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Wedding industry left at altar without Covid-19 SOP

By [Khairah N. Karim](#) - May 18, 2020 @ 10:01am

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Five wedding associations, on behalf of the wedding industry, in particular micro-entrepreneurs, have written a letter to the Economic Affairs Ministry highlighting the plight faced by the wedding industry. - Pic source: Freepik.

KUALA LUMPUR: Wedding associations are calling for the government to determine and announce its position on mass gatherings as well as the standard operating procedures (SOP) that come with it.

Five wedding associations, on behalf of the wedding industry, in particular micro-entrepreneurs, have written a letter to the Economic Affairs Ministry highlighting the plight faced by the wedding industry.

The associations are asking for the government to provide guidelines and protocols to allow them to restart operations.

The association comprises the Association of Wedding Professionals (AWP), Wedding Professionals Association of Malaysia, Penang Wedding Professionals Association, Malay Wedding and Portrait Photographers Malaysia and Malaysian Gifts and Premium Association, which provide wedding services and venues.

The association said that for the industry to survive, steps needed to be taken to encourage and ensure that couples continued to plan their weddings after the Movement Control Order (MCO).

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"With the implementation of the MCO, the wedding industry has ground to a halt as weddings cannot take place. It is also alarming to note that couples are not planning for weddings in the future due to the uncertainty of when MCO will be lifted and of what protocols the government will issue in relation to mass gatherings post-MCO."

It added that couples would likely plan their weddings only if the government announced its position on mass gatherings and if they were allowed, how many people could attend and the SOP for the industry.

AWP president Leticia Hsu said the letter, which it sent on April 26 and addressed to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economic Affairs) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, has yet to be met with a response.

Hsu, who owns wedding planning company Elysium Weddings, said that while the tourism and hospitality industry had been the focus due to how badly it had been affected by Covid-19, only a few had discussed the wedding industry.

"When mass gatherings came to a halt, so did our business."

She added that while wedding planners were trying to plan virtual weddings, it may or might not be something that Malaysian couples were ready for.

"We had even planned a virtual wedding fair in June."

Hsu, who is vice-president of the Federation of Asia & Pacific Bridal Associations and author of *The Malaysian Wedding Handbook* series, said that without guidelines for weddings and an indeterminate timeline for when the pandemic would end, the industry's future looked bleak.

For Cindy Chang, the pandemic has had a negative impact on her bridal styling business.

Chang, who is AWP vice-president, said couples were afraid to book her company's services for themselves and family members since they have no clue when they could have the wedding.

"Our friends in the industry have taken to Instagram to remind couples that they should continue to plan for their weddings. We also offered great deals to motivate them.

"But as long as the government is not offering any guideline, we (the industry) are bleeding to death."