

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak – Singapore Government’s Latest Measures and Implications to Employers

On 24 March 2020, the Singapore government announced new measures to minimise further spread of COVID-19. Please refer to the full advisory (available [here](#)) for details. We outline some of the measures which are of particular note to employers:

Measures	Implications
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gatherings outside of work are limited to 10 persons or fewer. There should be physical distancing of at least one meter between persons where interactions are non-transient. Groups of diners are limited to 10 persons or fewer. 	Employers should limit work related meals / after work gatherings and advise employees to reduce social meetings.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Centre-based tuition and enrichment classes are to be suspended. School children who are living with persons who had returned from the UK, US or any ASEAN country on or after 14 March 2020 AND school children who are living with person who will be returning from any other country from 2359 hours 25 March 2020 will be placed on 14 day Leave of Absence. 	<p>Parents face additional child care pressures.</p> <p>Employers are encouraged to provide flexible work arrangements during these exceptional circumstances.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All events and mass gatherings must be deferred or cancelled. 	If client events / conferences are being contemplated, they must be cancelled. Companies can consider using virtual meeting apps or tools to conduct such events.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> At the workplace, employers are also to put in place measures to ensure that there is no close 	The existing measures for workplaces are to continue to apply.

Measures	Implications
<p>physical interactions amongst employees.</p> <p>7. Whenever possible, there should be no physical meetings. Teleconferencing should be used instead.</p> <p>8. Employers must ensure that employees telecommute from home where employees can perform their work in such manner.</p>	<p>The new measures are more stringent. For instance, to ensure compliance with the new measures, employers should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have measures to segregate employees; • Ensure alternate chairs in meeting rooms are not used; • If for exceptional reasons physical meetings are inevitable, do not hold large meetings. As a guide, meetings should consist of less than 10 persons. <p>While each case should be determined on a case-by-case basis, jobs which are not suitable for telecommuting would generally be those where physical presence is required. This would include front line / customer facing jobs, security jobs, maintenance roles, factory production roles.</p> <p>The Ministry of Manpower (“MOM”) has an ongoing enforcement operation to ensure that workplaces comply with safe distancing measures.</p> <p>Stop work orders and remedial orders can be (and have been) issued to companies which disregard the safe distancing requirements.</p>
<p>9. Disregard of prevailing travel advisories will bring adverse implications:</p> <p>a. Singapore residents and Long Term Pass holders who leave Singapore from 27 March 2020 will be charged at unsubsidised rates for hospital stays at public hospitals if they are admitted for suspected infection.</p> <p>b. Singapore residents will not be able to utilise MediShield Life or Integrated Shield Plans for treatments at public or private hospitals.</p>	<p>Presently, the advisory is to defer all travel.</p> <p>Employers should ensure no work-related travel are undertaken.</p> <p>Employers should advise employees not to travel for personal reasons.</p> <p>For work pass holders, employers are reminded that they can only return to Singapore if they have obtained prior approval from MOM.</p>

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<p>c. Any work pass holder or his / her dependent who leaves Singapore from 27 March 2020 could face significant delays before they are allowed to return to Singapore</p>	
<p>10. Reiteration of earlier recommendation that all persons who are unwell, even with mild symptoms, should see a doctor.</p>	<p>Employees should be encouraged to be socially responsible. Any person who exhibits any flu like symptoms should be told to see a doctor and leave the workplace immediately.</p>

This update sets out the position as at 25 March 2020. The situation is constantly evolving. Thus, please closely monitor the government announcements as changes can occur quickly.

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