

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES TRAVELING TO AND FROM CHINA AND KNOWN AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN RESPONSE TO INCREASE IN CASES OF NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (nCoV) PNEUMONIA

1. In view of the novel coronavirus (“nCoV”) outbreak in Wuhan and other parts of China, MOH advises travellers to avoid travel to Hubei Province, China. MOH also reminds the public to continue to exercise caution and attention to personal hygiene when travelling to the rest of China.

Travel and work arrangements

2. With the anticipated increase in travel volume over the Chinese New Year holiday period, employers should advise employees to be vigilant and adopt the following precautions where relevant:

- a. Employers should check the Ministry of Health (MOH) website (www.moh.gov.sg) for the latest update on countries affected by nCoV so that a considered decision can be made on whether to proceed with business travel plans.
 - i. If business travel to known affected countries is unavoidable and alternative options such as video-conferencing are not possible, employers should arrange for their employees to consult a doctor for travel health advice prior to travel.
 - ii. For employees whose work is performed in known affected countries, employers should ensure that employees are adequately protected or monitored in accordance to MOH guidelines.
- b. Employers should advise employees to similarly check the list of countries on the MOH website before making any non-work-related travel plans.
- c. Employees should declare if they have travelled to China recently, or if they have any upcoming travel plans to China.
 - i. They should monitor their health for two weeks upon returning to Singapore and seek medical attention promptly if they feel unwell.
 - ii. As a precaution, the employer may require the employee to consult a doctor. They should also wear a mask if having respiratory symptoms such as cough or running nose and inform the doctor of their travel history.
- d. For employees who may need to stay at home to take care of family members who have travelled to known affected countries, the following arrangements can be considered:
 - i. Allow employees to use their Annual Leave
 - ii. For employees who have used up their leave entitlements, employers could consider granting them no pay leave during the period of absence
- e. Employers are encouraged to adopt a flexible approach in implementing work arrangements, such as arranging for telecommuting and remote communications access systems (e.g. teleconferencing) to allow the employees to work from home.
- f. Where applicable, by mutual agreement, employers and employees/unions could also agree on other arrangements for employees’ leave of absence relating to nCoV.

Medical benefits

3. If the affected employee has used up the medical benefits provided for, under the employment contract and/or collective agreement, employers should consider providing medical coverage as the employees concerned may face financial hardship during this time.

Other advisories to note

4. Employers should closely monitor nCoV-related developments and follow travel and health advisories on the MOH website. Employees are urged to cooperate with their employers. Both employers and employees are strongly encouraged to take precautionary steps to advisories issued by MOH.

Travellers should adopt the following precautions at all times:

- a. Avoid contact with live animals including poultry and birds, and consumption of raw and undercooked meats;
- b. Maintain high level of biosecurity at all times if coming into direct contact with live animals, poultry and birds in the course of work;
- c. Avoid crowded places and close contact with people who are unwell or showing symptoms of illness;
- d. Observe good personal hygiene at all times;
- e. 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 secretion after coughing or sneezing);
- f. Cover mouth with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing at the workplace, and dispose soiled tissue paper in the designated rubbish bins at the workplace immediately

5. Employers are also encouraged to refer to the Ministry of Manpower website (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/ncov>) regularly and familiarise themselves with guidelines that the Ministry may publish to guide employers on additional measures that can be adopted.

6. For further queries, please contact:

a. Ministry of Manpower

MOM Contact Centre, Tel: (65) 6438 5122

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