

## ASKED & ANSWERED

In this special release your concerns are addressed as members of the Chamber by representatives from the Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development Board, with the support of representatives from the Ministry for Trade and Industry.

**What triggers or measures would be needed to relax the travel restrictions/reopen borders? Particularly given the varying levels of exposure in different countries that can generate imported cases.**

Singapore has always taken a consistent approach towards border control measures, which is based on a risk assessment of the situation and the evidence available. It is not discriminatory and not directed at any particular country, nationality or race.

The measures are aimed at limiting the number of new cases in Singapore and minimising the risk of community spread, taking into account the fact that Singapore is a small and high-density city state.

All of the border measures that Singapore has put in place are temporary measures, and they are dynamic. The Government will monitor the situation closely and carefully calibrate the measures according to the risk situation. We will make appropriate adjustments to the travel restrictions as necessary.

**We have many instances of small companies that do not have 30% local ownership, for example owned and operated by foreign manpower but generating income for the economy and hiring local talent. Is there any additional support available to these organisations? If they were able to defer costs for a period, there would be better cashflow and potential for them to survive this and continue to support the local economy and workforce.**

All Singapore-based companies can benefit from measures rolled out over the Unity and Resilience Budgets to save jobs, ease cashflow and reduce costs:

- **Wage support.** These are enhanced wage support under the enhanced Jobs Support Scheme (if they hire Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents) and the enhanced Wage Credit Scheme (if they hire Singapore Citizens).
- **Tax deferral and rebates.** These are the automatic three-month deferral of any Corporate Income Tax (CIT) Payments due in the months of April, May, and June 2020, the CIT rebate of 25%, as well as the enhanced rebate for Property Tax payable this year.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), together with the financial industry, has also rolled out additional measures to support SMEs facing cashflow difficulties with continued access to bank credit and insurance cover. MAS is also providing sufficient liquidity to the

Singapore Dollar and US Dollar funding markets to ensure that financial institutions can meet the SGD and USD funding needs of their customers. For more info, please refer to the MAS press release [here](#).

Beyond the measures that enable firms to survive this crisis, there are also measures that help firms facing an increase in downtime that are looking to retain workers and develop their pipeline in preparation for recovery:

- **Enhanced training support.** Employers in more severely affected sectors (i.e. air transport, tourism, retail, food services, land transport and arts and culture) can enjoy enhanced course fee subsidies and absentee payroll of up to 90%, when they send workers for eligible training courses starting before 1 Jan 2021. Enhanced absentee payroll support will be made available to all sectors from May 2020.
- **SGUnited Traineeships.** Workforce Singapore will co-share the manpower costs of offering traineeships to local first-time job seekers this year. This will give an added boost for employers to continue building their talent pipeline, while giving trainees valuable work experience. More details will be released by Workforce Singapore soon.

**What criteria is planned to be used to determine the timeline for relaxing the restrictions on returning work pass holders, which type of roles are being approved and are extenuating circumstances being taken into account? When will MOM issue work permits?**

Measures are made based on the most current information on the COVID-19 situation.

To reduce the risk of importing the COVID-19 virus, the entry of pass holders into Singapore has been restricted. All employers are strongly urged to defer bringing pass holders into Singapore. We ask for your understanding and cooperation in doing your part to safeguard the interest of Singapore's public health and the health of your other employees.

If this is not possible, the employer can make an [application for entry approval](#) before the pass holder travels to Singapore with additional responsibilities. The chances of receiving this approval is clearly stated as being very slim.

**Can the 30-day short term visa which is issued upon cancellation of a work pass be extended during this period?**

Employers can apply for extension of Special Pass / Short-Term Visit Pass if they are unable to send their foreign employees home due to travel restrictions imposed by their countries via <https://form.gov.sg/#!/5e32864e3733960011b05603>.

**If an employee is under an SHN but needs to visit a doctor's clinic what is the advice in order to avoid penalties?**

For life threatening cases such as cardiac arrest, active seizures, breathlessness, major traumas and stroke, employees should call 995 directly for assistance.

For non-emergencies (such as cough or fever, follow-up visits for chronic conditions, refilling of prescription, etc):

- Singapore Citizens, PRs and long-term pass holders may contact the People's Association (PA) at 6344 8222. PA will assist in making necessary arrangements

with the nearest Public Health Preparedness Clinic (PHPC) or GP clinic. Employees should inform the staff and doctor of travel history and the SHN status.

- Foreign employees issued with a work pass should contact their employers. Employers should assist in contacting a PHPC or GP clinic, and ensure that foreign employees have sufficient medicines for their needs. Employers / dorm operators should take down the names and contact details (address, telephone number) of all persons who have come into close contact with the foreign employee when he/she had fever, cough or breathlessness, or was feeling unwell. If the worker is confirmed to have COVID-19, MOH officers will contact the dorm operator / management to trace all those who came into contact with the worker.

For more information see the full [FAQs on COVID-19](#) from the MOM.

### What is the legislation around temporary salary reductions by companies during this period?

We encourage employers to visit [www.mom.gov.sg/TAMEM](http://www.mom.gov.sg/TAMEM) for guidance on measures for employers to manage excess manpower. With effect from 12 March 2020, employers with 10 or more employees are required to [notify MOM](#) if they implement cost-saving measures that affect employees' salaries. This is a temporary measure until the economy recovers and helps ensure that:

- Measures are implemented responsibly
- Downstream salary issues are prevented
- Tripartite partners can provide timely and appropriate support when necessary.

---

The Chamber would like to thank our colleagues at the Ministry for Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Manpower for their assistance in responding to our members' questions during this time.

### Information resources available from the Chamber:

- [Coronavirus Advisory](#) – all the latest official updates from Singapore and the UK in one resource, updated daily
- [Financial Support Updates](#) – summary of the various financial support measures available to Singapore-based businesses