

# MEDIA RELEASE

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JOINTLY ISSUED BY MOH, NEA, BCA AND LTA

## GOOD HYGIENE AND IMPROVED VENTILATION TO FURTHER REDUCE THE RISK OF COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

*To improve the ventilation and indoor air quality in buildings, the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), National Environment Agency (NEA) and Ministry of Health (MOH) have updated the Guidance Note to building owners and facilities managers.*

**Singapore, 25 May 2021** – COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through respiratory droplets from an infected individual to those around them. When the infected individual coughs, sneezes, talks loudly or sings, small particles and aerosols can also be emitted, which could result in transmission of the virus to others in the same room or area. This risk is higher when there is prolonged contact, especially in enclosed environments with limited airflow and poor ventilation. This does not mean that one can easily contract the virus by simply breathing. However, in enclosed environments with limited airflow and poor ventilation, the risk of transmission is greater.

2 Good hygiene practices include wearing masks, washing hands regularly, using hand sanitisers, ensuring physical distancing, minimising time in crowded enclosed places and avoiding contact with those who are unwell. All these practices remain critical in reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19. Individuals should also refrain from talking or interacting with non-household members when physical distancing is not possible, such as in lifts or on public transport.

3 In addition to these good hygiene practices, good ventilation will prevent the accumulation of any virus aerosols in the air, and thus further reduce the risk of exposure to the virus. Home ventilation can be improved by opening windows. Where practicable, doors too can also be kept open, especially when there are guests present.

4 In non-residential indoor spaces, good ventilation and the regular disinfection of high-touch points should supplement existing safe distancing measures, to reduce occupants or visitors' risk of exposure to COVID-19.

5 Public transport, such as trains and buses, are well-ventilated through mechanical and/or natural fresh air intake<sup>1</sup>. The ventilation systems, combined with stepped-up cleaning and disinfection regimes – as well as commuters' observing the strict discipline of wearing good efficiency masks and not talking – will minimise commuters' exposure to the virus.

6 The Building and Construction Authority (BCA), the National Environment Agency (NEA) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) have updated the technical Guidance Note to building owners and facilities managers on improving ventilation and indoor air quality in buildings, taking into account the latest COVID-19 situation. The Guidance Note, first

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<sup>1</sup> An A\*STAR study conducted in 2020 on droplet dispersal has concluded that the air change in our buses and trains are sufficiently high.

published in May 2020, provides guidance to building owners and facilities managers to implement good ventilation in indoor spaces. The Guidance Note applies to non-residential premises where air-conditioning is used, as well as to naturally ventilated premises, with the exception of specialised premises<sup>2</sup> such as factory production areas, hospitals, polyclinics, and laboratories where setting-specific rules apply.

7 The Guidance Note provides detailed technical recommendations for premises according to the type of ventilation system used. These are based on the principle of maximising fresh air intake, and the appropriate cleaning of recirculated air. All building managers and facilities' managers are strongly encouraged to follow the recommendations and to maintain a healthy indoor environment to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The guidance note is available on the BCA, NEA and MOH websites.

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<sup>2</sup> Specialised premises refer to those with ACMV systems<sup>3</sup> that fall outside the scope of SS553: Code of Practice for Air Conditioning and Mechanical Ventilation in Buildings. Advice from subject matter experts and specialists should be sought for specialised premises that may require additional considerations.

<sup>3</sup>ACMV systems include air handling units and fan coil units, such as cassette or wall-mounted types.

### **About National Environment Agency**

The National Environment Agency (NEA) is the leading public organisation responsible for ensuring a clean and sustainable environment for Singapore. Its key roles are to improve and sustain a clean environment, promote sustainability and resource efficiency, maintain high public health standards, provide timely and reliable meteorological information, and encourage a vibrant hawker culture. NEA works closely with its partners and the community to develop and spearhead environmental and public health initiatives and programmes. It is committed to motivating every individual to care for the environment as a way of life, in order to build a liveable and sustainable Singapore for present and future generations.

For more information, visit [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg)

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### **About Building and Construction Authority (BCA)**

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) champions the development and transformation of the Built Environment sector, in order to improve Singapore's living environment. BCA oversees areas such as safety, quality, inclusiveness, sustainability and productivity, all of which, together with our stakeholders and industry partners, help to achieve our mission to transform the Built Environment sector and shape a liveable and smart built environment for Singapore. For more information, visit [www1.bca.gov.sg](http://www1.bca.gov.sg).

### **About Land Transport Authority (LTA)**

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is a statutory board under the Ministry of Transport, which spearheads land transport developments in Singapore. As the agency responsible for planning, designing, building and maintaining Singapore's land transport infrastructure and systems, we aim to bring about a greener and more inclusive public transport system, complemented by convenient options to walk and cycle from their homes or to their destinations. We leverage technology to strengthen our rail and bus infrastructure and provide exciting options for future land transport. For more information, please visit the website at [www.lta.gov.sg](http://www.lta.gov.sg).