

Immigration news alerts

COVID-19

COVID-19 (also previously referred to as 2019 Novel Coronavirus or 2019-nCoV) is a virus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. While it is unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people, authorities across the globe are issuing travel health notices related to this outbreak.

In this series of news alerts, we will provide you with immigration updates to keep you up to date on the rapidly evolving situation within our region.

Note: If you have trouble accessing any of the links below, please try to copy and paste them directly into your browser.

Indonesia

Temporary entry ban for foreign nationals *(Translated from Bahasa Indonesia)*

Ministry of Law and Human Rights | 31 March 2020

With effect from 2 April, 00.00 Western Indonesian Time, a temporary ban has been imposed on the entry and transit of foreign nationals, with the exception of:


- a. Foreign nationals holding Limited Stay Permits (E-ITAS) and Permanent Stay Permits (ITAP)

- b. Foreign nationals holding Diplomatic Visas and Official Visas
- c. Foreign nationals holding Diplomatic Stay Permits and Official Stay Permits
- d. Support workers for medical, sustenance, and humanity causes
- e. Transportation crew
- f. Foreign nationals working on strategic national projects

Foreigners who meet the abovementioned definitions will also need to fulfil the following requirements to gain entry:

- Present statement letter in English issued by the local government health authority certifying that the requestor is healthy
- Resided in a territory/country declared free from COVID-19 for the past 14 days
- Consent to be quarantined for 14 days under the supervision of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia

Foreign nationals holding Visitor Stay Permits (visas on arrival, visa exemptions, single and multiple visit visas), Limited Stay Permits or Permanent Stay Permits that have expired and/or are non-extendable shall be automatically granted an Emergency Stay Permit without having to file a request with the immigration office. The provision of the Emergency Stay Permit shall be free of charge.

 [More information](#)

Singapore

Work pass cancellation for Malaysian employees will only be allowed after 14 April

Ministry of Manpower (MOM) | 1 April 2020

In an email circular sent to employers on 1 April, the MOM stated that cancellation of work passes for Malaysian employees will only be allowed after 14 April, in view of Malaysia's extension of the Movement Control Order (MCO) until 14 April.

Employers are urged not to send employees home while the MCO is in place, unless the employee wants to return on his or her own accord. In this case, the employee must sign a [declaration](#), which must be handed over at the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) checkpoint before leaving Singapore. Once the employee has left Singapore, please [notify MOM](#) to cancel the work pass.

Failure to comply with these conditions may result in suspension of employer work pass privileges. Employers are also responsible for the housing arrangements of their employees until 14 April.

Expansion of temporary scheme to help businesses manage manpower needs

Ministry of Manpower | 1 April 2020

Under the six-month temporary scheme which started from 2 March, firms in these sectors can hire existing People's Republic of China (PRC) Work Permit

Holders (WPHs) with the agreement of their employers, without the workers having to leave Singapore.

With prior approvals for work pass holders to enter Singapore being restricted to a very small number to reduce the risk of importation, the MOM will be expanding the temporary scheme to help more firms hire workers who are already in Singapore. From 1 April, the scheme will be expanded as follows:

- a. **Allow inter-sectoral transfer of foreign workers for all sectors:** Firms in all sectors can hire existing WPHs (who are in Singapore) from other sectors, with the agreement of their current employers. This relaxes the current rule that only allows transfers within the respective sectors.
- b. **Allow transfers of foreign workers whose work permits are nearing expiry for all sectors:** Firms in all sectors can hire existing WPHs from their own or another sector, where the work permits are within 40 days of expiry. This is an extension of a scheme that exists for the construction and process sectors for transfers within their own sectors. Agreement from the current employer is not needed.

Hiring firms will be required to meet prevailing criteria under their respective sectors. This temporary scheme will be in place for five months until 31 August.



[More information](#)

Actions to be taken by employers to bring pass holders (work pass holders and their dependants) from overseas into Singapore

Ministry of Manpower | Updated as of 31 March 2020

All employers are **strongly urged** to defer bringing pass holders into Singapore. If you are unable to defer the pass holders' entry, you may proceed with the following. However, please note that chances of getting an entry approval are **very slim**:

1. Ensure you can fulfil the [additional responsibilities](#) to bring your work pass holders in. If they have dependants who are not issued any work passes, including Letter of Consent (LOC), they must also fulfil their [responsibilities towards their dependants](#).
2. [Request for MOM's entry approval](#) **before** the pass holders can enter Singapore.
3. Wait for MOM's approval **before** arranging for the pass holders to enter Singapore.

For the full details on the actions to be taken by employers to bring pass holders (work pass holders and their dependants) from overseas into Singapore, please refer to the link below.



[More information](#)

Employers in Singapore must allow staff to work from home or risk penalties

The Straits Times | 31 March 2020

Employers must allow their staff to work from home as far as possible or risk facing penalties. "This applies to all workplaces regardless of size, and it should be for all times, all days, and not some times, some days," said Manpower Minister

Josephine Teo.

The Manpower Ministry is looking to amend laws to increase potential penalties – including stop-work orders and fines—for firms who fail to implement these advisories.

MOM will be stepping up enforcement in coming weeks. But Mrs Teo also reassured firms that a “measured approach” will be taken when it comes to punishment meted out in what is already a period of economic hardship for many companies.



More information

Contact

Should you have any comments or questions arising from this newsletter, please feel free to contact me.



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