



FOR IMMEDIATE REPORTING

RESUMING MORE ACTIVITIES SAFELY

As the number of community cases has remained low, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce will ease measures to facilitate business operations, by supporting essential business travel, and enabling more employees to return to the workplace. In recognition of the importance of religious and particular social activities, we will also be expanding the capacity limits for worship services and wedding receptions.

2. We are also stepping up measures to support earlier detection of potential COVID cases and a safer living and working environment for all.

FACILITATING ESSENTIAL TRAVEL THROUGH BUSINESS TRAVEL PASS PILOT

3. In June 2020, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce stated that studies were ongoing on how to facilitate business travel in a safe and calibrated manner. We are piloting a new business travel pass for senior executives in Singapore with regional or international responsibilities who need to travel regularly for official and business purposes.

4. Travellers on this pass will be required to abide by a strict controlled itinerary when they travel overseas for work. Upon return, the traveller will be given the option of doing a COVID-19 test in lieu of Stay-Home Notice (SHN) and self-isolate until the COVID-19 test results are out.

5. To ensure that we can carefully monitor the public health outcomes of this pilot, the number of passes will be strictly limited in the initial phase. If the pilot is successful, and public health measures are fully abided by, we will consider expanding the scheme in a safe and calibrated manner.

ENABLING MORE EMPLOYEES TO RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE SAFELY

6. The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has updated the [Requirements for Safe Management Measures \(SMM\) at the Workplace](#) to continue to ensure safe workplaces for all. These updated requirements will take effect from 28 September 2020.

More employees may return to the workplace

7. Working from home remains the default mode of working. We will allow more employees (presently working from home) to return to the workplaces. But employers must ensure that (i) such employees continue to work from home for at least half their

working time, and (ii) no more than half of such employees are at the workplace at any point in time.¹

8. With more employees returning to the workplace, employers should play their part in minimising crowding and possible congregation at common spaces, including on public transport. They can do so by:

- a. Implementing flexible workplace hours to allow employees who can, to work partly at home and partly at the workplace such that they travel outside of peak periods, e.g. blocks of 10am-4pm or 1-5pm in-office hours, or return to the workplace only for meetings and work-from-home the rest of the time.
- b. Further staggering of reporting times such that half of all employees start work at or after 10am.

9. In addition, split team or shift arrangements must continue to be implemented, with each team restricted to one worksite where possible. Employers must also ensure clear separation of employees on different teams or shifts.

10. This update has been carefully considered to balance the concerns of employers regarding the impact of extended periods of working-from-home on productivity and workplace relations, while creating safe workplaces for employees. This will also support employees who face particular difficulty working-from-home. As these measures will need to be in place for some time, we encourage employers to ensure that work-from-home arrangements are implemented in a sustainable manner to enable employees to maintain work-life balance while continuing to meet business needs.

Events within the workplace may resume

11. Work-related events within the workplace premises that are business-oriented (such as conferences, seminars, corporate retreats, Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings) will be allowed to resume, for up to 50 persons (or lower depending on venue capacity based on safe management principles) with strict adherence to SMM requirements e.g. at least 1 metre safe distancing between each employee. We will consider allowing the resumption of work-related events at external venues at a later date. We will also update the safe management measures for workplaces in certain areas (e.g. rules on staff having their meals at staff canteens), taking reference from prevailing national guidelines. More details will be released by MOM later.

12. As per existing guidelines, employers must not organise or encourage larger scale social gatherings within or outside the workplace such as parties, celebrations, team bonding activities, dinner-and-dance (D&D), and gala dinners.

¹ To illustrate, for a full-time worker with a 6-day work week, he or she may be allowed to be in the office for up to three days in a week. Alternatively, an employer with 10 full-time employees who are currently working from home may split the 10 employees into two teams, and ask each team to return to the workplace every alternate week while the other team continues to work from home. Returning to the workplace can either be initiated by the employee and agreed upon with the employer, or directed by the employer.

Workplace SMM necessary for safe working environments

13. To reduce the risk of transmission with the gradual resumption of activities, employers must continue to ensure clear physical spacing of at least 1 metre and demarcate safe physical distances:

- a. Between all persons at meeting rooms, work areas, and workstations; and
- b. At all times during work-related events held at the workplace.

14. In addition, employers must continue to ensure good workplace SMMs such as controlling access at the workplace and cleaning of common spaces regularly. Employees should also do their part in adhering to the measures to create a safe working environment.

15. The tripartite partners – MOM, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) will continue to review the requirements periodically to take further developments into account, such as updated medical advice, technological updates and operational practices. These updates will help employers to keep workplaces safe amidst the fluid COVID-19 situation, while streamlining processes where possible.

16. To continue to ensure safe workplaces for all and minimise the risk of widespread re-emergence of COVID-19 in the community, the onus is on employers and employees to comply with the SMM requirements, including the use of SafeEntry to check-in all employees and visitors as required. Non-compliance with SMMs may result in penalties such as suspension of on-site operations, fines, and withholding of payouts for government support schemes and grants. More severe violations of SMMs may result in prosecution. The [SnapSAFE](#) app may continue to be used to report any breach of the requirements at the workplace.

INCREASING LIMITS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES

17. Since 7 August 2020, the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) had worked with 12 religious organisations (ROs), with more coming on board progressively, to pilot an increase in limit for congregational and other worship services from 50 persons to 100 persons (split in two zones of 50 persons for congregational services). From 3 October 2020, all ROs will be allowed to conduct congregational and other worship services for up to 100 persons, subject to safe distancing and safe management measures in place. MCCY is also considering a pilot to increase worship limits up to 250 persons (five zones of 50 persons for congregational services) and will release further details subsequently.

INCREASING NUMBER OF ATTENDEES FOR MARRIAGE SOLEMNISATIONS AND WEDDING RECEPTIONS

18. From 3 October 2020, we will be expanding the current pilot for wedding receptions to allow up to 100 unique attendees (including the wedding couple, excluding vendors and service providers) in total, subject to premise capacity. Participants in a wedding can be split into multiple zones of up to 50 persons each, or

split by staggered timings with up to 50 persons in each slot. There should be at least 30 minutes between slots for cleaning and disinfection of the event space. The cap for marriage solemnisations will also be increased to 100 persons², split across multiple zones of up to 50 persons each. Venue operators may impose a lower cap if they are unable to comply with the zoning or staggered timing requirements. Video link solemnisations will continue to be offered as an option for couples. More details on the safe management measures are available on <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

19. Starting in November 2020, we will also be launching a pilot which will allow wedding receptions organised by a registered wedding organiser to take place at Housing Development Board (HDB) common areas, such as void decks and Multi-Purpose Halls managed by Town Councils. Further details, including the commencement date for this initiative, will be released at a later stage. In the meantime, couples may also wish to consider holding their events at function rooms and multi-purpose halls at community centres/ clubs, which have been made available for wedding celebrations at affordable rates.

20. The increase in the number of attendees is aimed at facilitating marriages that may have been postponed or put on hold. Given the dynamic situation of the COVID-19 situation, we encourage couples who are ready to proceed with their wedding plans to do so without delay. The Multi-Ministry Taskforce will continue to review the parameters of marriage solemnisations and wedding receptions based on the ability of organisers and attendees to work together to adhere to the necessary safe management measures. The pilot can only be sustained if these higher-risk events are conducted in a manner that is safe for the wedding couple, their family and friends, and the general public.

GRADUAL EXPANSION OF CINEMA CAPACITIES

21. We will continue to expand the capacity of venues where safe distancing and safe management measures are well adhered to. From 1 Oct 2020, large cinema halls (with more than 300 seats) will be allowed to have up to three zones of up to 50 patrons each. Other cinema halls would also be permitted to increase their capacity to 50% of their original operating capacity, or maintain the current limit of up to 50 patrons per hall, subject to the relevant safe management measures.

UPDATE ON COVID-19 TESTING FOR SPECIFIC COMMUNITY GROUPS

22. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Health Promotion Board (HPB), together with other government agencies, have commenced voluntary COVID-19 testing operations for taxi and Private Hire Car (PHC) drivers, and launched a pilot for stallholders at hawker centres, markets and coffeeshops in Marine Parade Constituency, as well as selected groups of food delivery personnel. These testing operations were conducted at temporary swab sites in the community (e.g. taxi depots) and at HPB's Regional Screening Centres (RSCs).

² Subject to premise capacity. The cap for solemnisations held in homes and the Registries of Civil and Muslim Marriages Building remains unchanged at a maximum of 10 persons (excluding the solemniser).

23. Voluntary testing operations for taxi/PHC drivers took place over the period 8 - 22 September 2020, resulting in more than 10,000 drivers tested to date. More than 750 stallholders and food delivery personnel were also tested at Marine Parade in the pilot run over the weekend (i.e. 19 – 20 September). All drivers, stallholders and food delivery personnel who have participated in these voluntary testing exercises have thus far tested negative for COVID-19. MOH would like to thank all parties for their support. Details on the roll-out of COVID-19 testing for stallholders and food delivery personnel will be made known when ready.

24. The results of the community testing operations indicate very low prevalence rates in the community. It is also an indicator that our safe management measures are helping keep our community safe as we gradually resume our daily activities.

UPDATING MASK-WEARING RULES FOR CHILDREN

25. The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have recently issued their guidance that young children below the age of 6 years may not have the coordination necessary for the proper use of masks. Therefore consistent adult supervision is recommended to ensure appropriate and safe use of masks by these young children.

26. Our current guidelines allow for greater flexibility on mask use for young children, and permit children 12 years old and below to use a face shield in place of a mask. These are already consistent with WHO and UNICEF’s recommendations but not fully reflected in our current laws. We will be therefore adjusting the legal cut-off age for children to wear masks to 6 years old and above, up from the current 2 years old and above.

27. To protect young children from COVID-19, we continue to strongly encourage young children to use a mask or face shield, especially if they are in a group setting (e.g. in preschool) or when interacting with others. Children and other persons who may not have the coordination necessary for the proper use of masks or face shields, should continue to be supervised when doing so.

FIGHTING COVID-19 TOGETHER

28. As we resume more economic and social activities, with more employees returning to the workplace and more persons engaging in business travel, the risk of community transmission increases. We strongly urge everyone to do their part by observing safe distancing and practising good personal hygiene to reduce the risk of transmission. Those who are unwell, including those showing early/mild symptoms, should be socially responsible and seek medical attention immediately and stay at home to prevent the spread of illness to others.

29. Together, we can continue in our fight against COVID-19, to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our community.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
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