

Updated on 24 March 2020

## **ADVISORY ON COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019) FOR BUSINESSES**

1. The Government is taking further precautionary measures to reduce the risk of importation of COVID-19 into Singapore. We advise all businesses to take note of these additional measures which are in the latest advisories published by the [Ministry of Health \(MOH\)](#) and the [Ministry of Manpower \(MOM\)](#).

### **Business Continuity Plans<sup>1</sup>**

2. All workplaces should update their business continuity plans (BCP), and prepare for widespread community transmission. As the situation is evolving rapidly around the world, companies are encouraged to have their BCP in place. This includes making plans, where feasible, to:
  - Make arrangements so that workers do not have to travel in and out of Singapore;
  - Secure temporary accommodation in Singapore for workers who may not normally reside here (e.g. those that commute frequently in and out of Singapore). More information can be found in [MOM's press release](#).
  - Implement alternatives to travel out of Singapore, such as video-conferencing.
3. Enterprise Singapore (ESG), supported by the Singapore Business Federation, has enhanced the [Business Continuity Guide](#) for enterprises to develop your plans to deal with COVID-19. This guide is also available [on ESG's website](#).

### **Travel Advisory<sup>2,3</sup>**

4. Employers should review work-related travel plans and defer all travel abroad, with immediate effect. We encourage employers to explore alternative ways of business communications.
5. Employers should remind employees to defer all travel plans to all countries. You should obtain a travel declaration from your employees.
6. If an employee still proceeds to travel overseas, you may require the employee to use his/her own annual leave entitlements to cover the duration of the mandatory Stay-Home Notice (SHN), or any extended period of travel in the destination country. If the

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<sup>1</sup> ["General Advisory for Workplace Measures in Response to DORSCON Orange Situation in Singapore"](#), Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 7 February 2020

<sup>2</sup> ["Updates on COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 4 March 2020

<sup>3</sup> ["Additional Measures for Travellers to Prevent Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 18 March 2020

employee does not have sufficient annual leave entitlements, you may allow the employee to consume advance leave or put the employee on no-pay leave.

7. Any Singapore resident or Long Term Pass holder who leaves Singapore from 27 March 2020, in disregard of the prevailing travel advisories, will be charged at unsubsidised rates for their inpatient stay at public hospitals, if they are admitted for suspected COVID-19 and have onset of symptoms within 14 days of returning to Singapore. Singapore residents will also not be able to claim from MediShield Life or Integrated Shield Plans for these treatments at public and private hospitals<sup>4</sup>.
8. Any work pass holder or his/her dependant who leaves Singapore from 27 March 2020 will be deprioritised for entry approval and could see significant delays before they are allowed to return to Singapore if they persist in travelling abroad and return infected<sup>5</sup>.

**Travel Restrictions**<sup>6,7,8</sup>

9. The summary list of countries/regions and border control measures is as follows:

<b>Travel History in Countries/Regions</b>	<b>For Singapore Residents and Long-Term Pass Holders</b>	<b>For Short-Term Visitors</b>
Hubei province (China)	14-day quarantine	Not allowed entry or transit
All countries/regions  <i>With effect from 23 March 2020, 2359 hours</i>	14-day SHN MOM will only allow the entry/return of work pass holders (and their dependents) who are providing essential services such as healthcare and transport.  Details of how Malaysians with Singapore work permits can enter Singapore to work are being worked out under the	Not allowed entry or transit

<sup>4</sup> ["Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 24 March 2020

<sup>5</sup> ["Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 24 March 2020

<sup>6</sup> ["Updates on COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 4 March 2020

<sup>7</sup> ["Advisories on COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 4 March 2020

<sup>8</sup> ["Additional Border Control Measures to Reduce Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 22 March 2020

	Singapore-Malaysia Committee on COVID-19.	
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10. From 27 March 2020, 0900 hours, all travellers arriving in Singapore, including residents (Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents) and Long-Term Pass holders (Student's Pass, Dependent's Pass, Work Pass and Long-Term Visit Pass Holders), must submit a health declaration before proceeding with immigration clearance<sup>9</sup>. They will have to do so via the [SG Arrival Card \(SGAC\) e-Service](#). The health declaration will be made available before 27 March 2020 as part of the SGAC e-Service, so that travellers who are due to arrive in Singapore after 27 March, 0900 hours, can complete it in advance of their arrival.
11. All travellers can submit their health declaration up to three days prior to arrival in Singapore. They must re-submit their health declaration if there are changes to their health condition or travel history before arriving in Singapore.

#### **Visas and Work Passes**<sup>10,11,12</sup>

12. The issuance of all forms of new visas and previously issued visas to those with PRC passports and Iranian passports have been suspended. The visa-free transit facility for those with PRC passports has also been suspended with immediate effect.
13. From 23 March 2020, 2359 hours, all short-term visitors (from anywhere in the world) will not be allowed to enter or transit through Singapore.
14. The MOM will only allow the entry/return of work pass holders, including their dependents, for those providing essential services, such as in healthcare and transport.
15. Such workers planning to enter/return to Singapore from any country are to obtain MOM's approval before commencing their journey. The entry approval requirement applies to:
- Existing work pass holders currently out of Singapore; and
  - In-Principle Approval holders who have yet to enter Singapore.

<sup>9</sup> ["All Travellers Arriving In Singapore From 27 March 2020, 0900 Hours, Must Submit Health Declaration Via The SG Arrival Card E-Service"](#), Immigration & Checkpoints Authority, Extracted on 23 March 2020

<sup>10</sup> ["Extension of Precautionary Measures to Minimise Risk of Community Spread in Singapore"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 31 January 2020

<sup>11</sup> ["Additional Precautionary Measures in Response to Escalating Global Situation"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 4 March 2020

<sup>12</sup> ["Additional Border Control Measures to Reduce Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 22 March 2020

16. When applying for entry approval, you must:

- Declare that you have arranged for suitable premises to house affected employees as they will be placed on a mandatory 14-day SHN upon their arrival in Singapore.
- [Request for MOM's approval](#) before your employees can enter Singapore. You will need to send the MOM approval letter to the employee, who will need to show it to airline staff upon check-in and at the ICA checkpoint upon arrival in Singapore.

17. Please note the following:

- If your employees wish to bring their dependents who are not employed in Singapore, please advise them to seek [prior approval from MOM](#).
- Use [MOM's entry approval calculator](#) to plan when to submit your request.

<b>For new or existing</b>	<b>Who needs to request for approval?</b>	<b>Who is responsible to ensure SHN is observed?</b>
Work pass holders, including those with Letter of Consent	Employer	Employer and work pass holder
Dependent's Pass or Long-Term Visit Pass holders who are not employed i.e. not issued a work pass, including Letter of Consent	Local sponsor i.e. employer of Employment Pass or S Pass holder	Holders of Employment Pass, S Pass, Dependant's Pass or Long-Term Visit Pass

### **Additional Measures for Returning Employees**<sup>13,14</sup>

18. As a precautionary measure, MOM is encouraging all companies to impose Leave of Absence (LOA) for all employees returning to Singapore between 14 March 2020 and 20 March 2020 if these employees have not been issued with SHN<sup>15</sup>. You may find more details [here](#).

19. Those entering Singapore and exhibiting fever and/or other symptoms of respiratory illness are required to undergo a COVID-19 swab test at the checkpoint, regardless

<sup>13</sup> "[MOM Entry Approval and Stay-Home-Notices Now Covers All New and Existing Work Pass Holders](#)", Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 18 March 2020

<sup>14</sup> "[Additional Measures for Travellers to Prevent Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases](#)", Ministry of Health, Extracted on 18 March 2020

<sup>15</sup> "[Companies Encouraged to Impose Leave of Absence for Employees Returning Between 14 And 20 March 2020](#)", Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 20 March 2020

of travel history. Those who meet the clinical suspect case definition will be conveyed to the hospital for follow-up. Please refer to [this link on MOH's website](#) for more details.

20. MOM is providing support for those affected by SHN requirements due to COVID-19. Under the [LOA/SHN Support Programme](#), eligible employers will be able to apply for \$100 per affected worker for the required duration of SHN or company-imposed LOA. Please refer to [this link](#) for full details on the eligibility criteria and application process.
21. Employees who are served a Quarantine Order will be deemed to be on paid sick leave. The period of absence from work will be treated as paid hospitalisation leave, as part of the employees' hospitalisation leave eligibility under their employment contracts, collective agreements or as per the Employment Act.
22. MOH is providing support to those affected by the Quarantine Order due to COVID-19. Please refer to [this link on the MOH website](#) for details on the eligibility criteria of the Quarantine Order Allowance (QOA) Scheme.
23. The Government is implementing [enhanced precautions for UK/US returnees](#)<sup>16</sup>. The UK and US account for the largest share of imported cases by far. More residents are expected to return from these countries over the coming weeks.
24. Employees who have completed 14 days of quarantine, SHN, and who remain well, can return to work. It is not necessary for them to undergo additional tests to detect the presence of the COVID-19 virus. All doctors/clinics **will not** issue any letters or memos to certify a person to be free from COVID-19 infection.

### **Precautionary Measures for General Employees**<sup>17,18</sup>

25. Please remind all employees who have returned to Singapore from overseas (regardless of location) to monitor their health closely and exercise appropriate precautions at all times. They should see a doctor promptly if they are unwell, and inform their doctor of their travel history. Should they have fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose, fever, sore throat, breathlessness), they should wear a mask and call a clinic ahead of the visit.
26. We advise you to pay special attention to vulnerable employees (e.g. older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions) in planning your operations or work schedules. You should reduce exposure of such employees to frontline work, where possible.

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<sup>16</sup> "[Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19](#)", Ministry of Health, Extracted on 24 March 2020

<sup>17</sup> "[Updates on COVID-19](#)", Ministry of Health, Extracted on 28 January 2020

<sup>18</sup> "[Additional Precautionary Measures to Prevent Further Importation and Spread of COVID-19 Cases](#)", Ministry of Health, Extracted on 13 March 2020

27. Ensure your employees conduct regular temperature-taking and check whether they have respiratory symptoms such as cough and runny nose. Temperature should be taken at least twice daily, and anyone with a fever or is unwell should leave the office immediately to see a doctor. In particular, they should avoid coming into close and sustained proximity with others.<sup>19</sup> For more details, please refer to [this advisory](#).
28. Should you become aware that someone at your workplace is a confirmed or suspect case of COVID-19, you are advised to adopt [these measures set out by MOM](#).
29. You should also carry out a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of that section of the workplace premises exposed to confirmed case(s). Please refer to the National Environment Agency's (NEA) [guidelines](#) for more details.

### **Precautionary Measures for Specific Sectors**

30. The MOH has compiled a list of advisories for companies and employees in specific sectors. Please refer to the list [here](#).

### **Safe Distancing Measures**<sup>20,21, 22</sup>

31. With effect from 26 March 2020, 2359 hours, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce will be [enforcing stricter measures to limit gatherings outside of work and school](#) to 10 persons or fewer and ensure that physical distancing of at least one metre can be achieved in most settings where interactions are non-transient. These measures are expected to be in place until 30 April 2020 but may be extended if the situation does not improve.

### **Events & Gatherings**

32. All events and mass gatherings (e.g. conferences, exhibitions, festivals, concerts, sporting events, trade fairs) must be deferred or cancelled, regardless of size. This is a tightening of the previous requirement where all events and gatherings were to be limited to fewer than 250 participants.
33. Singaporeans are advised to avoid holding and participating in social events and gatherings involving more than 10 persons at any one time. More details can be found [here](#).

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<sup>19</sup> ["Risk Assessment Raised to DORSCON Orange"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 7 February 2020

<sup>20</sup> ["Additional Precautionary Measures to Prevent Further Importation and Spread of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 13 March 2020

<sup>21</sup> ["Stricter Safe Distancing Measures to Prevent Further Spread of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 20 March 2020

<sup>22</sup> ["Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 24 March 2020

## Workplaces

34. We strongly advise you to put in place measures to reduce close physical interactions among employees.<sup>23</sup> Tele-conferencing should be used in place of physical meetings wherever possible. Where employees can perform their work by telecommuting from home, you must ensure that they do so.
35. For employees undertaking job roles or functions where tele-commuting is not feasible, employers should take the following precautions:
- Staggered working hours
  - Reduce duration and proximity of physical interactions
  - Defer non-critical events and scale down critical work events
  - For more details, please refer to [this link on MOH](#)

## Business Establishments<sup>24</sup>

36. The Government will close all bars and entertainment venues such as night clubs, discos, cinemas, theatres, and karaoke outlets, where there is a high risk of transmission due to sustained close contact over a period of time.
37. [Existing measures for food & beverage and retail establishments](#) continue to apply. Other activities such as live music or karaoke which are likely to cause patrons to congregate will have to cease. Food and beverage outlets must set up their spaces (arrangement of tables and seating) to ensure separation of at least one metre between tables or different groups of diners.
- Related diners (e.g. family members, couples) can be seated together at one table, but the tables must be spaced out.
  - Groups of diners should also be limited to 10 persons or fewer.
38. Other public venues such as retail malls, museums and attractions, where contact is more transient, may remain open remain open. However, operators must ensure the following:
- Reduce operating capacity within the venue at any one time, so that the venue does not have more than one person per 16 square metres of usable space. This is to significantly reduce the density of crowds in these venues, especially during peak periods.
  - Groups must not exceed 10 persons. Shows within attractions (indoor and outdoor), group tours at the museums, and open atrium sales events (except for supermarket retailers where atrium sales may be used to disperse crowds from their stores) will be suspended.

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<sup>23</sup> ["Stricter Safe Distancing Measures to Prevent Further Spread of COVID-19 Cases"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 20 March 2020

<sup>24</sup> ["Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19"](#), Ministry of Health, Extracted on 24 March 2020

- Disperse congregations and provide an environment that allows at least one metre physical spacing between patrons. These include queues and waiting areas. Operators are encouraged to offer services by appointment or through digital services where possible, to minimise queues. Crowds should be quickly dispersed.

39. Retail malls and attractions that are unable to adhere to these requirements must be closed. Additional penalties may be imposed on those which are found to have been a place of transmission of COVID-19, if the venues are found not to have adhered to these requirements.

### **Regulations Under the Infectious Disease Act**

40. The MOH will be promulgating Regulations under the Infectious Diseases Act to give legal force to the safe distancing measures, as well as to provide enhanced penalties for breaches of the SHN. The penalty for an offence under the Regulations, including any SHN breach, would be a fine of less than \$10,000 or imprisonment of less than six months or both. In addition, existing levers under the Infectious Diseases Act, including the temporary suspension of operations, may be used against persons and operators found to be non-compliant with the Regulations.

41. Government agencies will also step up enforcement efforts against persons on SHN, using a combination of mobile applications, phone surveillance and house visits. The number of officers conducting such checks will be increased substantially to tighten enforcement efforts. Detailed checks will also be carried out to verify the declared addresses of returning residents on the SHN forms. To provide expeditious support to persons on SHN, a centralised call centre will be set up from 26 March 2020 to handle all SHN-related queries.

### **Collective Effort to Keep Singapore Clean<sup>25,26</sup>**

42. We encourage your business to commit and adhere to sector-specific sanitation and hygiene checklists under the “SG Clean” certification programme. Businesses that meet the necessary requirements can qualify for an “SG Clean” quality mark to be displayed at their premises. These efforts are part of the “SG Clean” campaign led by the NEA, together with multiple agencies including ESG, to rally businesses to commit to upholding good hygiene practices. You may find more information on “SG Clean” [here](#).

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<sup>25</sup> [“Press Release: “SG Clean” Campaign Launched to Rally Public and Businesses to Work Together to Keep Singapore Clean”](#), National Environment Agency, Extracted on 16 February 2020

<sup>26</sup> [“SG Clean Campaign Launched to Rally Public and Businesses to Work Together to Keep Singapore Clean”](#), National Environment Agency, Extracted on 16 February 2020

## **Support for Businesses**

43. The Government has introduced [measures](#) at Budget 2020 to help companies and workers weather near-term uncertainties. These include:

- A Stabilisation and Support Package amounting to \$4 billion to support firms by defraying their wage costs and addressing short-term cash flow needs;
- Additional support for sectors directly affected by COVID-19 i.e. tourism, aviation, retail, food services and point-to-point transport services.<sup>27</sup>

44. In view of the evolving Covid-19 situation, the MOM will introduce [further measures to help businesses cope during this period](#)<sup>28</sup>. MOM will provide:

- A three-month extension of the levy payment timeline to small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) with immediate effect, for more flexibility in their cash-flow management;
- Levy waiver for up to 90 days with immediate effect for foreign workers on overseas leave; and
- Man-Year Entitlement (MYE) refund for construction firms affected by disruptions arising from COVID-19, with effect from 1 April 2020.

45. In addition, firms with excess manpower are urged to prioritise locals to be retained in their jobs. These firms should also give consent for their existing foreign workers to be transferred to other employers facing manpower shortages.

46. As businesses seek to adjust to the changing operating environment, we strongly encourage employers to take a long-term view of their manpower needs. When managing excess manpower, retrenchment should always be the last resort, after other options have been considered and found to be unworkable<sup>29</sup>. For appropriate measures to manage excess manpower, you may refer to the [Tripartite Advisory on Managing Excess Manpower and Responsible Retrenchment](#).

47. If you have 10 or more employees and have implemented any cost-saving measures that affects your employees' monthly salaries (including bonuses and increments) during this period, you are required to notify MOM through this [online form](#) – within 1 week after implementation. This temporary requirement is in place to encourage responsible implementation of such measures, prevent downstream salary disputes, and allow MOM to monitor the scope and scale of such measures. For more details, please refer to [the MOM website](#).

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<sup>27</sup> "[Budget 2020 Speech: Responding to Challenges in a New Decade](#)", Singapore Budget 2020, Extracted on 19 February 2020

<sup>28</sup> "[Further Measures to Help Companies Cope with COVID-19 Situation](#)", Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 24 March 2020

<sup>29</sup> "[Tripartite Partners Update Advisory on Managing Excess Manpower and Responsible Retrenchment in View of COVID-19](#)", Ministry of Manpower, Extracted on 12 March 2020

48. If you have workers affected by Malaysia's Movement Control Order, MOM will provide temporary housing support to help you to defray the additional costs of housing affected workers in short term housing. Eligible employers can apply for temporary housing support of \$50 per affected worker per night, capped at 14 nights to cover the extra housing costs incurred. For more details, please refer to [this advisory](#). Affected workers refer to workers who:

- Are Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents or Work Pass holders who are Malaysian Citizens;
- Reside in Malaysia and commute to Singapore; and
- Are housed in Singapore in hotels, dormitories or rented accommodation between 18 March and 31 March 2020.

49. The Government will continue to work together with tripartite partners to restructure our economy, build new enterprise capabilities, and upskill our workers for the future.

### **Latest Updates**

50. All companies and employees should closely monitor COVID-19-related developments and follow travel and health advisories. Please refer to the [MOH website](#) for the latest update on the COVID-19 situation. You can also refer to the [Ministry of Trade and Industry \(MTI\)'s website](#) for more business-related information pertaining to COVID-19.

**ANNEX A**

**QR Codes to Relevant Websites**

<p><b>Enterprise Singapore</b> – Advisory on the COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) for Businesses</p>	
<p><b>Enterprise Singapore</b> – Safe Distancing Measures at Retail and F&amp;B Establishments (20 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Singapore Government</b> – SG Clean Website</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Updates on COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) Local Situation</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Advisories for Various Sectors</p>	

<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Tighter measures to Minimise Further Spread of COVID-19 (24 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Additional Border Control Measures to Reduce Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases (22 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Stricter Safe Distancing Measures to Prevent Further Spread of COVID-19 Cases (20 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Additional Measures for Travellers to Reduce Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases (18 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Additional Precautionary Measures to Prevent Further Importation of COVID-19 Cases (15 March 2020)</p>	

<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Additional Precautionary Measures to Prevent Further Importation and Spread of COVID-19 Cases (13 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Additional Precautionary Measures in Response to Escalating Situation Global Situation (3 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Health</b> – Implementation of New Stay-Home Notice (17 February 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – Further Measures to Help Companies Cope with COVID-19 Situation (24 Mar 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – Companies Encouraged to Impose Leave of Absence for Employees Returning Between 14 And 20 March 2020 (20 March 2020)</p>	

<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – MOM Entry Approval and Stay-Home Notices Now Covers All New and Existing Work Pass Holders (18 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – MOM Entry Approval and Stay-Home Notices Extended to ASEAN Countries, Japan, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (15 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – Advisory on social distancing measures at the workplace (13 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – Tripartite Partners Update Advisory on Managing Excess Manpower and Responsible Retrenchment in View of COVID-19 (11 March 2020)</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Manpower</b> – General Advisory for Employers if a Confirmed or Suspect Case of COVID-19 is Detected at the Workplace (18 February 2020)</p>	

<p><b>Ministry of Trade and Industry</b> – Updates on COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019)</p>	
<p><b>National Environment Agency</b> – Interim Guidelines for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection of Areas Exposed to Confirmed Case(s) of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) in Non-Healthcare Commercial Premises</p>	
<p><b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b> – Where Are You Travelling to?</p>	
<p><b>Immigration &amp; Checkpoints Authority</b> – All Travellers Arriving In Singapore From 27 March 2020, 0900 Hours, Must Submit Health Declaration Via The SG Arrival Card E-Service</p>	