

COVID-19 Update – United Arab Emirates

Wednesday April 01, 2020

Category	Recent Developments
Economic Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Dubai International Financial Center (DIFC) will introduce a series of fiscal easing initiatives over the next three months to help protect the businesses operating within the DIFC. (Link)• Emirates Airlines will receive a cash injection from the Government of Dubai as a show of full support. (Link)• Ajman’s government has announced a stimulus package to support Ajman’s local community and business sector. (Link)• President HH Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has approved a federal law that will regulate the strategic stock of food commodities in the country. The new law is aimed at organizing food supplies in the event of a crises, emergencies or disasters and achieving food sustainability. (Link)• Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, including Al Hilal Bank announced its commitment to ensure the continuity of employment at the bank by pledging that no employee will be made redundant during 2020. (Link)• Lootah BCGas, a gas utility provider, has announced an AED 15 million coronavirus support program. The program aims to support gas utility customers in the UAE who are facing challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic. (Link)
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On March 31, the UAE saw 53 new cases of the coronavirus, bringing the total to 664 total confirmed cases. (Link)• Group 42, a leading technology company based in Abu Dhabi, has launched a new massive laboratory built to address the need for detection and diagnosis of the coronavirus. The lab is capable of conducting tens of thousands of tests per day and is the first of its scale outside of China. (Link)• Dubai Corporation for Ambulance Services has launched its first ‘Self Sanitization Walk’ to protect paramedics and other health care professionals from the risk of various kinds of infection. As health professionals walk through the new device, it will rid their clothes of any lingering viruses and bacteria. (Link)• Expo 2020 organizers and steering committee are exploring the option of delaying the opening of Expo 2020 by one year. (Link)• The UAE cabinet has approved new precautionary measures to contain the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The Cabinet has approved the extension of residence permits expiring on March 1, waived the related administrative fines, and agreed to a scheme to allow digital transactions management solutions for notary publics. (Link)• Dubai has established a disease control center. The center will be chaired by Dr. Amer Ahmed Al Sharif and includes representatives from the Ministry of Health and Prevention and other relevant authorities. The center’s mandate will be to prepare and implement strategic plans to combat pandemics, including the coronavirus. (Link)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority held a joint meeting with the Emirates Scientists Council to discuss ways of employing scientific research to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (Link) • Over the next 10 days, coronavirus drive-up test centers will be opening across the UAE, including in Dubai Sharjah (which will serve Ajman and Umm al Qaiwain), Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Al Ain and Al Dhafra. (Link) • A coronavirus drive-up testing center is now open in Sheikh Zayed Sports City. The testing center operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every weekday and provides services to about 600 people every day. The center can complete a test within 5 minutes and sends results through SMS or the SEHA application. (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) • UAE has evacuated a total of 1,743 UAE citizens currently abroad with 25 more evacuations currently underway. (Link)
Daily Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UAE has suspended the requirement to obtain a move permit in order to leave one's home between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the National Sterilization Program. (Link) • A UAE school group, Al Najah Education, has announced a 20 percent reduction to its fees. (Link) • The Ministry of Community Development has launched four interactive channels under the name "Taaluf" to provide families with family counselling for free to all UAE community members. The initiatives have been launched primarily to mitigate the psychological and mental health impacts the coronavirus. (Link) • The Dubai Roads and Transport Authority has asked transport and bus rental companies to suspend the use of minibuses until further notice. (Link) • Additional applications have been approved for use in the UAE by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority. These applications include Google Hangouts Meet, Cisco WebEx, Avaya Spaces, BlueJeans and Slack. (Link) • Schools in the UAE, including public, private and higher learning institutions will continue distance studies until the end of the 2019-2020 academic year. (Link) • Increased movement restrictions in Al Ras area of Dubai have been announced by Dubai's Supreme Committee of Crisis and Disaster Management. Individuals in the Al Ras area are discouraged from leaving their homes during the day. The restrictions will be in place for two weeks beginning March 31. (Link) • Paid and multi-story parking in Dubai will be free for two weeks starting March 31. (Link) • The UAE ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation have temporarily closed their Customer Happiness Centers until further notice. (Link)