

Entry Approval and Stay-Home Notice Requirements For All New and Returning Foreign Domestic Workers

Ref: 15 March 2020 - Employment practices - Foreign manpower - Work passes and permits

1. In view of the rapid spread of COVID-19 across the world, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has introduced new measures for Foreign Domestic Workers (FDWs). The new measures take into consideration that FDWs live with families and many look after young children and the elderly.

Entry Approval and Mandatory Stay-Home Notice Requirements

2. With effect from 16 March 2020, 2359 hours, MOM requires all employers and employment agencies (EAs) planning for their FDWs to enter Singapore, to obtain MOM's approval before they commence their journey. This applies to all new FDWs (i.e. in-principle approval holders) and returning FDWs travelling to Singapore from any country.
3. Upon arrival in Singapore, FDWs will be placed on a mandatory 14-day Stay-Home Notice (SHN). All new incoming FDWs must serve their SHN at an alternative accommodation (dormitories, hostels or hotels) before they can be deployed for employment. For FDWs returning from overseas, their employers can arrange for them to serve the SHN in the employer's residential address, or alternative accommodation.
4. Employers and EAs can apply for the entry approval online. Employers of direct-hire FDWs or employers of FDWs returning from overseas may also engage the services of an EA to assist in the entry approval and SHN arrangements. The party applying for the entry approval will be responsible for:
 - Ensuring that the FDW complies with the SHN.
 - Ensuring proper housing and upkeep arrangements for the FDW to serve the SHN without leaving the SHN accommodation. EAs and employers can visit www.mom.gov.sg/shn-alt-accom or contact MOM via mom_qops@mom.gov.sg if they need assistance on accommodation options.
 - Ensuring that FDW has access to a local mobile phone and remains contactable for compliance checks by MOM during the SHN period.
5. The party requesting for the entry approval should inform the FDWs not to make travel plans to Singapore until approval has been obtained. The EAs or employers will be required to send the MOM approval letter to the FDWs, who will need to show it to the airline staff during check-in and at the ICA checkpoint upon arrival in Singapore
6. EAs, employers and their FDWs have a collective duty to ensure that the entry approval and the SHN requirements are complied with. Enforcement action, including revocation of work passes and suspension of work pass privileges, will be taken if the requirements are not complied with. Demerit points will also be imposed on EAs whose actions result in violation of the requirements by the FDWs.

For more details on the requirements, please refer to annex A.

Assistance Package for Employers Affected by SHN Requirements

7. MOM will provide an assistance package to support employers (Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents) who are affected by the SHN requirements. Employers can apply for \$60 support daily per affected FDW and have their levy waived during the SHN period. Employers will be eligible for the assistance package if the FDW does not serve her SHN at the employers' registered residential address (i.e. if they serve their SHN at an alternative accommodation such as dormitories, hostels or hotels), and:
 - a. The FDW's work pass application is submitted to MOM on or before 15 March 2020; or
 - b. The FDW has a valid work pass, and left Singapore on or before 15 March 2020.
8. Employers can apply for the assistance and levy waiver within 90 days after the FDW has completed her SHN. More details on the application process will be provided at a later date.

Prospective Employers to Factor Requirements into Hiring Decisions

9. Prospective employers should factor in the new requirements, including cost implications, in their hiring decisions. They should also consider renewing their existing FDW's contract or hire a transfer FDW instead.

Further Advisory for FDWs and FDW Employers

Rest day arrangements

10. In view of the introduction of social distancing measures, MOM strongly encourages FDWs to spend their rest day at home during this period.
11. MOM recommends that employers discuss with their FDWs and reach a mutual agreement on rest day arrangements:
 - a. If FDWs agree to spend their rest day at home, employers should not assign work to them on the rest day.
 - b. If FDWs agree to forgo their rest days, employers must provide compensation in lieu of the rest day.
 - c. If FDWs have errands to attend to on their rest day, they should be encouraged to take their rest day on a weekday, when public spaces are less crowded.
 - d. Employers should also encourage their FDWs not to gather in public areas.

Home leave

12. For FDWs who have plans to travel back home, MOM advises that employers and FDWs discuss and come to a mutual agreement for the FDWs to postpone their home leave until the situation stabilises. Employers should inform their FDWs that based on current guidelines, they will be required to serve the SHN upon their return to Singapore. Employers should also inform their FDWs that the employer may not be obligated to pay for accommodation costs should the FDW serve the SHN in an alternative accommodation upon their return.

13. For further queries or clarifications, please contact:

a. Ministry of Manpower

Online Enquiry via this link: www.mom.gov.sg/feedback

Website: www.mom.gov.sg

Annex A: Factsheet on Stay-Home Notice Requirements for Foreign Domestic Workers

The Ministry of Manpower has introduced a mandatory Stay-Home Notice (SHN) for foreign domestic workers (FDWs). This factsheet provides additional information on the actions to be taken by employment agencies (EAs) and employers to facilitate the entry of new and returning FDWs into Singapore.

If the FDW is arriving in Singapore from 16 March 2020, 2359 hours, the EA/employer must do the following:

- (I) Obtain MOM's approval before your FDW can enter Singapore.
- (II) Ensure you can fulfil the additional responsibilities to bring your FDW in.

(I) Obtain MOM's Approval

Applications open daily from 12:01 pm and close at 12 pm the next day.

Requests received during this period are for arrivals within 14 days after the application closes (e.g. for arrivals in Singapore from 18 Mar 2020 to 31 Mar 2020, the employer can submit the request from 16 Mar 2020, 12:01 pm to 17 Mar 2020, 12 pm).

Applications submitted:

- By 12 pm: Will receive the outcome on the same day.
- After 12 pm: Will receive the outcome the next day.

EA/Employers should obtain MOM's approval before confirming the FDW's flight to Singapore.

For new FDWs who are holding on to an in-principle approval (IPA), the FDW will need to wait to complete their 14-day Stay-Home Notice before they can complete their medical examination and get their Work Permit issued. MOM will automatically extend their Short-Term Visit Pass and IPA by 14 days, and notify employers when the extension is done. First time FDWs should complete the Settling-in Programme (SIP) within 3 days of serving their SHN.

(II) Additional responsibilities

EA/Employer's responsibilities

Before requesting for MOM's approval, party applying for the entry approval should take note of the additional responsibilities:

Before the FDW leaves for Singapore, the party applying for the entry approval must:

- Secure a suitable place of residence for her to complete the 14-day Stay-Home Notice (SHN). The FDW should be housed in a dormitory, hostel, or hotel.
- Ensure she has a SIM card with a Singapore telephone number for MOM to contact her.

After the FDW arrives in Singapore, the party applying for the entry approval must:

- Explain and ensure the FDW understands the additional conditions imposed for the SHN period she needs to comply with.
- Ensure the FDW fully complies with the additional conditions imposed.
- Arrange to send the FDW from the airport directly to her temporary accommodation or place of residence to serve the 14-day SHN immediately upon arrival in Singapore.
- Ensure the FDW downloads WhatsApp on her mobile phone and responds to MOM's phone calls, WhatsApp video calls or SMSes within 1 hour during the 14-day SHN period. This includes ensuring that her prepaid card is sufficiently topped up and she is able to make video calls using WhatsApp.
- Arrange to provide her with food and other daily essentials during the SHN period as she is not allowed to leave her place of residence.
- Take care of the FDW's medical needs (e.g. visits to a clinic nearest to her place of residence, re-scheduling follow-up visits for chronic conditions, refilling of prescription, etc.).

If the applying party is unable to fulfil the obligations above, he/she should not bring your FDW into Singapore.

What FDWs must do during their 14-day SHN

FDWs must:

- Not leave their place of residence.
- Not have any visitors to their place of residence and must minimise contact with others.
- Download WhatsApp on their mobile phones and reply to MOM's phone calls, WhatsApp video calls or SMSes within 1 hour.
- Maintain a record of persons they come into close contact with.
- Act responsibly based on advisories issued by the Singapore Government.

Penalties for non-compliance

EAs, Employers and their FDWs have a collective duty to ensure that the SHN is complied with.

MOM will not hesitate to take enforcement measures against any parties who do not comply with the requirements. Measures include criminal proceedings, work pass revocations and withdrawal of work pass privileges. Demerit points will be imposed on EAs whose actions result in violation of SHN by the FDW.

Source of Information, Guidelines, Compliance, Laws, Rules & Regulations is from the relevant authority of Singapore:

- **MINISTRY OF MANPOWER (MOM)**

PLEASE VISIT US ONLINE WITH THE BELOW HYPERLINK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FDW:

www.ACHIBIZ.com