

# ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO PREVENT FURTHER IMPORTATION AND SPREAD OF COVID-19 CASES

 **13TH MAR 2020**

Singapore will implement additional precautionary measures to slow the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. These include travel advisories against all non-essential travel and border restrictions for Italy, France, Spain and Germany, as well as additional social distancing measures within Singapore.

2. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global pandemic on 11 March 2020, and called upon governments around the world to do more to combat the virus. The WHO cited Singapore as a country that has already taken proactive measures to contain the virus. Still, as the co-chairs of the Multi-Ministry Taskforce said on Tuesday, and as the Prime Minister warned in a national broadcast yesterday, we must take additional measures, including further temporary travel restrictions, to break the transmission of the virus.

3. In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased more than ten-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled. There are now more than 125,000 cases in 118 countries, and more than 4,000 deaths. In Singapore, as of 12 March, almost 25% of our total number of confirmed cases were imported. Over the past ten days alone, there have been 23 imported cases, or nearly a third of all new cases. These included 13 cases with travel history to European countries, and six cases from Indonesia.

## **Travel advisory**

4. In light of the rapid spread of the virus across Europe, the Ministry of Health (MOH) advises Singaporeans to defer all non-essential travel to Italy, France, Spain and Germany. The four countries have had very high numbers of

cases and very high rates of increase. In addition, our existing advisory to defer all travel to Hubei province in mainland China, and non-essential travel to the rest of mainland China, Iran<sup>1</sup>, Japan and the Republic of Korea, remains.

5. Singaporeans are also advised to exercise caution when travelling to all countries affected by COVID-19, especially those which have exported cases (see [Annex](#) ([https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/annex13-3.pdf?sfvrsn=8ef33767\\_4](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/annex13-3.pdf?sfvrsn=8ef33767_4))). These include our neighbouring countries, like Indonesia and the Philippines, and those further afield, like the United Kingdom. The global picture is evolving, and there could be other countries that may be affected.

6. Singaporeans who have made plans to travel during the upcoming March school holidays are advised to review their plans based on the latest advisory. All travellers will be subject to the prevailing travel measures imposed by their destination countries, and those imposed by Singapore upon their return home. As Singapore's measures will evolve according to the global situation, Singaporeans should check the MOH website (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>) (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>) for the latest measures.

### **Border restrictions**

7. Given the increase in imported cases from European countries, we are putting in place new border restrictions.

a. From 15 March 2020, 2359 hours, all new visitors with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days will not be allowed entry into Singapore, or transit through Singapore.

b. From 15 March 2020, 2359 hours, the following groups will be issued with a Stay-Home Notice (SHN):

i. Residents (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents) with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days; and

ii. Long-term pass holders (including work passes, Student's Pass, Dependant's Pass, and Long-term Visit Pass) with recent travel history to Italy, France, Spain and Germany within the last 14 days.

8. Persons under SHN will have to remain in their place of residence at all times for 14 days after returning to Singapore.

9. As previously announced, residents and long-term pass holders returning from mainland China (outside Hubei province<sup>2</sup>), Iran, and the Republic of Korea will continue to be issued a 14-day SHN upon return to Singapore.

10. All these border restrictions are temporary, and will be reviewed regularly based on the global situation.

### **Additional precautionary measures**

11. Since 4 March 2020, travellers entering Singapore and exhibiting fever and/or other symptoms of respiratory illness are required to undergo a COVID-19 swab test at the checkpoint, regardless of travel history. With immediate effect, all such travellers will also be issued a 14-day SHN<sup>3</sup>, which they will have to serve in full even if the result of the swab test is negative. Those who meet the clinical suspect case definition will be conveyed to the hospital for follow-up.

12. With immediate effect, Singapore will cease port calls for all cruise vessels.

### **Social distancing**

13. In order to reduce the risk of local transmission, we will introduce requirements and advisories for events and gatherings, workplaces and public venues. This is to limit large crowds gathering in close proximity over a prolonged duration.

#### Advisory for events and gatherings

14. All ticketed cultural, sports and entertainment events, with 250 participants or more, are to be deferred or cancelled. For events that have already been committed (e.g. tickets sold), organisers must demonstrate that satisfactory precautionary measures have been put in place before they can proceed.

15. For all other mass gatherings including private functions and religious services, organisers are advised to put in place the following precautions:
- a. Reduce the scale of events to below 250 participants where possible;
  - b. Reduce the crowding of participants and improve ventilation. For example, participants could be seated at least a metre apart from one another, and be advised to reduce contact with others (e.g. avoid shaking hands);
  - c. Put in place temperature and health screening measures, as well as turn away persons who are unwell; and
  - d. Put in place measures to facilitate contact tracing if needed, such as obtaining contact details of participants.
16. Participants are also advised to practise social responsibility - monitor their own health condition and avoid attending gatherings and events if unwell.

#### Advisory for workplaces

17. Employers are advised to put in place measures to reduce close contact where feasible. For example, employers should implement tele-commuting and video-conferencing where possible, as well as stagger work hours, and allow employees to commute at off-peak hours. Seating in meeting rooms and work stations could also be spaced apart.

#### Advisory for public venues

18. Owners/ tenants of venues which are accessible to the public are advised to put in place measures to reduce close contact by patrons/customers, where possible. For instance:
- a. Dining venues could set seats at least a metre apart;
  - b. Entertainment venues and tourist attractions (e.g. casinos, cinemas, theme parks, museums, and galleries) could limit the number of visitors at any one time, and/or increase spacing among visitors; and

c. Sports centres with indoor facilities (e.g. gyms, private academies) could limit the number of patrons, introduce physical separation measures, increase the frequency of cleaning, as well as issue advisories to reduce unnecessary contact, and practise public hygiene.

19. The above advisories for events, gatherings, workplaces and public venues will be subject to further review based on the global situation.

## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**13 MARCH 2020**

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' advisory issued on 8 January 2020 against travelling to or remaining in Iran due to rising tensions in the Middle East remains in place.

<sup>2</sup> Persons returning from Hubei province are subject to quarantine.

<sup>3</sup> Places where foreign visitors serve out their SHN period can include hotels.

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