

## MMA: Civil servants must lead by example on public health

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*Pic courtesy Malaysian Medical Association (MMA)*

**PETALING JAYA:** The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has strongly condemned a recent reported incident involving a Selangor civil servant who was photographed smoking in an official state government vehicle, emphasising that public officials must set the standard for integrity and public health.

The incident, which went viral on social media, has prompted swift action from

Selangor authorities who issued a show-cause letter to the officer involved.

However, MMA President Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo (*pic*) stressed that such enforcement must be consistent across all levels of government.

"Civil servants and leaders must set the standard. Their behaviour reflects the institutions they serve," Dr Thirunavukarasu said in a press statement issued today.

"When those tasked with upholding the law disregard it, it undermines public trust and confidence in governance."

The MMA highlighted that smoking in vehicles, regardless of whether windows are open or closed, can still expose others to second-hand smoke and normalises unhealthy behaviour that contradicts the government's own health policies.

The medical association pointed out that the incident goes beyond mere rule-breaking, as it sets a poor example for public health initiatives.

With Malaysia working towards reducing smoking prevalence to 15% by the end of 2025 under the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024, civil servants should be leading by example.

"Civil servants must be role models in promoting healthy behaviours, not only through policy but through personal example," the statement emphasised.

While commending the Selangor government's swift response in issuing a

show-cause letter, the MMA called for consistent enforcement of the Public Officers (Conduct and Discipline) Regulations 1993 across all government levels.

The association stressed that public office is a position of trust where "integrity, accountability, and responsibility are non-negotiable."

Dr Thirunavukarasu concluded by emphasising that leadership extends beyond authority.

"Every action matters. Leadership is not just about authority, it is about setting the right example for the rakyat to follow."

The incident serves as a reminder of the high standards expected from public servants, particularly in light of ongoing public health campaigns and the government's commitment to creating smoke-free environments.

Under current Malaysian tobacco control laws, smoking is prohibited in various public spaces, with violations carrying fines of up to RM5,000. The enforcement of these regulations is particularly crucial as the government works towards achieving its smoking reduction targets.