



ADVISORY FOR EMPLOYERS ON EMPLOYEES' NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL IN RESPONSE TO UPDATED TRAVEL ADVISORY (COVID-19)

Issued on 16 March 2020

1. In view of the evolving COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) situation, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced on 15 March 2020 that the public is advised to defer all non-essential travel to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 infection while overseas. The public is advised to review their travel plans as travellers would be subject to the prevailing measures imposed by their destination countries, and those imposed by Singapore upon their return.

2. The tripartite partners – the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) – are issuing this advisory to guide employers on setting clear **HR policies with regard to the treatment of employees who travel outside Singapore during this period of pandemic whether it is for work or otherwise**. Broadly, such HR policies could include any company-imposed Leave of Absence (company-LOA) from work, not exceeding 14 days, upon the employee's return. Unionised companies should consult the unions when developing the HR policies. **Employers must communicate and explain the HR policies to their employees before implementing them.**

A. Work-related travel plans

3. Employers should review work-related travel plans and defer all non-essential travel. They should instead explore alternative ways of business communications such as video-conferencing.

4. If work-related travel cannot be avoided, employers must ensure that their employees' health is adequately protected in accordance with [MOH guidelines](#).¹ In addition, **employers are expected to provide additional paid leave to the employee concerned** to cover:

- a. Quarantine or self-isolation period imposed by the destination country on the employee;
- b. Delay in employee's return to Singapore, due to circumstances such as flight availability, need for MOM's pre-entry approval to allow for orderly return of foreign employees, etc.; and
- c. Mandatory Stay-Home Notice (SHN) or company-LOA that the employee may be required to serve upon his return to Singapore.

5. Employers should accede to employees' request to not go on any work-related travel and should not penalise them for making such a request.

B. Non-work-related travel plans by employees

6. **Employers should remind employees of MOH's travel advisory to defer all non-essential travel plans to all countries.** Employers should obtain a travel declaration from their employees, on

¹ Employees on work related travel must not incur additional leave or expenses on their own, including medical, accommodation or daily expenses, if they are quarantined overseas or have contracted COVID-19.

whether they have any upcoming overseas travel plans to, including but not limited to, the affected areas covered by mandatory SHN requirements².

7. **For non-work related and non-essential travel outside Singapore, if an employee still proceeds to travel overseas even after issuance of MOH's travel advisory, the employer may require the employee to use his own annual leave entitlements to cover the duration of any mandatory SHN(where applicable), company-imposed LOA duration, or any extended period of travel in the destination country. If the employee does not have sufficient annual leave entitlements, the employer may allow the employee to consume advance leave or put the employee on no-pay leave. Employers are reminded to be fair and apply the relevant HR policies to all employees.**

8. For avoidance of doubt, the LOA/SHN Support Programme for employers and self-employed persons will **not** be applicable for travel (work-related or non-work related) that commenced after 15 March 2020. In other words, employers and self-employed persons will be eligible for the \$100 daily support when affected workers serve out mandatory SHN requirements if their travel out of Singapore commenced on or before 15 March 2020.

9. The tripartite partners urge all employers and employees to reduce travel abroad as far as possible during this period.

10. For further queries, please contact:

a. Ministry of Manpower

MOM Contact Centre, Email: mom_lrwd@mom.gov.sg
Online Enquiry via this link: www.mom.gov.sg/feedback
Website: www.mom.gov.sg

b. Ministry of Health

MOH General Hotline, Tel: (65) 6325 9220
Online Enquiry via this link: www.crms.moh.gov.sg/modfeedback.aspx
Website: www.moh.gov.sg

² With effect from 17 March 2020, the mandatory SHN requirements, and pre-entry approval requirements for foreign employees, are applicable to all travellers entering Singapore with a recent travel history (including transit) in the last 14 days to mainland China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, ASEAN countries, Japan, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.