

FAQS FOR SBF WEBPAGE

- 1. Why is MOM, jointly with SBF, introducing this temporary scheme for employers to hire existing Work Permit Holders (WPHs) who are available for transfer?**

MOM, jointly with SBF, has introduced this scheme following consultation with the industry, trade unions, and partner agencies. This is to give companies more flexibility to manage their manpower, in light of the COVID-19 situation.

Companies will be allowed to hire existing WPHs (who are in Singapore) from all sectors with the agreement of their current employers. Companies that are facing manpower shortages can save on search and recruitment expenses, while those with excess manpower can give their workers an opportunity to continue working in Singapore and save on repatriation costs.

- 2. When will the scheme end?**

The scheme will be in place till 28 February 2021.

- 3. Since this is a temporary scheme, would the worker's Work Permit validity upon transfer be also temporary?**

The duration of a Work Permit is generally two years, subject to the validity of the worker's passport, the security bond and the worker's employment period, whichever is shorter. For sectors that require PA, it will also be subjected to the PA duration.

- 4. Why is there an expansion of the temporary scheme from 1 April 2020 to allow inter-sectoral transfers of WPHs, as well as transfers of WPHs whose work permits are nearing expiry, for all sectors?**

With entry approvals for work pass holders into Singapore being restricted to a very small number to reduce the risk of COVID-19 importation, MOM has expanded the temporary scheme from 1 April 2020 to allow firms in all sectors to:

- a) hire WPHs from all sectors with the agreement of the current employers;
- b) hire WPHs from all sectors whose work permits are nearing expiry (agreement from the current employers is not needed).

Companies in need of additional manpower can now tap on a larger pool of WPHs from different sectors while reducing their search and recruitment costs.

Companies with excess manpower can also transfer their WPHs to other companies more quickly.

5. What is the process for companies interested to participate in this scheme?

Interested companies can approach SBF who will help connect employers who are looking to release their WPHs to those who are experiencing a shortage of manpower.

SBF will maintain a list of WPHs whom employers are looking to release due to excess manpower. This list will be accessible to companies that are looking to fill their manpower shortages.

Companies looking to release their WPH should contact SBF ManpowerConnect and furnish basic information of these workers including their years of experience, specific skills as well as their expected date of release.

Companies looking to hire should contact SBF ManpowerConnect with their manpower requirements, including the skills required of the workers. If they find a suitable worker from the database of available WPH, the company should liaise directly with the worker's current employer to obtain consent for the transfer of employment of the worker.

Companies (releasing and hiring employers) and the workers must mutually agree on a suitable transfer arrangement for the workers. Upon SBF informing MOM of the transfer arrangement, the hiring employer can proceed to submit a new work permit application for the WPH without the worker having to exit Singapore, via Work Permit Online (WPOL) after three working days but no later than a month. All prevailing work permit criteria apply for new applications. The releasing company does not need to cancel the work permit of their WPH. The work permit will be auto-cancelled once the hiring company issues the work permit for the worker.

6. Can a work permit application for existing WPH be made directly to MOM instead of going through SBF?

For transfers of WPHs with more than 40 days or less than 21 days before work permit expiry (including inter-sectoral transfers), companies can approach SBF at manpowerconnect@sbf.org.sg or visit [SBF's website](#) for more information. **Agreement from the current employers must be obtained.** All prevailing Work Permit criteria apply for new applications.

- Note: Companies in the construction, process and marine shipyard sectors can continue to use WPOL to hire existing WPHs within their respective sectors, with the agreement of the current employers. There is no need to go through SBF.

For transfers of WPHs with work permit expiring between 21 and 40 days (inclusive) (including inter-sectoral transfers), companies can submit their request to MOM via an [online form](#) or visit [MOM's website](#) for more information. **Agreement of the current employer is not needed.** All prevailing Work Permit criteria apply for new applications.

- Note: Companies in the construction and process sectors can continue to use WPOL to hire existing WPHs within their respective sectors, and whose Work Permits are expiring in 21 to 40 days' time. There is no need to submit a request via the online form.

7. Why is agreement from the current employer required for transfer of workers from 20 days to Work Permit expiry?

For transfers from 20 days to Work Permit expiry, agreement from the current employer must be obtained from 1 September 2020. This is to give the current employer sufficient time to make repatriation arrangements for their workers before the Work Permit expires, should the worker be unable to find another employer.

8. Is this scheme only available to SBF members?

The scheme has been extended to all companies in Singapore.

9. What are the fees that SBF will be charging?

SBF will provide the facilitation service free of charge for the whole period of the temporary scheme till 28 February 2021.

Separately, the hiring company will need to submit a new work permit application to MOM via WPOL. The current application fee of \$35 per application applies.

10. Is this scheme also applicable to Malaysian WPHs?

Companies are currently allowed to hire Malaysian WPHs who are in Singapore from any sector. Agreement from the current employer is not required. Hiring companies can continue to use WPOL to hire existing Malaysian WPHs who are in Singapore.

11. Can companies hire or transfer existing WPHs across sectors under this scheme?

Yes. From 1 April 2020, companies in all sectors can hire existing WPHs (who are in Singapore) from other sectors, with the agreement of their current employers.

12. Can Employment Agencies (EAs) represent those companies and/or workers to do this transfer?

Yes. EAs will need to provide SBF with the authorisation form that is signed by the employer. This form can be downloaded on MOM's website: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/employment-agencies/templates-and-forms>.