



GENERAL ADVISORY FOR WORKPLACE MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO DORSCON ORANGE SITUATION IN SINGAPORE

7 February 2020

1. With the occurrence of a few local cases of 2019-nCoV without any links to previous cases or travel history to China, MOH has stepped up its risk assessment from DORSCON Yellow to DORSCON Orange on 7 February 2020.
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 on the appropriate workplace measures to guide employers to continue running their operations while minimising risks of community spread of the 2019-nCoV.

Measures for Employers and Workplaces under DORSCON ORANGE

Business Continuity Plans and Managing Operations

3. Employers should step up their Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), and prepare for widespread community transmission. Employers which have not developed BCPs may wish to refer to the [Guide on Business Continuity Planning for 2019 novel coronavirus¹](#) to develop their BCPs as soon as possible.
4. Specifically, employers may wish to consider the following in their BCPs:
 - a. **Frontline staff** – For employers who manage frontline staff, they may wish to consider split team arrangements under their BCPs to ensure continuity of services. Split team arrangements refer to allocating employees under alternate teams (e.g. Team A & Team B) who can be deployed according to *different work schedules or at different work sites*. Team A and Team B should be physically segregated to avoid the risk of infection between teams. Employers could also cross-train employees and establish covering arrangements to minimise disruptions.
 - b. **Backend staff** – Employers are encouraged to allow backend staff to work from home where feasible. Employers can also consider split teams where some backend staff would work from the office while others work from home to minimise interaction. Employers may wish to procure the necessary equipment and review their work processes to facilitate employees to utilise flexible work arrangements.
 - c. **Temperature Screening**. Depending on the nature of business and environment, employers may consider measures in their BCPs to control and log access of visitors/customers to their workplaces, with temperature screening where necessary. In general, frontline staff who do temperature screening for visitors/customers should don masks. BCPs should give guidance to frontline staff to ask the customers who are unwell to reschedule their appointments and return another day when they are well.

¹ The guide also provides employers with useful resources such as examples of workflows to carry out visitor or temperature screening or contact tracing, as well as templates of the related forms.

5. Prior to executing the BCPs, employers should clearly communicate and explain to employees the measures that are being implemented as well as their roles and responsibilities. Where possible, unionised employers should engage their unions on their BCPs early to provide assurance to employees.

6. As advised by MOH, employers are advised to cancel or defer non-essential large-scale events. Those who choose to proceed should take additional precautions:

- a. Carry out temperature screening;
- b. Look out for respiratory symptoms such as cough or runny nose, and deny entry to unwell individuals;
- c. Remind participants not to attend if they have recent travel history to mainland China or are under leave of absence, and require travel declaration, if possible;
- d. Ensure that event venues are ventilated and are adequately equipped with facilities for hand washing;
- e. Increase the frequency of cleaning of commonly used areas; and
- f. Maintain a registration list of participants, if practical.

7. Employers should regularly check the MOM and MOH website for the latest information on the 2019-nCoV situation and review their BCP processes and measures to ensure that they remain relevant. MOM, MTI, NTUC and SNEF had also issued [an advisory](#) for employers on additional precautionary measures for stepping up cleaning of work premises and on serving customers who are unwell.

Taking Care of Employees

8. In view of DORSCON orange, we urge employers to take the following measures to safeguard the well-being of their employees:

- a. Personal health and hygiene – Employers are encouraged to remind their employees to take care of their own health. All employers should require their employees to take their temperature regularly (at least twice daily) and check for respiratory symptoms. Employees are also encouraged to observe good personal hygiene, e.g. wash their hands regularly and refrain from touching their face. Any employee who is unwell should leave the workplace immediately and consult a doctor.
- b. Vulnerable employees – Employers should pay special attention to older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions in planning their operations or work schedules. Where operationally feasible, employers should reduce exposure of such employees to frontline work.

9. Employees with caregiving needs – Employers are urged to be supportive of their employees' needs during this period if an employee needs to stay at home for non-work related reasons relating to the 2019-nCoV situation, e.g. caregiving needs for family members or for children should schools or childcare facilities close. In such situations, employers are encouraged to adopt flexible work arrangements to allow the employee to work from home. If working from home is not possible, employers can consider the following options, or a combination of the options, for the employees:

- a. Allow employees to use their leave entitlements such as hospitalisation leave, outpatient sick leave, annual leave, childcare/ family care leave;

- b. For employees who have used up their leave entitlements, be flexible in granting paid time-off or allow them to use advanced paid leave or no-pay leave; or
- c. Other mutually agreed arrangements between the employers and employees / unions.

10. Leave of Absence (LOA) – For employees who are required to be under LOA, employers must ensure that employees stay away from the workplace, but employers may allow employees to work from home. If working from home is not possible, employers should provide additional paid leave² for the LOA period. If this is not feasible, employers can consider the options in paragraph 9 above.

11. Quarantined employees – Employees who are served a Home Quarantine Order will be deemed to be on paid hospitalisation leave for the duration of the Order.

12. Employers and employees may wish to refer to MOH and MOM websites for more information on how employees could manage their essential needs (e.g. food and other personal matters) during quarantine or LOA, as well as the Quarantine Order Allowance Scheme and other business support schemes.

Conclusion – Staying United in Tackling the 2019-nCoV situation

13. Overall, MOM urges employers to be flexible and supportive of their employees' needs during this period. Employees are urged to cooperate with their employers in executing the BCPs. Both employers and employees are strongly encouraged to take precautionary steps according to advisories issued by MOM and MOH.

14. 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

² Additional paid leave should be paid at gross rate of pay which includes allowances that an employee is entitled to under a contract of service but excludes: additional payments (overtime, bonus, annual wage supplements etc), reimbursement of special expenses incurred during the course of employment, productivity incentive payments, travel, food and housing allowances.