

## NOTE February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020

**As an acknowledged leader in the management of the COVID-19 outbreak, Singapore has continued to respond in an informed and strategic way to the evolving situation. SACEOS – The Singapore Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers – has continuously supported local and regional industry by summarizing and interpreting this information as part of their industry support program. Their latest document (as related below) provides highly useful insights and guidance for the industry as a whole.**

### BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, and called upon governments around the world to do more to combat the virus. The WHO cited Singapore as a country that has already taken proactive measures to contain the virus. Still, as the co-chairs of the Multi-Ministry Taskforce said on Tuesday, and as the Prime Minister warned in a national broadcast yesterday, Singapore must take additional measures, including further temporary travel restrictions, to break the transmission of the virus.

### ADVISORY AFFECTING TRAVEL & BORDER MOVEMENTS

#### Travel Advisory

In light of the rapid spread of the virus across Europe, MOH advises Singaporeans to defer all non-essential travel to Italy, France, Spain and Germany. In addition, the existing advisory to defer all travel to Hubei province in mainland China, and non-essential travel to the rest of mainland China, Iran, Japan and the Republic of Korea, remains.

Singaporeans are also advised to exercise caution when travelling to all countries affected by COVID-19, especially those which have exported cases. These include our neighbouring countries, like Indonesia and the Philippines, and those further afield, like the United Kingdom. The global picture is evolving, and there could be other countries that may be affected.

As Singapore's measures will evolve according to the global situation, Singaporeans should check the MOH website [www.moh.gov.sg](http://www.moh.gov.sg) for the latest measures.

#### Border Restrictions

From 15 March 2020, 2359 hours, all new visitors with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days will not be allowed entry into Singapore, or transit through Singapore. At the same time, the following returning groups will be issued with a Stay-Home Notice (SHN):

- a | Residents (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents) with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days; and
- b | Long-term pass holders (including work passes, Student's Pass, Dependant's Pass, and Long-term Visit Pass) with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days.

As previously announced, residents and long-term pass holders returning from mainland China (outside Hubei province), Iran, and the Republic of Korea will continue to be issued a 14-day SHN upon return to Singapore.

All these border restrictions are temporary, and will be reviewed regularly based on the global situation.

## ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

### Social Distancing

In order to reduce the risk of local transmission, MOH will introduce requirements and advisories for events and gatherings, workplaces and public venues. This is to limit large crowds gathering in close proximity over a prolonged duration.

#### I | Advisory for Events and Gatherings

All ticketed cultural, sports and entertainment events, with 250 participants or more, are to be deferred or cancelled. For events that have already been committed (e.g. tickets sold), organisers must demonstrate that satisfactory precautionary measures have been put in place before they can proceed.

For all other mass gatherings including private functions and religious services, organisers are advised to put in place the following precautions:

- a | Reduce the scale of events to below 250 participants where possible;
- b | Reduce the crowding of participants and improve ventilation. For example, participants could be seated at least a metre apart from one another, and be advised to reduce contact with others (e.g. avoid shaking hands);
- c | Put in place temperature and health screening measures, as well as turn away persons who are unwell
- d | Put in place measures to facilitate contact tracing if needed, such as obtaining contact details of participants.
- e | Participants are also advised to practice social responsibility – monitor their own health condition and avoid attending gatherings and events if unwell.

#### II | Advisory for Workplaces

All workplaces should step up their business continuity plans, and prepare for widespread community transmission. Enterprise Singapore (ESG), supported by the Singapore Business Federation, has enhanced the [Business Continuity Guide](#) for enterprises to develop plans to deal with the COVID-19.

Employers are advised to put in place measures to reduce close contact where feasible. For example, employers should implement tele-commuting and video-conferencing where possible, as well as stagger work hours, and allow employees to commute at off-peak hours. Seating in meeting rooms and work stations could also be spaced apart.

#### III | Advisory for Public Venues

Owners/ tenants of venues which are accessible to the public are advised to put in place measures to reduce close contact by patrons/customers, where possible. For instance:

- a | Dining venues could set seats at least a metre apart;
- b | Entertainment venues and tourist attractions (e.g. casinos, cinemas, theme parks, museums, and galleries) could limit the number of visitors at any one time, and/or increase spacing among visitors; and
- c | Sports centres with indoor facilities (e.g. gyms, private academies) could limit the number of patrons, introduce physical separation measures, increase the frequency of cleaning, as well as issue advisories to reduce unnecessary contact, and practice public hygiene.

The above advisories for events, gatherings, workplaces and public venues will be subject to further review based on the global situation.

## OTHER INITIATIVES

### Collective Effort to Keep Singapore Clean

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, to rally businesses to commit to upholding good hygiene practices. You may find more information on “SG Clean” here.

### Cushioning Impact of COVID-19 on Businesses

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

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

### Taking a Long-Term View of Manpower Needs

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. For appropriate measures to manage excess manpower, you may refer to the [Tripartite Advisory on Managing Excess Manpower and Responsible Retrenchment](#).

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 this link on the [MOM website](#). 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.

**If you have any questions, get in touch  
with us at [secretariat@saceos.org.sg](mailto:secretariat@saceos.org.sg).**