

RESUMING OUR TRANSITION TO RESILIENCE

 **11TH MAR 2022**

On 16 February 2022, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced the streamlining of Safe Management Measures (SMMs) to five core parameters (SMM 1 – 5). SMM 1 – 5 is not an easing of measures, but a streamlining of the many rules that have accumulated over two years, which made the rules difficult to understand, remember and follow. However, in view of the surge in daily cases and the heavy workload in the healthcare sector, the MTF had nevertheless deferred the effective date of SMM 1 – 5.

2. Since then, daily local case numbers have begun to fall gradually over the past week. Workload for our hospitals, primary care and COVID-19 treatment facilities remains high but is stabilising. The Ministry of Health (MOH) will continue to take active measures to support our hospitals. These include enhancing healthcare manpower, including with the help of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF); transferring as many patients as possible to care facilities outside of public hospitals, and encouraging the public to refrain from visiting hospital emergency departments if they are infected and experiencing symptoms which are not severe.

3. In the meantime, we should proceed with the simplification and streamlining of SMMs. This is to make things simpler to understand and remember, so that everyone can better do their part. It also prepares us for further easing of measures and the safe resumption of normal activities, when conditions are right and the healthcare workload has eased, which we expect in the coming weeks.

4. We will also facilitate the safe resumption of travel by further simplifying testing regimes for travellers on the Vaccinated Travel Lane. Just as streamlining SMMs will pave the way for further relaxations in time to come, this will pave the way for our subsequent transition to a Vaccinated Travel concept where all vaccinated travellers, especially residents who need to travel for work or studies, can enjoy quarantine-free entry and re-entry into Singapore without the need to apply for entry approval.

Updates on Local Situation

5. Daily case numbers have fallen from the peak 7-day moving average (7DMA) of 18,280 cases to a 7DMA of 16,392 in the past week. The number of cases hospitalised has also begun to fall from the peak of 1,726 to 1,450. The incidence of severe illness continues to be significantly lower than during the Delta wave. In the past 28 days, 0.04% and 0.2% of local cases required ICU care or oxygen supplementation respectively.

6. Our healthcare workers continue to face a heavy workload. Hence, we urge everyone to continue exercising personal responsibility. If you test positive for COVID-19, self-isolate in line with MOH's health protocols 1 and 2. Do not go to work or engage in social activities until you have fulfilled the conditions to exit self-isolation, that is with a negative Antigen Rapid Test (ART) after at least 72 hours from first testing positive for COVID-19.

Proceeding with Streamlining of SMMs

7. As the situation stabilises, we will now proceed with the planned streamlining of our COVID-19 SMM rules, which was earlier announced on 16 February 2022. The simplification exercise is not an easing of rules, but will better enable everyone to do their part as we transition to a COVID-19 resilient nation and resume more social and economic activities safely.

8. From **15 March 2022**, we will streamline the SMMs based on the **SMM 1 – 5** framework:

- a. Group sizes;
- b. Mask-wearing;
- c. Workplace requirements;
- d. Safe distancing; and
- e. Capacity limits.

9. The streamlined SMMs are described below and summarised in [Annex A](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-(2)fdde171cd2e5423580eaa19b7986a2ac.pdf?sfvrsn=8e3b5585_0) ([https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-\(2\)fdde171cd2e5423580eaa19b7986a2ac.pdf?sfvrsn=8e3b5585_0](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-(2)fdde171cd2e5423580eaa19b7986a2ac.pdf?sfvrsn=8e3b5585_0)).

Group Sizes

10. Group size directly affects the number of close contacts in society, and is likely to be the key factor in driving infections. Hence, the permissible group size for social gatherings remains at 5 persons.

11. The maximum number of unique visitors per household will be adjusted from 5 persons per day, to 5 persons at any one time. This can be perceived as an easing of measures, as many infections do take place at home. However, households typically do not receive multiple sets of visitors outside of festive periods, and those who want to meet multiple groups of friends have been doing so outside of their homes. We urge everyone to continue to exercise restraint in meeting multiple groups of friends, be it outside or at home, and especially if you live with vulnerable persons.

Mask-Wearing

12. Mask-wearing will continue to be required as a default, as this continues to confer significant protection against infection.

Workplace Requirements

13. We will maintain the current posture of allowing up to 50% of employees who can work from home to return to the office to limit social interactions. However, as part of the streamlining of rules, we will align the rules for social gatherings for workplaces and other social settings, so long as general group size and masking rules are adhered to. As economic activities pick up, we will also remove the specific restriction on cross-deployment of employees across workplaces, although employers may continue to do so for business continuity reasons.

Safe Distancing

14. Safe distancing will continue to be required for all mask-off settings, and encouraged but not required for mask-on settings. This is in recognition that masking remains the key means of protection against infection. Where safe distancing is required, the distance will be streamlined to a single safe distance of 1 metre for all settings. However, we still need to guard against gatherings of big crowds, even if they have their masks on. Hence, we will impose capacity limits, as described below.

Capacity Limits

15. Event sizes will be set based on the capacity of the venue. We will lift specific event size limits for events such as religious services, business events, media conferences, funerary memorial events, solemnisations, wedding receptions, and mask-on classes¹. Zoning requirements will also be removed, as the main protection is through masks and vaccination.

16. However, for large events and settings of more than 1,000 pax, which pose greater infection risks, we will impose a capacity limit of 50%, as a precaution. These will include attractions, cruises, MICE and large work-related events, as well as large performing arts venues and sports stadiums. For other settings such as shopping malls and large standalone stores, the current density limit of 10sqm/pax roughly translates to 50% capacity. This means that:

- a. For smaller settings/events with $\leq 1,000$ pax, they can proceed without being subject to any capacity limit.
- b. For larger settings/events with $> 1,000$ pax and that are mask-on², they will be subject to a capacity limit of 50%. For mask-off events, individuals will be required to comply with the 1 metre safe distancing requirement and prevailing group size.

See [Annex B \(https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-b-\(1\)1ddd2e41431749e5a78e2bfd0de632d6.pdf?sfvrsn=75ca6772_0\)](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-b-(1)1ddd2e41431749e5a78e2bfd0de632d6.pdf?sfvrsn=75ca6772_0) for the list of settings/events covered.

Adjustments to Vaccination-Differentiated SMMs (VDS)

17. From 15 March 2022, unvaccinated children aged 12 years and below (i.e. born in 2010 or later) need not be from the same household to be included within a group entering premises or participating in activities with VDS.

Resuming Sports

18. There has not been clear evidence suggesting that transient contact while playing sports leads to infections. Conversely, two years of SMMs have taken its toll on the physical, emotional and mental well-being of our people, especially the young.

19. From **15 March 2022**, we will allow team sports for up to 30 fully vaccinated persons (including players, coaches, umpires, etc.) to proceed as earlier planned, at selected supervised/operated sports facilities (i.e. ActiveSG/PA facilities and SportSG-approved private facilities). The Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) will progressively expand the number of venues in the coming weeks. The resumption of sports is part of our continuing effort to allow selected normal activities, especially those with intrinsic health benefits, to resume as the pandemic situation stabilises and improves.

20. The prevailing community SMMs will apply before and after the sport activity, and during rest breaks. No additional testing requirement will be imposed as long as all participants are fully vaccinated, but participants are strongly encouraged to self-test before arriving for the sports activity, and to stay home if they test positive or develop symptoms. Participants will be required to complete a health declaration form prior to the sports activity.

21. For all these revisions on community SMMs listed above, the relevant agencies will provide more details on the resultant requirements specific to their sectors.

Aligning SMMs in Migrant Worker Dormitories and Recreation Centres with SMMs in the Community

22. From 15 March 2022, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will also streamline the SMMs for migrant workers (MWs) living in dormitories to align with the latest SMMs for the community. Usage of sports facilities, group sizes and events in dormitories and Recreation Centres will be aligned with that of the community. For example, MWs will be able to resume all sports activities involving up to 30 fully vaccinated persons at supervised sports facilities within dormitories and Recreation Centres.

Expansion of Community Visits Programme for MWs residing in dormitories

23. The number of COVID-19 cases within dormitories has stayed very low over the past few weeks. Vaccination coverage and booster take-up amongst MWs have been very strong. The MW population has therefore become very resilient to COVID-19 infections.

24. Hence, there are good reasons to take a significant step to allow more of our vaccinated MWs to visit the community safely, and to safeguard their well-being. From 15 March 2022, up to 15,000 vaccinated MWs will be allowed to visit the community on weekdays, and up to 30,000 on weekends and public holidays, for up to 8 hours per visit. This is an increase from the current quotas of 3,000 on weekdays, and 6,000 for weekends and public holidays.

25. To manage crowding at popular locations, MWs will continue to apply to visit their selected locations in the community. MOM will monitor the application numbers and continue to conduct regular checks at potential congregation hotspots.

Upcoming Expansion of Requirement for Booster Dose

26. As announced previously, from 14 March 2022, persons aged 12 – 17 years who have completed their primary vaccination series and are eligible for booster vaccination will be considered as fully vaccinated for only 270 days after the last dose in their primary vaccination series, and will require a booster dose to maintain their vaccinated status thereafter. We strongly encourage all who are eligible to receive booster doses to take them as soon as possible. This will help to keep you and your loved ones safe.

Updates to Border Measures

27. We had earlier simplified our country/region classification and border measures on 22 February 2022 to pave the way for more Vaccinated Travel. Over the past weeks, imported infection numbers have stayed very low – around 1% of total daily infections – because many countries have already passed the peak of their Omicron infection waves.

28. Given the above, we will now further rationalise our travel protocols by switching to an unsupervised self-swab Antigen Rapid Test (ART) within 24 hours of entry for General Category (Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL)) and Category I travellers entering Singapore from **14 March 2022, 2359 hours**. This will replace the previous requirement for a supervised self-swab ART. Travellers are required to report their unsupervised self-swab ART test result via [sync.gov.sg](https://www.sync.gov.sg/) (<https://www.sync.gov.sg/>)³ before proceeding with their activities in Singapore. Border measures for travellers arriving from **14 March 2022, 2359h** can be found at [Annex C](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-cff9b1b4b572c45c8b979138ca5ca456d.pdf?sfvrsn=bbb75eee_0) (https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-cff9b1b4b572c45c8b979138ca5ca456d.pdf?sfvrsn=bbb75eee_0).

29. The latest border requirements can be found on the [SafeTravel website](https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/) (<https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/>). Travellers are strongly advised to visit the website to check the latest border measures for the associated country or region before entering Singapore, and be prepared to adhere to the prevailing border measures upon entry into Singapore.

30. These are important steps to take to prepare ourselves for a new Vaccinated Travel concept in the coming weeks, where fully vaccinated travellers generally need not apply for approval to enter

Singapore, and will undergo simplified test requirements.

Transition to Resilience

31. The situation has stabilised with the concerted efforts and sacrifices of our healthcare workers and everyone's cooperation in adhering to SMMs. However, this does not mean that we can lower our guard. We must continue to exercise personal responsibility in adhering to SMMs and following the appropriate health protocols should we test positive for COVID-19, including by resting at home or visiting your primary care physicians if you need any medical attention. We should also refrain from going to the Emergency Departments unless there are any medical emergencies, so as to ensure that we preserve the hospital resources for those require acute care. Not doing so could erode our hard-earned gains. We will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and ease measures to allow more activities to resume. Step by step, we will transition to resilience and emerge stronger from this crisis.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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[1] These refer to events held outside the home. For home solemnisations, there can be up to 10 attendees or 5 non-resident visitors (whichever is higher). For home funerals, the current arrangement of up to 30 attendees remains. Refer to the relevant sectoral advisories for more details.

[2] For example, for a 1,200 pax event, the event would need to be held at a venue which accommodates 2,400 pax, or the event size would have to be capped at 1,000 pax. Events where 1m safe distancing and group size limits apply will not be subject to the 50% capacity limit, as the SMMs already ensure spreading out of attendees.

[3] Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents and Long-Term Pass Holders (LTPHs) with Singpass accounts should log into Sync using Singpass to submit their results. LTPHs and Short-Term Visitors (STVs) without Singpass accounts should log into Sync using their passport number, date of birth and nationality.

Ministry of Health

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