

9 April 2020

## **Suspension of Activities at Workplace Premises to Reduce COVID-19 Transmission**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **1) How will I know whether my hotel is carrying out an essential activity and should therefore be exempted from suspension?**

Only essential services and related supply chains are exempted from the suspension. They include all licensed hotels as well as the transit hotels located in Changi Airport Terminal 1, 2 and 3 that are:

- housing people on Stay Home Notice (SHN)
- a Government Quarantine Facility (GQF)
- a Community Isolation Facility (CIF)
- providing accommodation for existing occupants, students, foreigners or foreign workers affected by travel restrictions.

These hotels can continue to operate until informed otherwise, but must close all on-site recreational facilities. Their F&B facilities may remain open only for takeaway or delivery. Hotels must also minimise the numbers of on-site staffing. All hotel staff who can perform their roles remotely (e.g., finance, HR) must telecommute.

They are required to submit details of their plans to operate with enhanced safe distancing measures in place at <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg> by end of 13 Apr. This is so that agencies can verify the nature of activities and size up the number of workers that have to operate on-site.

#### **2) Since hotels are classified as essential services, why do I still need to submit details of my operations in order to continue operating?**

This is so that agencies can verify the nature of your business activities and assess the number of workers that need to operate on-site. All activities of your hotel that can take place through telecommuting must be conducted through telecommuting from home.

#### **3) My hotel is carrying out an essential activity listed in Annex A and I have submitted details of my operations and manpower more than 24 hours ago but I have not gotten a reply. What should I do?**

You may continue with on-site operations until you receive a reply from us. Do check your junk mail folder and add Covid\_GoBusiness@mti.gov.sg to your safe recipients list.

**4) I operate a hotel/hostel that is not licenced. Can I apply for an exemption?**

You must suspend your on-site activities unless you are:

If your hotel is not supporting SHN; GQF; CIF and accommodation needs of students, foreigners, and foreign workers affected by travel restrictions, as well as for existing occupants only, you must suspend your on-site activities.

If you believe that your company's activities are essential and you would like to be considered for an exemption, please submit an application through <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>, with the relevant supporting information including justifications for why your activities are essential. All applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. You must wait for approval of your exemption application before you re-commence onsite activities.

***Bookings and Extension of Stays***

**5) I have existing guests staying in my hotel, can my hotel continue to remain open?**

Yes, but no new bookings can be accepted except from people on SHN, healthcare workers or guests who are unable to leave Singapore because of travel restrictions.

You must close all on-site recreational facilities. Your F&B facilities may remain open only for takeaway or delivery. You must also minimise the numbers of on-site staffing. All hotel staff who can perform their roles remotely (e.g., finance, HR) must telecommute.

**6) What about Singaporeans and local residents who have booked staycations with us during this period?**

As everyone should stay home except for essential purposes, hotels cannot take in any staycation guests as locals cannot check-in to hotels during this period.

**7) I have received queries from healthcare workers who wish to make reservations to stay at my hotel as it is nearer to their workplace. Can I accept these bookings?**

In support of our frontline healthcare workers, hotels can accept healthcare workers but should verify that the person is an existing employee of a healthcare provider by verifying their staff pass.

**8) I receive bookings through OTA websites. What should I do? Do I reject all the bookings?**

Hotels cannot accept new bookings except for SHN guests, guests who are unable to leave Singapore because of travel restrictions, or healthcare workers.

As due diligence, hotels should get contact information of guests who made this booking through their OTA partners and get in touch with the person who placed the reservation to find out the purpose of the booking. If it supports the purposes mentioned which allow hotels to remain open, the hotel may take in the booking. If not, hotel should reject and refund the bookings accordingly.

**9) Can I accept bookings from Singaporeans who wish to stay in a more conducive environment or those who wish to isolate themselves from their families?**

We would discourage hotels from accepting bookings from Singaporeans who have residential homes. However, should there be requests for self-isolation from their families, hotels can accept such bookings if the bookings are made for the entire duration of the circuit breaker i.e. until 4 May 2020. This is to minimise movement and interactions in public and private spaces.

**10) What do I do with bookings received prior to this new ruling?**

All bookings made for check-in between 7 April and 4 May 2020 (both dates inclusive) will have to be deferred or cancelled. If there are guests who have checked-in prior to 7 April 2020, these guests are considered as existing occupants and can stay at the hotel until their original check out date.

Hotel will need to undertake due diligence to check with persons who made the reservation on their purpose of stay. If the purpose of stay is related to supporting Stay Home Notice (SHN); Government Quarantine Facility (GQF); Community Isolation Facility (CIF); and accommodation needs of students, foreigners, and foreign workers affected by travel restrictions, as well as for existing occupants only, the hotel may take in these bookings.

**11) Can hotels take in bookings from persons who have finished serving their SHN but would like to seek cheaper accommodation alternatives to continue to self-isolate from their family, or have no other places of residence to return to?**

If the guest has finished serving his/her 14-day SHN and has no other residential home to return to, or wish to continue his/her self-isolation, the guest may extend his/her

stay at the hotel. The hotel can continue to house this guest as he/she is considered an existing guest.

Hotels can accept **new** reservations made by persons who have served out their SHN if the bookings are made for the entire duration of the circuit breaker i.e. until 4 May 2020. This is to minimise movement and interactions in public and private spaces. Hotel should undertake due diligence to verify the SHN letter to ensure that the guest had indeed completed his/her 14-day SHN, and there is no gap between the end of SHN and new check-in date.

- 12) Can hotels take in bookings from foreign workers and/or employers on behalf of their foreign workers, who are not affected by the travel restrictions, but are looking for alternative accommodation e.g. cheaper alternative, or those working in essential services who wish to stay apart from their families.**

Hotels can accept these reservations if the bookings are made for the entire duration of the circuit breaker i.e. until 4 May 2020. This is to minimise movement and number of contacts. Hotel should undertake due diligence to verify the work passes of this group of foreign workers, and check with their employers if their companies are considered as essential services.

However, hotels should undertake due diligence to ensure these foreign workers are not hotel-hopping by checking where their last place of stay was.

#### ***F&B and Recreational Facilities***

- 13) Can my non-SHN guests dine in my hotel's F&B establishments and restaurants?**

Your F&B facilities may remain open only for takeaway or delivery. To reduce interactions, dine-in service is not allowed and the guests should not consume any food or drinks in your F&B establishments. You can deliver the food to their rooms but they cannot dine in your F&B outlets and restaurants.

While patrons and delivery drivers can continue to enter the F&B premises to access take-away services, there will be no dine-in service, and nobody should consume any food or drinks on-site whilst waiting for takeaway food.

F&B outlets that remain open for delivery or takeaway must adhere to the enhanced Safe Distancing Measures in their premises, and minimise crowds by ensuring patrons are spaced at least 1 metre apart at all times (i.e. within the premise and when queuing).

**14) Can my local guests/long stay guests continue to use the amenities such as swimming pool and gym?**

No. You must close all on-site recreational facilities. Your F&B facilities may remain open only for takeaway or delivery. This applies to service apartments and condominiums.

**15) Can my non-SHN guests leave their rooms and hang around at the pool area?**

Guests who are not serving SHN or quarantine order are strongly encouraged to remain in their rooms at all times, and avoid going out unnecessarily, except to purchase daily necessities, essential services, or for urgent medical needs. There should be no social contact with other guests in the hotel and other members of public.

**16) Can club lounge facility, with precautionary and social distancing measures in place, be made available to guests?**

Hotels must close all on-site recreational facilities including club lounge facility. F&B facilities may remain open only for takeaway or delivery. The elevated set of safe distancing measures as a circuit breaker is to pre-empt the trend of increasing local transmission of COVID-19. The aim is to reduce movements and interactions in public and private spaces. There should be no social gatherings. Social contact should be confined to immediate family members living in the same household during this period.

***Operations and Staffing***

**17) Should the SHN housekeeping and laundry service protocols apply to all in-house guests? Can hotel service the guest rooms for general maintenance and/or engineering works and repairs?**

Hotels may continue with normal housekeeping and laundry services for non-SHN guests, and all other repairs and general maintenance works required. Social contact should be minimised.

**18) I have workers who stay in-house. If my hotel is closed, must I evict them as well?**

You can remain open if your staff are staying in the hotel. However, you cannot accept new bookings except for SHN guests, guests who are unable to leave Singapore because of travel restrictions.

**19) Am I expected to keep my employees? Will the Government be reimbursing me for my manpower costs?**

We strongly encourage hotels to retain your workers. The recently announced Support and Stabilization package 2 includes enhanced support measures such as an increased Job Support Scheme (to 75%) and other schemes to upskill workers and redesign jobs to prepare the sector for when business demand returns.

**20) As several employees are needed at the hotel to support the daily essential operational tasks, can they still continue to have their duty meals at the staff canteen if the necessary precautions and safe distancing measures are in place?**

Hotel can continue to operate the staff canteen and provide individually-portioned meal for their employees. Safe distancing measures must be observed and employees are required to sit at least 1-meter apart from each other. Meal times should be staggered to prevent employees from congregating in groups.

Additionally, hotel should reduce the number of employees working on site to a minimal level.

**21) How do hotel determine the minimum staffing level?**

Hotel should determine the staffing level based on the occupancy rate and critical functions which need to support hotel operations, including front office, F&B and housekeeping.

However, all business activities that can take place through telecommuting must be done from home. Hotels must continue to put in place precautionary measures and reduce close contact between staff working on site by:

- Minimising number of on-site staff as much as possible
- Maximise the number of staff who can telecommute
- Staggering working hours
- Postponing all group events; and
- Implementing shift work and/or split team arrangements

***Others***

**22) My hotel is undergoing renovation. Can the renovation works continue?**

Renovation works should be suspended unless these development projects are assessed to be in critical stages of construction and cannot be suspended due to

potential safety risks, maintenance and services to ensure public safety and emergency repairs and maintenance.

Safety critical works include works assessed by BCA to be in critical stages of construction, and cannot be stopped suddenly due to potential public safety risks. However, these projects should be wound down to a state where works may be safely stopped.

**23) My company (laundromat) offers services to hotels which are listed as Essential Services. Can I be exempted?**

Please submit an application through <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>. You will need to provide details such as the names of the essential firms and the goods and/or services that you provide to these firms. We will respond to you within 48 hours if you are allowed to continue operating during the suspension period. You may continue with your support of the essential service while waiting for our response if you have safe distancing practices in place. Should your services be found not to be a critical activity in support of an essential service, you will be required to stop operations.