



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

1 April 2020

### EXPANSION OF TEMPORARY SCHEME TO HELP BUSINESSES MANAGE MANPOWER NEEDS

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) announced on 25 February 2020 that it had partnered with the Singapore Business Federation (SBF) to introduce a temporary scheme to help firms in the manufacturing and services sectors better manage their manpower needs in view of the COVID-19 situation.

2 Under the six-month temporary scheme which started from 2 March 2020, firms in these sectors can hire existing PRC Work Permit holders (WPHs) with the agreement of their employers, without the workers having to leave Singapore. As of 30 March 2020, MOM and SBF have helped 490 companies in these sectors hire 280 PRC WPHs.

3 With prior approvals for work pass holders to enter Singapore being restricted to a very small number to reduce the risk of importation, MOM will be expanding the temporary scheme to help more firms hire workers who are already in Singapore. **From 1 April 2020, the scheme will be expanded as follows:**

- A. **Allow inter-sectoral transfer of foreign workers for all sectors:** Firms in all sectors can hire existing WPHs (who are in Singapore) from other sectors, with the agreement of their current employers. This relaxes the current rule that only allows transfers within the respective sectors.
- B. **Allow transfers of foreign workers whose work permits are nearing expiry for all sectors:** Firms in all sectors can hire existing WPHs from their own or another sector, where the work permits are within 40 days of expiry. This is an extension of a scheme that exists for the construction and process sectors for transfers within their own sectors. Agreement from the current employer is not needed.

4 The hiring firms will be required to meet prevailing criteria under their respective sectors. This temporary scheme will be in place for five months until 31 August 2020.

5 These new measures will give firms in all sectors even more flexibility to manage their manpower needs. Firms facing a shortage of manpower can tap on a bigger pool of experienced WPHs and save on search and recruitment costs. Firms with excess manpower can transfer their WPHs to other firms more quickly, giving their WPHs the opportunity to continue working in Singapore and save on repatriation costs.

6 For inter-sectoral transfers (earlier than 40 days before work permit expiry), firms can approach SBF at [manpowerconnect@sbf.org.sg](mailto:manpowerconnect@sbf.org.sg) or visit their [website](#) for more information. For transfers of WPHs from 40 days before work permit expiry (including inter-sectoral transfers), firms can submit their request via an [online form](#) or visit [MOM's website](#) for more information.

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**For media queries, please contact**

Jon Nio  
Assistant Director  
Corporate Communications Department  
DID: 6499 6008  
HP: 9296 2662  
Email: [jon\\_nio@mom.gov.sg](mailto:jon_nio@mom.gov.sg)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Are there any fees involved for these new COE measures under this temporary scheme?**

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.

SBF is providing the facilitation service for free for the whole period of the temporary scheme till 31 Aug 2020.

**2. How long will these new COE measures be implemented for? Will the temporary scheme be extended?**

The new temporary COE measures will be implemented from 1 April to 31 August 2020. MOM may extend the arrangement, should the situation require for it.