

COVID-19 WORKPLACE MEASURES

Updated as of 22 April 2020

1. The Ministry of Health (“**MOH**”) has issued the Infectious Diseases (Workplace Measures to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19) Regulations 2020 (the “**IDA Regulations**”) which were gazetted on 1 April 2020 and were in force from 2 April 2020.
2. The IDA Regulations were repealed on 10 April 2020, with the introduction of the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures Act) 2020 (the “**COVID-19 Act**”) and the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020 (the “**COVID-19 Regulations**”) which were gazetted on 7 April 2020. The COVID-19 Regulations are in force from 7 April 2020 to 4 May 2020 (both dates inclusive) (the “**Relevant Period**”).
3. The Ministry of Manpower (“**MOM**”) has begun enforcement operations on workplaces’ compliance with the Regulations. These inspections target workplaces where groups of workers congregate (such as offices, factories, construction sites, shipyards etc.).
4. This is an update on the newly implemented measures which may be applicable to you. Please note that failure to comply with the COVID-19 Regulations is an offence.

Closure of Business Premises (with exceptions) during the Relevant Period

5. Only an essential service provider may continue to carry out its business at its business premises (i.e. where it ordinarily carries out its business) if the following conditions are met:
 - a. Permission has been granted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The onus lies on the service provider to apply for the requisite permission; and
 - b. The business is carried out with the restrictions or conditions imposed when such permission is granted (referred to in paragraph 6a. above).
6. A non-essential service provider and its worker(s) must carry on its business and work only from home.
7. Please refer to the following: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/essentialservices/> in order to find out more as to what constitutes an essential service provider and a non-essential service provider. Applications for permission to continue business operations from one’s business premises can similarly be made online at <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/>.

Implementation of telecommuting and split team arrangements for Essential Service Providers

8. The COVID-19 Regulations require all employers to provide their employees with the necessary facilities to work from home and direct all employees to work from home during the Relevant Period (i.e. 7 April 2020 – 4 May 2020) unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so.
9. However, for workplaces which require the employees to be at the workplace, employers must group these employees into 2 or more groups for the purposes of avoiding physical interactions between employees in different groups. Further, employees should have staggered working hours and should not arrive and leave work at the same time.

Safe distancing measures

10. Employers must also take reasonable steps to ensure that there is a distance of at least one metre between any 2 individuals in the workplace. This is not limited to seating arrangements (seats must be at least one metre apart and where seats are fixed, alternate seats must be demarcated as seats not to be occupied) but also applies to queues in the workplace (which includes the pantry, waiting areas, restrooms etc.). Where individuals (other than employees) enter the workplace, they must not arrive at the workplace at the same time or remain for a longer period than necessary.
11. If any individual develops symptoms of coughing, sneezing, breathlessness, a runny nose or is otherwise feeling physically unwell, he should immediately report to the employer or a designated person and such employee must be provided with and asked to wear a face mask and to immediately leave the workplace or be isolated.
12. Employers must also cancel or postpone every organised activity involving physical interactions between employees and other individuals unless such activity is critical to operations.

13. Employers must also ensure that all its workers and any other individual at the workplace wears a mask, as far as is reasonably practicable.
14. Employers must also put in place measures to limit the entry of non-employees, as follows:
 - a. Only individuals procuring or delivering goods or services connected to the employer's business or providing any other essential service to the employer and/or its employees can enter the workplace;
 - b. Such non-employees must not arrive at the same time and do not remain in the workplace for a longer period than is necessary; and
 - c. All non-employees must keep a distance of at least one metre from *any* individual within the workplace.
15. Employers must communicate (as far as is reasonably practicable) to all its employees the safe distancing measures put in place at the workplace.

Movement control and other measures

16. Employers must not allow any employee or individual who is subject to a movement control measure to enter the workplace. A person who is subject to a movement control measure includes any person required to remain at home pursuant to a stay-home notice, a leave of absence, a quarantine order or a medical certificate certifying the individual has acute respiratory symptoms.
17. Employers must ensure that the body temperature of every individual entering the workplace be taken and for contact tracing purposes, keep the contact particulars of each individual, before allowing the individual to enter the workplace. Employers must also refuse entry to any individual exhibiting any specified symptoms. As far as possible, employers should allow natural ventilation of the workplace during working hours.

Update on the extended Circuit Breaker and Tightened Workplace Measures (as of 21 April 2020)

18. On 21 April 2020, it was announced that the Circuit Breaker period will extend to 1 June 2020 (inclusive) (the "**Circuit Breaker Extended Period**"). Whilst there have been no updates to the COVID-19 Act and Covid-19 Regulations as yet, the government has announced that there will be tighter measures in place.
19. On 21 April 2020, the Ministry of Trade and Industry ("**MTI**") issued a press release statement ("**MTI's 21 April 2020 Press Release**") on the tightened measures in relation to workplaces and businesses (the "**Tightened Workplace Measures**").
20. The Tightened Workplace Measures target two main areas during the Circuit Breaker Extended Period:
 - a. Reducing the list of services that are allowed to operate (with effect from 22 April 2020); and
 - b. Additional workplace measures for services that can continue to operate.

A. Reduced List of Services (with effect from 22 April 2020)

21. A few types of consumer and consumer-facing services which are deemed as less critical have been suspended from 22 April 2020, including the following:
 - a. Standalone Food & Beverage ("**F&B**") outlets (i.e. excluding those in hawker centres, food courts and coffee shops) that sell predominantly beverages, packaged snacks, confectioneries or desserts) will have to suspend their on-site operations. However, there is an exception to this for such standalone F&B outlets which can operate on an online retail platform only if such F&B outlets have the requisite licensed central kitchen or manufacturing facility that does not manufacture chocolate products, ice-cream, chips, sweets, cakes and confectionery (see Annex 2 of MTI's 21 April 2020 Press Release for the full list);
 - b. Hairdressing and barber services will be required to suspend all operations;

- c. Selected-consumer facing businesses will have to further reduce interactions with customers by for instance, operating on an appointment-only basis (e.g. optician shops);
 - d. Pet supplies and retail laundry services must close their physical stores but are permitted to provide online sales and delivery services;
 - e. Certain businesses which were allowed to operate prior to 22 April 2020 will be notified by MTI to suspend their on-site operations within 24 hours from being notified by MTI. Such businesses are businesses which MTI deems as less critical for day-to-day living or less critical in maintaining the essential supply chains.
22. For the amended list of essential services, please visit: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/essentialservices/>.
- B. Additional workplace measures for services that can continue to operate*
23. Employers are required to put in place heightened measures to minimise the potential risks of transmission of COVID-19 amongst its employees at the workplace. Such measures include the following:
- a. Teams working in different locations are not allowed to interact physically with one another;
 - b. Employers are encouraged to use SafeEntry to log their employees' entry into and exit from the workplace. This would aid in a more effective and efficient way of conducting contact-tracing, when required. [see: <https://www.ndi-api.gov.sg/safeentry>].
24. In light of the Circuit Breaker Extended Period, MTI may notify selected businesses to suspend their businesses even if such businesses obtained prior approval from MTI to operate during the Relevant Period.
25. Otherwise, businesses which obtained prior approval from MTI to operate during the Relevant Period can continue to operate until 1 June 2020, unless otherwise notified by MTI.

Moving forward

26. The Singapore Government is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation both in Singapore and overseas and constantly refining existing measures and implementing additional ones. It is thus important to closely monitor the websites of Gov.sg, the [MOM](#) and the [MOH](#) for the latest advisories and updates on COVID-19. For further information on safe-distancing measures, you may also refer to the [MOM Advisory on safe-distancing measures at the workplace](#) (updated on 26 March 2020).

We hope that the above is useful to you. If you require any clarification or further guidance in respect of the above, please do not hesitate to reach out to us and we would be more than happy to help.

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