



Singapore Employment Law – Covid 19 Updates

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Singapore Government has introduced measures to restrict the entry of foreigners into Singapore in order to reduce the number of imported cases. Employers have been urged to defer bringing in foreign employees until after the circuit breaker period. The Ministry of Manpower ("MOM") will only approve a limited number of new pass applications during this circuit breaker period. Employers should only attempt to apply if the foreigner is already in Singapore. MOM has also automatically extended the validities of all in-principle approvals ("IPAs") expiring from 21 March 2020 by two months, hence allowing employers to defer the entry of their foreign employees.

For foreign employees whose employers have obtained MOM's Notification Letter and applied for their passes to be issued but are unable to proceed with the registration of their FIN card details and biometrics (given the closure of MOM's services centre at least until 1 June 2020), these employees may remain in Singapore and commence work with the Notification Letter provided by MOM if they can telecommute or if they work in essential services. Employers will not be required to extend the validity period of the Notification Letter as the pass has already been issued. The pass holder can proceed to make an appointment once the services centre resumes operations.

For new applicants with IPAs and existing pass holders who are currently overseas, employers must obtain entry approval from MOM for them to enter Singapore. Those with Long Term Visit Passes ("LTVPs") issued by ICA need to request for ICA's entry approval, even if they have LOCs issued by MOM. At present, only very limited approvals will be granted. Priority to be granted entry approval will be given to companies that provide essential services and are supported by the relevant government agencies. Those that are not will be rejected.

Even after entry approval is granted, the employee must serve a mandatory 14-day Stay Home Notice period at a designated facility upon their arrival into Singapore. Employers must also be able to fulfil certain **additional responsibilities** to bring work pass holders in.

Existing work passes expiring between 6 May 2020 to 5 June 2020 will be automatically extended until 1 July 2020. In the event that a pass holder has ceased working for the employer but the employer is unable to send a pass holder home due to travel restrictions imposed by their home countries, employers can **apply for extension of Special Pass /Short-Term Visit Pass**. MOM may then extend the employees' stay for another month.