

COVID-19 Update – United Arab Emirates

Thursday March 26, 2020

| Category | Recent Developments |
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| Economic Measures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UAE cabinet has approved a temporary reduction in the water and electricity bill of shopping malls, commercial shops, hotels, hotel apartments and factories by 20 percent for 3 months starting in April. (Link) HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, has directed a 10% reduction on all Sharjah electricity and water bills for three months. (Link) The Abu Dhabi Government has unveiled 17 financial initiatives in cooperation with Abu Dhabi's local banks to reduce finance-related costs, facilitate ease of access to financing and maintain the resilience of the Abu Dhabi economy. (Link) RAKBANK announced further plans to provide financial relief to individuals, small to medium enterprises, and corporates impacted by the economic consequences of COVID-19. For example, individuals financially impacted by COVID-19 will be able to defer auto and personal loan payments without penalty for up to three months. Businesses are encouraged to contact the bank to discuss options for financial relief. (Link) The UAE has launched the Fund of the United Arab Emirates: Homeland of Humanity, in an effort to unify national efforts to combat the coronavirus. (Link) Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank has pledged to donate AED 25 million to the Ma'an 'Together We Are Good' programme that is aimed at encouraging financial and in-kind contributions from individuals and companies to support the community during the corona virus outbreak. (Link) |
| Health & Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On March 25, 85 new cases of COVID-19 have been reported by the Ministry of Health and Prevention bringing the total to 333 cases. (Link) The Ministry of Health Prevention and the Ministry of Interior have announced the implementation of a 'National Disinfection Programme', which will aim to completely sterilize all public utilities and public transportation over this weekend. (Link) 64 individuals have been referred to the Public Prosecution office for violating their legally mandated 14-day home quarantines. (Link) "Shield Hand Sanitizing Gel" has been placed on a recall list and the Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology has warned against its use due to the high levels of methanol, a substance dangerous to public health. (Link) Dubai police have begun using drones to reinforce COVID-19 measures, such as the prohibition on public gatherings. (Link) One Expo 2020 staff member has been infected with the coronavirus. The event organizers are now taking precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. (Link) |
| Travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Etihad Airways announced that it has suspended all flights from or to Abu Dhabi for an initial period of two weeks. (Link) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship have stated that visitors who cannot leave the UAE due to the recent travel restrictions will be granted legal status to remain in the UAE. Additional details are soon to be announced. (Link) • UAE will be arranging flights home for UAE citizens who are in the United States and wish to return to the UAE. (Link) |
| Daily Life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft team applications, Zoom and Blackboard applications now work in the UAE. The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority has lifted restrictions on these applications in an effort to support distance learning and working from home arrangements. (Link) • The Ministry of Health and Prevention and the National Emergency and Crisis and Disasters Management Authority stated that food retail outlets such as cooperative societies, grocery stores, supermarkets and pharmacies are permitted to remain open but must not exceed 30 percent of their total occupancy. (Link) • Abu Dhabi Media temporarily suspends print publications and instead issues digital versions. This decision is in line with the National Media Council decision to halt the circulation of newspapers and print magazines until further notice. (Link) • The Ministry of Justice has announced that the law on combating communicable diseases will now apply to COVID-19. Failure to report contact with an infected person or seeking medical treatment when suspecting an infection could result in fines or jail time or both. (Link) • All educational institutions in the UAE have now been prohibited from exchanging any type of paper materials with their students. Institutions are being urged to ensure the delivery of education only through distance learning. (Link) • The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department has been directed by HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to halt all rental property eviction cases and any enforcement of civil and commercial judgements for a period of two months. Executive procedures such as blocking of bank accounts and the seizure of assets have also been halted for two months. (Link) • The Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be suspending its Customer Happiness Centre operations starting today (March 26) until further notice. (Link) • Dubai has announced that all shops, except for grocery stores and pharmacies, must close for a period of two weeks starting yesterday (March 25). (Link) • Dubai government entities to work 100 percent remotely as of Sunday, March 29, 2020. (Link) |