
Singapore Issues Advice for Businesses amid COVID-19 Pandemic

March 25, 2020 Written by [Ayman Falak Medina](#)

- *Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has issued several measures that could impact how businesses operate in the country.*
- *These measures cover new travel restrictions, the issuance of visas and work passes, and the support program provided for businesses and self-employed persons (SEPs).*
- *Businesses and self-employed persons impacted by the government's Stay-Home Notice (SHN) requirements can receive financial support.*

Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has issued several measures that could impact how businesses operate in the country.

These measures cover new travel restrictions, the issuance of visas and work passes, and the support program provided for businesses and self-employed persons (SEPs) affected by the Stay-Home Notice (SHN) requirements.

The government hopes this will help minimize the health risk to employees while also ensuring that businesses can continue. With the country recording more than [500 cases](#), companies, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have had to adjust their business continuity planning (BCP).

Investors and business owners should seek the advice of qualified [local advisors](#) who can help with their specific circumstances.

Visas and employment permits

The MOM has suspended issuing all visa types for the People's Republic of China (PRC) passport holders as well as Iranian passport holders. The visa-free transit facility for PRC passport holders has also been suspended in addition to citizens of Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Visitors from these nations, however, who currently hold a visa to enter Singapore in the form of Work Passes, Dependant Passes, Student Passes, and Long-term Visit passes will still be allowed to enter the country, provided they adhere to a 14-day SHN

quarantine. Visitors need to provide to immigration officials the address and contact details of where they will serve the SHN period.

Singaporean businesses must seek approval from the MOM regarding employees returning to the country. This also applies to employees wishing to bring their dependents who are not working in Singapore.

If approved, the MOM will issue an approval letter to the employer to be given to the employee. The employee must show this letter to airline staff and immigration officials at the airport in Singapore.

Visitors from ASEAN and all other countries and regions will have to undergo the same procedure for both short-term visitors and long-term pass holders. Short-term visitors from ASEAN countries will be required to submit the requisite health information for approval before traveling.

Renewal of work visas

The government has advised those looking to renew Work Passes, Student Passes, Dependant Passes, or Long-term Visit Passes, to do so early. The government will cooperate with businesses to facilitate this process. Businesses are reminded that:

- Work permits can be renewed six weeks prior to expiry; and
- S pass, EntrePass, Employment Pass, Long-term Visit passes, and Dependent's Pass can be renewed six months prior to expiry.

LOA/SHN Support Programs

The government has established the [Leave of Absence \(LOA\)/Stay-Home Notice program](#) to support businesses and self-employed persons affected by LOA or SHN requirements. The support comes in the form of fiscal incentive available per worker affected.

Employers or self-employed persons will be eligible to receive S\$100 (US\$69) per affected worker for the duration of the LOA or SHN requirement.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this financial support, the affected worker must be a Singaporean citizen, permanent resident, or work pass holders.

Additionally, the worker must have returned from:

- Mainland China on or after January 14, 2020;
- South Korea (Cheongdo county or Daegu city) after February 26, 2020;
- Iran, South Korea, or northern Italy (Lombardy, Giulia, Friuli-Venezia, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, Piedmont, Aosta Valley, Trentino-Alto Adige/South Tyrol) after March 4, 2020;
- Italy, France, Spain, or Germany after March 15, 2020; and
- ASEAN countries, the UK, Switzerland, or Japan, after March 16.

Businesses should note that if the affected worker is able to work from home, then the company is not eligible to receive the LOA/SHN support.

How to apply

Employers can [apply](#) for the support program within 90 days from the last day of the LOA or SHN.

The employer will also need to submit proof of the affected worker's travel to the infected regions in the form of airline tickets, entry and departure stamps, and the scan of passports.

Employers will also need to provide proof of employment in the form of payslips as well as the Central Provident Form (PF) for December 2019 and January 2020 (only for local workers).

Self-employed persons will need to submit income tax returns for Year of Assessment 2020.

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