

Guide on Business Continuity Planning for **2019 novel coronavirus**

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Foreword

This document is a guide on business continuity planning for enterprises, especially for the small and medium sized enterprises in Singapore, to help them deal with the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in China. It is guided by the Singapore Standard for Business Continuity Management System – Requirements (SS ISO 22301), and relevant advisories issued by MOH and other government agencies.

Please note that this guide is non-exhaustive and does not cover all situations and businesses. This guide should be read in conjunction with the latest relevant advisories issued by MOH and other government agencies. Where applicable, users of this guide are advised to seek business continuity planning professionals' help on specific information relevant to their particular circumstances.

Due to the evolving situation of the novel coronavirus (nCoV), Enterprise Singapore reserves the right to make changes to this guide without notice to reflect new developments. Users are encouraged to access the latest version of this guide at www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/2019-ncov.

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Introduction

1. The objective of this guide is to help enterprises in their business continuity planning in response to the novel coronavirus (nCoV). It covers the following key business operational risks.
 - a. Human resource management
 - b. Processes and business functions
 - c. Supplier and customer management
 - d. Communications, both internal and external

This guide helps companies with the following:

- a. Minimise health risk to employees
- b. Minimise the risk of premises becoming a node of transmission
- c. Ensure plans are in place should employees be quarantined or infected
- d. Ensure alternative arrangements with suppliers and customers so that business operations can continue

What is the novel coronavirus (nCoV)?

2. The novel coronavirus (nCoV) belongs to a family of viruses known as the Coronaviruses, which can cause illnesses ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases, such as the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).¹ The novel coronavirus (nCoV) infections started in China but confirmed infections have also been reported in Singapore and other parts of the world.
3. The symptoms of the novel coronavirus (nCoV) are similar to that of regular pneumonia. Typical symptoms include fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough and shortness of breath.

Business Continuity Plans (BCP)

4. Enterprises are encouraged to plan and implement business continuity plans to minimise disruption to your operations and ensure that business remains viable during the virus outbreak. Enterprises can take the following steps to ensure adequate preparation for business continuity.

¹ Source: World Health Organisation

Human resource management

- a. A Flu Manager should be appointed to ensure that employees are familiar with the business continuity plans and comply with them during this period. The roles and responsibilities of the Flu Manager are given in **Annex 1**
- b. Develop a plan for the continuity of leadership in the event of absence of key decision makers and executives
- c. Consider flexible work arrangements for the high-risk employees, as well as employees who need to stay at home due to other reasons relating to the novel coronavirus (nCoV), e.g. to take care of family members who have travelled to known affected countries or regions
- d. Review employee management policies such as absenteeism, sick leave, overseas travel, workplace closure and recall of non-critical employees and their families from affected countries
- e. Defer all travel to Hubei Province and all non-essential business travel to Mainland China. Employers should check the MOH website (www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan) for the latest updates on the novel coronavirus (nCoV) situation so that an informed decision can be made on whether to proceed with business travel plans
 - If business travel to known affected areas is unavoidable and alternative options such as teleconferencing and video-conferencing are not possible, employers should arrange for their employees to consult a doctor for travel health advice prior to travel
 - For employees whose work is performed in known affected countries or regions, employers should ensure that employees are adequately protected or monitored in accordance to MOH guidelines
- f. Obtain a health and travel declaration from employees who have travelled to China recently, or who have any upcoming plans to travel to China²
- g. Check and monitor closely the health condition of employees who had been in China in the past 14 days
 - Employees who have been issued with a Leave of Absence should monitor their health closely for 14 days upon entering Singapore. Temperature checks should be made twice a day for 14 days. They should seek medical attention promptly if they feel unwell and inform their doctor of their travel history. If they have a fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, runny nose, sore, breathlessness), they should wear a mask and call the clinic ahead of the visit³
 - During the 14-day monitoring period upon their return, flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and teleconferencing, can be considered for employees to work from home. Please see special arrangements for

² MOM Advisory (www.mom.gov.sg/wuhanvirus)

³ MOM Advisory (www.mom.gov.sg/wuhanvirus)

- employees in education, healthcare and eldercare sectors in the relevant advisories by MOH and government agencies⁴
- If telecommuting or remote working is not possible, employers may refer to MOM's advisory at www.mom.gov.sg/wuhanvirus to better support employees' needs⁵
- h. Exercise readiness to implement public health response measures, e.g. contact tracing and social distancing, as advised by the MOH
- i. Review health insurance policies for workers

Process and business functions

- a. Identify critical business functions (prioritised activities) and essential employees. Enterprises should consider the following:
- Set up alternate teams of employees (e.g. Team A & Team B) who can be deployed at different work schedules (e.g. Team A working in the office at alternate weeks, while Team B telecommutes). Team A and Team B should be physically segregated to avoid the risk of infection between teams
 - Cross-train workers and establish covering arrangements to minimise disruptions
- b. Educate employees on infection control and good personal hygiene (see **Annex 2**)
- c. Develop plans related to visitor and employee screening and follow-up actions (see **Annex 3** on recommended procedures for health screening of visitors & employees)
- d. Monitor closely the novel coronavirus (nCoV)-related developments and follow travel and health advisories on the MOH and other government agencies' websites
- Employers and employees are encouraged to take precautionary steps based on advisories issued by government agencies
 - Employees should check the list of affected areas on the government agencies' websites before making any non-work-related travel plans
 - When travelling overseas, employees should adopt the following precautions at all times⁶:
 - i. Avoid contact with live animals including poultry and birds, and consumption of raw and undercooked meats
 - ii. Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness
 - iii. Observe good personal hygiene
 - iv. Practise frequent hand washing with soap (e.g. before handling food or eating, after going to the toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing)

⁴ "Advisories for various sectors", MOH (www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan/advisories-for-various-sectors)

⁵ MOM Advisory (www.mom.gov.sg/wuhanvirus)

⁶ STB Advisory (www.stb.gov.sg/content/stb/en/home-pages/advisory-on-wuhancoronavirus.html)

- v. Wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms such as a cough or runny nose
 - vi. Cover your mouth with a tissue paper when coughing or sneezing, and dispose the soiled tissue paper in the rubbish bin immediately; and
 - vii. Seek medical attention promptly if you are feeling unwell
- e. Develop a robust employee sickness surveillance process to identify and manage unwell employees
 - f. Ensure adequate supply of appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and medical equipment (e.g. thermometers, disposable gloves, surgical masks, N-95 masks and disinfectants) and undertake training to familiarise employees on their usage
 - g. Clean and disinfect companies' premises exposed to suspected or confirmed case(s) of the novel coronavirus (nCoV). Owners or operators can refer to the interim guidelines for environmental cleaning and disinfection released by NEA⁷

Supplier and customer management

- a. Identify essential suppliers and service providers, and discuss continuity issues with them such as understanding and implementation of their BCP
- b. Identify essential customers and ensure that plans are in place to meet customer needs
- c. Develop a plan on how and when to activate:
 - Alternative suppliers
 - Alternative delivery means to customers

Communications

- a. Begin by identifying a communications coordinator who will disseminate your communications plan in line with your business needs and business continuity plans
- b. Ensure that employees have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities before the virus outbreak occurs. For example, employees should be informed of the BCP measures that will impact them and be kept updated on the policies and progress on the measures to be implemented by the company in the event of a virus outbreak. Consider setting up a communication channel for employees to report their status and to make enquiries
- c. Identify the relevant stakeholders such as suppliers, service providers and customers, and key messages for each stakeholder group; and begin a dialogue with them on potential contingency measures during a virus outbreak

⁷ NEA Advisory (www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/public-cleanliness/guidelines-for-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection)

DORSCON

5. The MOH's Disease Outbreak Response System Condition (DORSCON) alert levels provide information on the expected public health impact of a novel or re-emerging infectious disease outbreak. The DORSCON alert levels should be used as a guide as to when an enterprise will activate their business continuity measures and adopt infection control measures at the workplace. The current DORSCON level is found at www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan.
6. As there may be a gradation of responses with each DORSCON phase and response measures may change during an actual outbreak, enterprises should build in buffer capacity and flexibility, where possible, in their existing BCP, so that measures can be ramped up or down, in line with the advisories issued by MOH and other government agencies.

Health advisories

7. Enterprises should refer to the latest health advisories issued by MOH, MOM and other government agencies as the situation evolves⁸.

⁸ Enterprises may call MOH, MOM, and other government agencies if they require clarifications on the advisories (e.g. MOH's general hotline is 6325 9220)

Annex 1

Roles and responsibilities of the Flu Manager

1. Actively monitor development of the virus outbreak and work with management to disseminate messages to employees with clear instructions when measures need to be activated
2. Educate employees on the latest available information on the virus. Brief them on the need for infection control measures and the preventive procedures that have been set in place. Educate employees on the different types of thermometers, such as oral and ear thermometer, and the proper way of using them
3. Collate updated contact information of all employees, i.e. home address/home telephone number/ mobile phone number. Make sure all employees have contact numbers of Flu Manager/Assistant Flu Manager*. Employees are to contact the Flu Manager if they are admitted to hospital with suspected infections for contact tracing purposes
4. Ensure that the company has appointed at least one designated Point of Contact (POC) (may be the Flu Manager), who will be responsible for liaising with MOH during activation of contact tracing processes at the workplace
5. Check the following websites (www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan) daily for updated advisories (e.g. travel advisories) and update employees accordingly
6. Ensure that employees who have travelled to affected areas are quarantined for a sufficient number of days, as advised by the MOH. Check on employees' health by phone or email during his/her absence from work
7. Appoint employee to keep quarantined employees informed of events in office
8. Ensure that the workplace has adequate supplies of tissue paper/hand towels, disinfectants and masks
9. Brief employees on personal hygiene measures:
 - a. Do not spit on the floor
 - b. Wash hands
 - i. Regularly and thoroughly with soap and water
 - ii. Before and after preparing food
 - iii. After going to the toilet
 - iv. Before and after eating
 - v. After coughing and sneezing
 - vi. After removing personal protective equipment like mask and disposable gloves
 - c. Sneezing and coughing should be done onto tissue paper which should be carefully disposed

- d. Avoid sharing of cups, cutlery, etc
 - e. Avoid physical contact such as shaking hands
10. Put up notices in washrooms on proper hand washing techniques
 11. Ensure common areas e.g. pantries, washrooms, meeting rooms are disinfected daily. Liaise with cleaning employees/contractors on this
 12. Designate a room/area in the office with nearby toilet facilities as the isolation room/area for the employee(s) with fever to use. Identify the isolation route (a route that is not commonly used by employees/visitors) that leads to an area where the employees with fever can be brought to the flu clinic/hospital
 13. Identify hospital/clinics that employees with fever can be brought to
 14. Where advised by MOH, carry out symptom or temperature monitoring of employees. If temperature monitoring is instituted, ensure employees measure their temperature twice daily (see **Annex 3G**: Temperature Monitoring Log). Once an employee is identified to have fever (38°C and above), follow instructions in **Annex 3B**: Procedures upon Detection of Unwell Employee.

*Note: Depending on the employee strength of your company and the size of your company's premises, an Assistant Flu Manager should be appointed as a backup to cover the duties of the Flu Manager. If applicable, a Flu Response Team should be set up to support the execution of incident response measures.

Annex 2A

Personal hygiene awareness

1. Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing
2. Maintain good indoor ventilation
3. Avoid sharing food, crockery, utensils and other personal hygiene items
4. Avoid physical contact such as shaking hands and avoid touching your face or rubbing your eyes
5. Maintain good personal hygiene, including hand washing with soap and water, or the use of alcohol-based hand rubs
6. Proper hand washing requires soap and water. The constant rubbing action helps soap break down the grease and dirt that carry most germs. Washing your hands for at least 15 to 30 seconds with soap and water does not just make your hands smell fresh but also reduces germ count by up to 99%
7. Follow these 8 simple steps to keep your hands clean:
 - a. Palm to palm
 - b. Between fingers
 - c. Back of hands
 - d. Base of thumbs
 - e. Back of fingers
 - f. Fingernails
 - g. Wrists
 - h. Rinse and wipe dry



Source: Health Promotion Board

How to wear a surgical mask

HOW TO WEAR A MASK?



It should **COVER YOUR MOUTH, NOSE AND CHIN**, with the coloured side facing outwards.



PINCH THE METAL EDGE OF THE MASK so that it presses gently on your nose bridge.



Remove a used mask by **HOLDING ONLY THE EAR LOOPS.**



DO NOT WEAR A MASK IF YOU ARE WELL

There are sufficient masks in the warehouses and government stockpiles, if they are used responsibly.

WEAR A MASK ONLY IF



- You have a **FEVER, COUGH OR RUNNY NOSE**
- You are **RECOVERING FROM ILLNESS**

Note:

- To be effective, change your mask regularly or if soiled or wet.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after disposing the soiled mask properly into a bin.

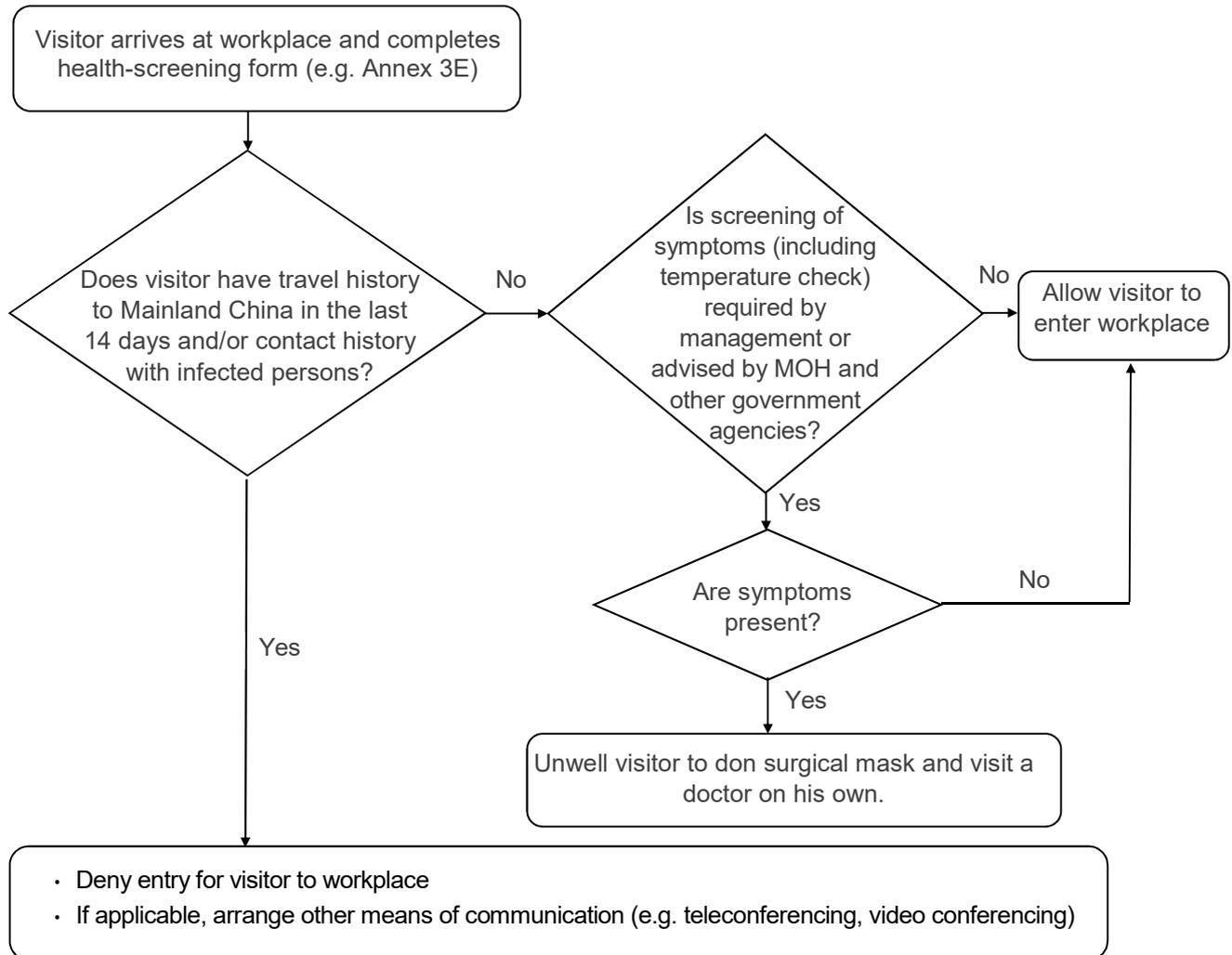
Source: Ministry of Health

Annex 3A

Procedures upon detection of visitors and employees who are unwell

SOP #1: Example of a workflow for visitor screening at the workplace

Enterprises should establish a procedure to manage the flow of visitors in their premises

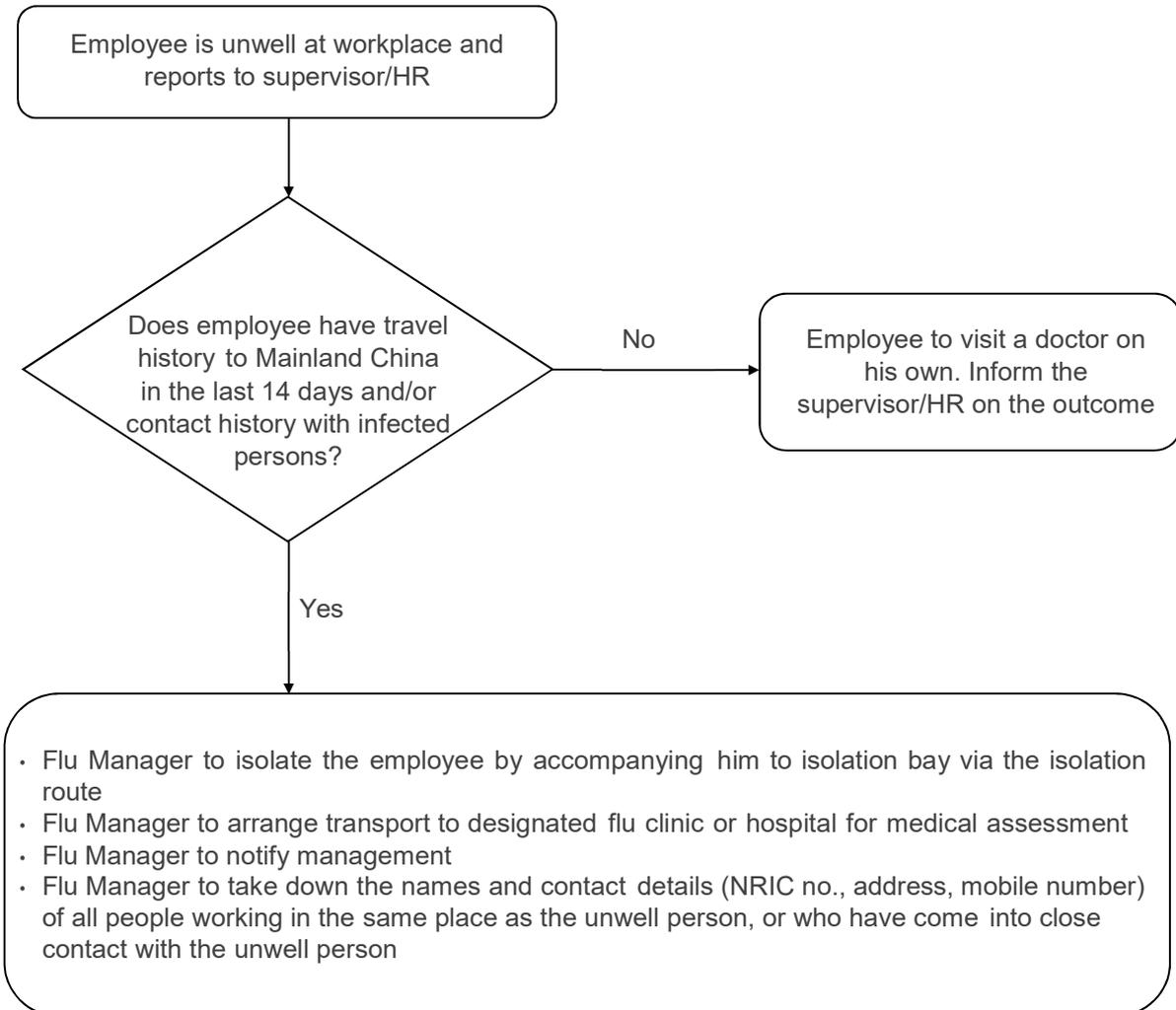


Additional Note:

- Additional measures may be required if advised by MOH and other government agencies.
- Masks to be made available at the counter for employees and visitors and additional PPE (e.g. gloves) may be made available to employees

Annex 3B

SOP #2: Example of a workflow for managing an unwell employee at workplace

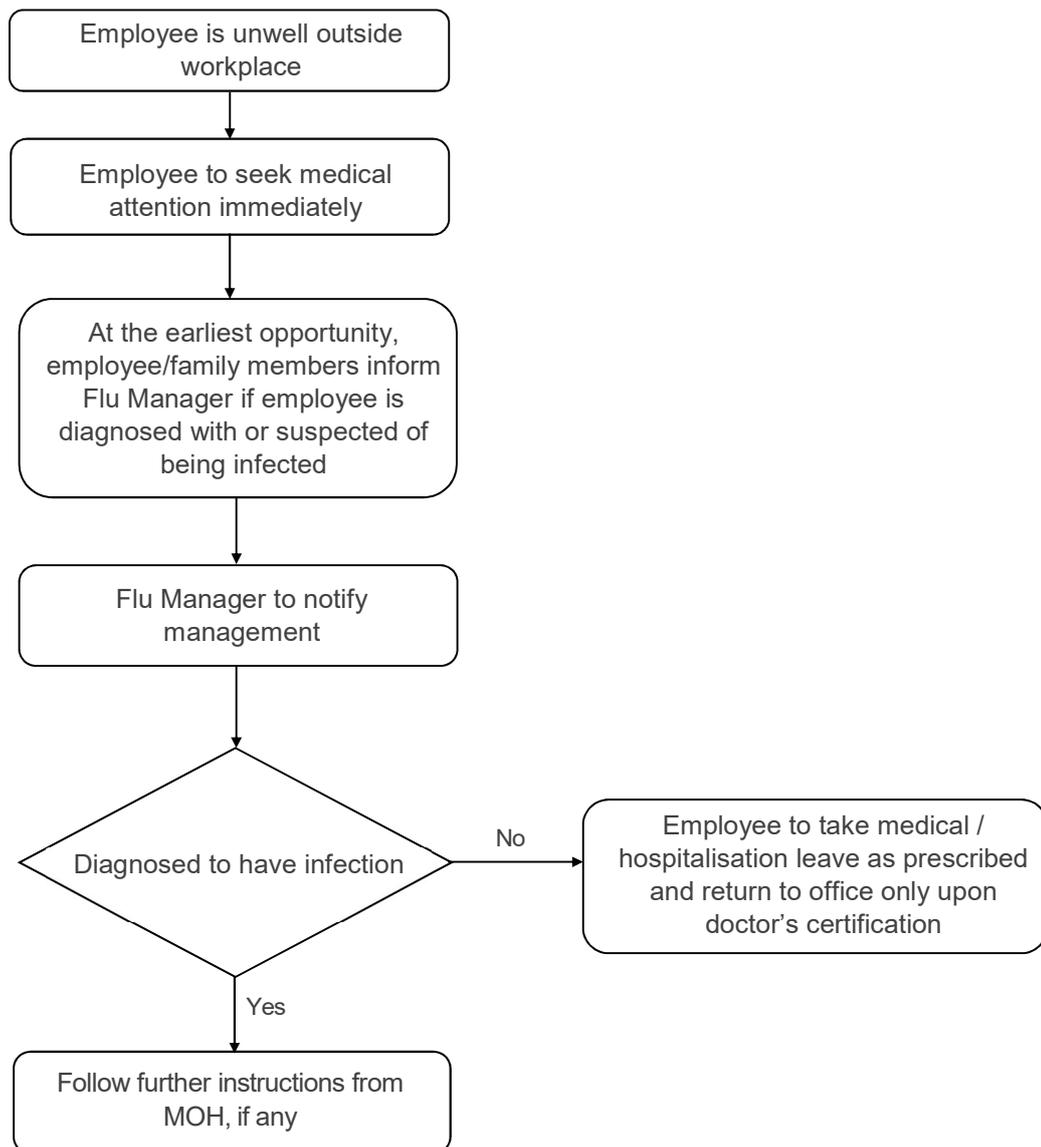


Additional Note:

- Additional measures may be required if advised by MOH and other government agencies
- The unwell person and employee attending to him should wear PPE

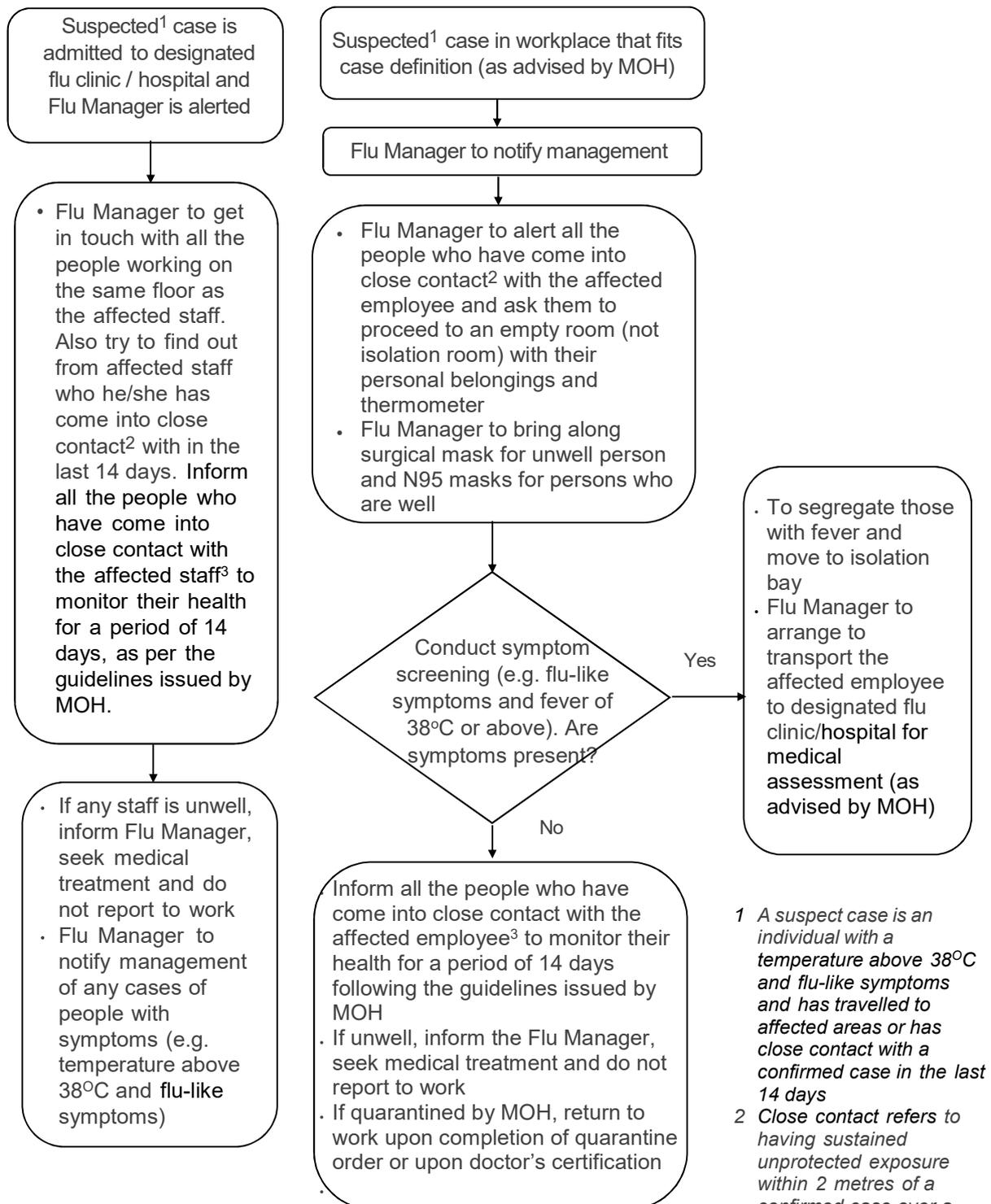
Annex 3C

SOP #3: Example of a workflow for managing employee unwell outside workplace



Annex 3D

SOP #4: Example of a workflow for contact tracing



1 A suspect case is an individual with a temperature above 38°C and flu-like symptoms and has travelled to affected areas or has close contact with a confirmed case in the last 14 days

2 Close contact refers to having sustained unprotected exposure within 2 metres of a confirmed case over a period of 30 minutes or more

3 As a precaution, staff may be advised to work from home or remotely

Annex 3E

Example of Health Screening Form for Visitors

Dear Sir / Madam

To prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (nCoV) in our community and reduce the risk of exposure to our staff and visitors, we are conducting a simple screening questionnaire. Your participation is important to help us take precautionary measures to protect you and everyone in this building. Thank you for your time.

Visitor's name:	Personal contact number (Mobile number/Home):
NRIC / Passport no.:	Nationality (for foreigner only):
Meeting venue / level / department to visit:	
Temperature reading of visitor:	Recorded by staff (name):

Self-declaration by visitor	
1	If you have the following symptom(s), please tick the relevant box(es) <input type="checkbox"/> Fever <input type="checkbox"/> Dry cough <input type="checkbox"/> Body aches <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat <input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose <input type="checkbox"/> Tiredness <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____
2	Have you been in contact with a confirmed novel coronavirus (nCoV) patient in the past 14 days? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3	Have you been to mainland China or affected countries in the past 14 days? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, please indicate the affected country(s)

Signature (visitor): _____

Date: _____

Annex 3F

Example of Notification Form for Employees

Suspected infection case at work

Details of affected employee

Name:	Department/worksite:	Location of isolation:
Job title:	Nationality: (For foreigner only)	NRIC / Passport no:
Address:		
Contact number: _____ (W) _____ (H) _____ (M)		
Symptoms: <input type="checkbox"/> Fever <input type="checkbox"/> Body aches <input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat <input type="checkbox"/> Tiredness <input type="checkbox"/> Dry cough <input type="checkbox"/> Headache <input type="checkbox"/> Runny nose <input type="checkbox"/> Others Details: _____		
Date & time of fever onset:		
Date & time of isolation:		
Travel history over the last 14 days		
Countries visited:		
Flights taken:		

Details of recording employee

Name:		
Job title:		
Address:		
Contact no: _____ (W) _____ (H) _____ (M)		
Date & time of recording:		

Annex 4

Tips on Temperature Taking

When to take your temperature:

1. Wait for 30 minutes before temperature taking if you have just exercised, eaten, drank, showered or been outdoors

How to take your temperature:

2. There are different ways of temperature taking for the different types of thermometers available

Glass thermometer

3. Wash the thermometer bulb with soap and water before use
4. Shake the thermometer a few times to bring the level of the mercury below 35°C
5. Temperatures can be taken from the armpit or mouth

Armpit reading

6. Place the thermometer bulb under your armpit. Fold your arm across your chest to hold the thermometer in place. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature after 5 minutes

Oral reading

7. Place the thermometer bulb under your tongue. Close your mouth and do not talk or bite the thermometer. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature after 3 minutes
8. Wash the bulb of the thermometer with soap and water after use

Digital thermometer

9. Wash the area of the thermometer bulb with soap and water before use
10. Switch on the thermometer and wait until it is ready to register a reading
11. Temperatures can be taken from the armpit or mouth

Armpit reading

12. Place the thermometer bulb under your armpit. Fold your arm across your chest to hold the thermometer in place. The thermometer will beep to signal that the temperature display is ready for reading. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature

Oral reading

13. Place the thermometer bulb under your tongue. Close your mouth and do not talk or bite the thermometer. The thermometer will beep to signal that the temperature display is ready for reading. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature

14. Wash the thermometer bulb with soap and water after use

Ear (tympanic) thermometer

15. Place a new disposable cap over the probe
16. Switch on the thermometer
17. Pull the ear backwards and upwards to straighten the ear canal when the thermometer is ready to register a reading
18. Insert the thermometer's probe into the ear canal
19. Press the activation button and hold until a reading appears (some models may beep when it is ready for a reading)
20. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature
21. Discard cap after use (use a new cap for every temperature taking)

Remember:

- It is important to read the manufacturer's instructions on the proper use of the thermometer
- When washing glass or digital thermometers, wash only the area in contact with the mouth/skin as the thermometer may not be waterproof
- Do not talk when taking an oral temperature or move about when taking an armpit temperature

Did you know...

- Temperatures taken at different parts of the body present different readings – those taken from the armpit are lower than readings from the mouth and ear
- For adults: if the armpit temperature is over 37.0°C, the oral temperature is over 37.3°C, or the ear temperature is over 37.7°C, you have a fever
- Children (below 12 years) have a fever if the armpit temperature is over 37.2°C, the oral temperature is over 37.5°C or the ear temperature is over 37.9°C
- The normal temperature for healthy adults and children ranges from 36.2°C to 37.2°C and the average normal temperature is taken as 37.0°C
- Children tend to have higher body temperatures due to higher metabolic rates
- Women who are ovulating may have temperatures that are 0.5°C higher due to hormonal changes in their bodies
- Adults over 65 years of age may have temperatures that are 0.3°C lower because of lower metabolic rates
- The times of the month and day also affect your temperature. The body is at its lowest temperature at 3am when it is at rest, and at its highest at 6pm after a busy day. To ensure accurate readings, it is advisable to take your temperature at the same time every day

Annex 5

Information on Health Advisories

Information on public advisories (local)

<p>Ministry of Health www.moh.gov.sg/2019-ncov-wuhan</p>	
<p>Ministry of Manpower www.mom.gov.sg/wuhanvirus</p>	
<p>National Environment Agency www.nea.gov.sg</p>	
<p>Building and Construction Authority www.bca.gov.sg</p>	
<p>Singapore Tourism Board www.stb.gov.sg</p>	

<p>Early Childhood Development Agency www.ecda.gov.sg</p>	
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Information on public advisories (international)

<p>World Health Organisation www.who.int</p>	
<p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov</p>	

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