

Updated Circular on Safe Management Measures Required for Hostels

1. On 14 December 2021, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced additional measures to prepare for a potential surge of Omicron cases in our community. In line with this, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) has updated the Safe Management Measures (SMMs) applicable to hostels¹.
2. We strongly urge all hostels to continue surveillance and monitoring of potential non-compliance within their premises. STB takes a serious view on establishments who do not comply with the SMMs and will continue to take strict enforcement actions against all establishments who breach them.
3. The information in this circular (which includes its annexes) supersedes that in previous advisories or statements.

Key Updates to Safe Management Measures:

Enhancements to Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures (VDS)

1. From 1 February 2022, VDS will be expanded to cover leisure guests in hotels, hostels and serviced apartments. More details will be shared with hostels to operationalise this enhancement.

Workplace Requirements

2. In addition to the implementation of the Workplace Vaccination Measures (WVM) starting from 1 January 2022, 50% of staff who can work from home will be allowed to return to the office.
3. Please refer to MOM's advisory at <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures>, for further details.

Reduction in Exemption Period for Recovered Individuals to Enter Settings Where VDS Are Implemented

4. From 1 January 2022, all individuals recovered from COVID-19 who are not fully vaccinated will only be given a 180-day exemption after infection² to enter settings where VDS are implemented. This is reduced from the current exemption period of 270 days and calculated starting from the day of the first positive PCR test obtained by the aforementioned individual in Singapore.
5. Non-fully vaccinated individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 infection prior to 1 January 2022 will also have their exemption period reduced from 270 days to 180 days. However, such individuals who have already exceeded the 180-day period as of 1 January 2022 will be granted an additional one month grace period till 31 January 2022 to complete their primary series vaccination regime, so as to

¹ "Hostels" refer to any premises providing accommodation for guests, on land approved for use as a backpackers' hostel, boarding house or guest house under the Planning Act (Cap. 232)

² This exemption does not apply to entry into VDS+Test events or activities i.e. individuals will still have to do ART prior to these events.



continue being able to enter VDS settings. As such, recovered individuals need only one dose of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines or two doses of Sinovac under the National Vaccination Programme to complete their primary series vaccination regimen, and they should do so latest by 17 January 2022, to allow an interval of 14 days from the completion of the regimen to be considered fully vaccinated. During the grace period from the date when they have exceeded the 180-day period, these individuals can produce their discharge memo for entry into VDS settings.

ART Positive (Ag+)/Covid Positive (C+) recovery in-situ in hotels and serviced apartments

6. From 20 December 2021, travellers residing in hotels³ who: (a) test positive for COVID-19 on a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test; (b) test positive for COVID-19 on an Antigen Rapid Test (ART); or (c) are identified as a close contact of a COVID-19 case and receive a Health Risk Warning (HRW) will recover or isolate in-situ by default.
7. Hostels are excluded from this change pertaining to hotels described in paragraph 6 above. Accordingly, all Ag+/C+ cases occurring in hostels are to be conveyed out by MOH to recover in care facilities. Please refer to **Annex A** for more details on the management of Ag+/C+ individuals.

Hostels must comply with the prevailing Sector Specific Requirements as outlined in Annex A of this hostel circular and in the advisories of the applicable agencies.

4. The hostel industry plays a critical role in keeping Singapore safe, and it is imperative that the industry remains vigilant and disciplined in maintaining health and safety protocols.

Testing Regimes for Hostels

5. Fast and Easy Tests (FET) Rostered Routine Testing (RRT)

- a. Since 15 July 2021, regular Fast and Easy Test (FETs) are mandatory for all staff, whether frontline or back-of-house, in the following higher-risk settings:
 - i. Staff who work in facilities on hostel premises that are allowed to open and require interaction with guests and visitors in mask-off settings (e.g. pools, gyms, fitness centres, spas, and areas where F&B is consumed such as dine-in F&B outlets, function areas, club lounge, in-room dining, staff canteen, etc.);
 - ii. Staff who work in Personal Care Services (PCS) on hostel premises that are allowed to open and require prolonged contact between individuals (e.g. facial and nail services, spas / saunas, massage establishments, hairdressing and make up services);
 - iii. Staff who work in Housekeeping (laundry / room and public area cleaning) and also staff who place/remove meals and other items outside rooms or guests on isolation; and

³ These include Stay-Home Notice (SHN)-Dedicated Facilities (SDFs), non-SDF hotels and other managed residences such as serviced apartments. This excludes hostels.



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Possible



- iv. Staff who work in Front Office, Bell Hop / Concierge, or Security who have interaction with guests and visitors.
 - b. Staff will not be required to conduct FETs if their business operations are suspended. For businesses that continue to remain open (including F&B outlets that stay open for delivery/takeaways), their staff must continue with the FET requirement.
 - c. With effect from 13 September 2021, the mandatory FET / RRT regime for staff has been increased to once every week. The Government will subsidise costs for the ART kits and supervisory training under the FET / RRT regime until 31 March 2022.
 - d. For more information on FET, please refer to the [FET notice](#).
6. **“Vaccinate or Regular Test” (VoRT) Regime**
- a. **With effect from 1 January 2022**, WVM will be implemented. Only employees who are fully vaccinated will be allowed to return to the workplace. Please refer to MOM’s advisory⁴ for more details on workplace arrangements for unvaccinated employees.
 - b. As all employers transit to the implementation of WVM, **the VoRT regime will cease with effect from 1 January 2022. The testing subsidies for medically ineligible individuals will also cease on the same date.** For avoidance of doubt, those who are medically ineligible for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines will still continue to be eligible for the Government-funded ART kits until 31 December 2021.
7. Vaccination remains critical in our fight against the pandemic. Hostels should also strongly encourage any remaining un-vaccinated employees to get vaccinated and facilitate their vaccination.
8. Hostels should review and reinforce current SMMs and remind employees to take all the prevailing measures seriously even if they have been vaccinated.

Implementation of Safe Management Measures

9. Hostels are reminded to comply with the Control Order⁵, **as well as the SMMs found in Annex A**.
10. Hostels must not allocate accommodation (e.g. accept bookings) to individuals for the purposes of leisure (i.e. provide leisure bookings) without the prior written permission of MTI.

⁴ <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/advisory-on-covid-19-vaccination-in-employment-settings>

⁵ “Control Order” means the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020 and, where applicable, the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Major Business Events — Control Order) Regulations 2021, the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Performances and Other Activities — Control Order) Regulations 2020, and the Infectious Diseases (Mass Gathering Testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019) Regulations 2021.



11. While the majority of the SMMs are drawn from the Control Order and are summarised for the convenience of hostels, the Control Order will prevail in case of any inconsistency.

Applications to Provide Leisure Bookings in Private Ensuite Rooms

12. Hostels that have private ensuite rooms and wish to resume allocation of accommodation to guests for the purposes of leisure (i.e. provide leisure bookings) must do the following in order to be considered for re-opening:
- Comply with the Sector Specific Requirements for leisure bookings, which can be found within **Annex A**, and any additional SMMs proposed by the hostel in its application, over and above compliance with the Control Order and all other applicable SMMs and the Sector Specific Requirements applicable to hostel facilities.
 - Submit the application found at **Annex B** to STB via go.gov.sg/localbookingapplication. STB and MTI will take up to 14 working days to assess each application.
 - Undergo an inspection scheduled and conducted by STB as part of the assessment process.
 - Resume the accommodation of guests for leisure purposes only after receiving approval from MTI. Hostels whose applications have been rejected by MTI will not be allowed to resume leisure stays at its premises.
13. The details in this circular are provided to help hostels develop their plans and implement the necessary SMMs for providing leisure bookings safely. These plans will have to be tailored to the specific nature of operations in each hostel, and potential risk factors arising from localised factors such as the physical premises and layout, environment, scale of operations, and typical guest behaviour.
14. Hostel operators must also explain how they will address key outcomes in their application to STB, to reduce potential transmission risks and support contact tracing efforts. Risk factors for hostels to consider include proximity between guests, propensity for crowds to form, level of activity and number of high-touch surfaces. Each application must show how the hostel will achieve all the following key outcomes:

Outcomes

Ability to meet density requirements

Limit occupancy to no more than 1 person per 10sqm guest-accessible public space per person (excluding hostel staff) at any point in time, where practicable.

Implement more stringent SMMs at areas where guests and staff spend more time, as opposed to areas which see more transient traffic.

Reduce face-to-face mingling among guests, between employees and between staff and guests

Stagger timings for guests to be at hostel lobby and guest facilities, and employees at back-of-house work environment.

Ability to disperse crowds and prevent bunching



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Mandatory implementation of Trace Together-only SafeEntry

Implement rigorous cleaning and disinfecting regimes, particularly for high touch elements

15. The application must also detail plans addressing operational areas such as SMMs for workplaces, response plans (to handle unwell guests, suspected/confirmed cases), and marketing and communications plan for re-opening.
16. Hostels whose applications have been approved must submit the following information:
 - a. Submit a set of required data every Friday before 10am via go.gov.sg/covid19-hotelupdates. This information will be used only as internal reference for public policy purposes and will not be shared with other hostels.
 - b. Submit the number of staff who are working on-site within 2 weeks of the date of resumption of on-site operations for leisure bookings following approval from MTI via <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>.
 - c. Inform STB immediately whenever there is a positive COVID-19 case at the hostel⁶, providing such particulars of the case as may be requested by STB.

Enforcement of Safe Management Measures

17. STB will conduct enforcement checks to ensure compliance with SMMs, including SMMs proposed in the application submitted by the hostel. Enforcement action will be taken against offenders who operate without the requisite MTI approval (e.g. providing leisure bookings) and/or who fail to comply with SMMs.
18. Under the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act passed in Parliament on 7 April 2020, first-time offenders may be fined up to \$10,000, imprisoned up to six months, or both. Repeat offenders may be fined up to \$20,000, imprisoned up to twelve months, or both. Under the Infectious Diseases (Mass Gathering Testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019) Regulations 2021, businesses that fail to comply with requirements thereunder will face a fine not exceeding \$10,000 and attendees that fail to comply will face a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both. Also under the Act, businesses that are not compliant may be ordered to cease business activities or close altogether. Businesses that are not compliant may also be ineligible for government grants, loans, tax rebates and other assistance.
19. For any enquiries, please contact STB.

Thank you.

SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD

Updated as of 23 December 2021

⁶ Includes guests and visitors that have patronised or visited the hostel, and hostel staff.