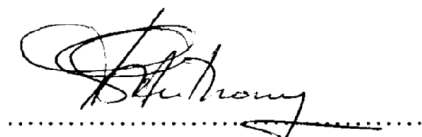
17. Offence

Any person who fails to comply with any of these measures commits an offence under section 152 of the Public Health Ordinance and is liable on summary conviction to the penalty provided under that section.

18. Measures taken by certain Ministers

All other measures taken under any law or administratively by the Ministers responsible for Education, Civil Aviation, Maritime, Immigration, Local Government, Amerindian Affairs and Finance shall remain effective and in full force.

Made this 26th day of February, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Anthony', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Dr. the Hon. Frank Anthony, M.P.
Minister of Health