

MEDIA RELEASE

FURTHER MEASURES TO RESTART THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SWIFTLY AND SAFELY

- *BCA has granted permission for all companies with foreign construction workers to resume work; 40,000 workers will benefit from this*
- *COVID-Safe Accommodation Criteria reviewed to allow more workers to support on-site work, and BCA will step up its on-site audits and inspections to mitigate COVID risks*
- *Cohorting exercise of workers in FEDA-licensed dormitories by employer to be completed by 30 September 2020, while workers are allowed to continue working*

Singapore, 12 August 2020 – With almost all foreign worker dormitories declared COVID-cleared by the Inter-Agency Taskforce (ITF), the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) is implementing further measures to accelerate the restart of construction work in a COVID-Safe manner. These include (i) allowing all firms and their foreign construction workers to resume work outside of construction site and supply works premises without the need to seek approval from BCA; (ii) temporarily suspending the 10-accommodation criteria so that more workers can resume work; and (iii) allowing workers to resume work while cohorting is being carried out in FEDA-licensed dormitories¹.

2. Since the end of the Circuit Breaker on 2 June, BCA has been focusing its efforts on helping and ensuring construction companies restart their construction projects safely. To date, more than 3,300 construction site projects have been approved to restart work.

Permission to resume work without application to BCA

3. All firms employing foreign workers registered with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) under Construction Account (foreign construction workers), outside of construction sites and supply works premises², have been allowed to resume work without the need to apply to BCA for approval.

¹ The list of dormitories licensed in accordance with the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act (FEDA) can be found at MOM's website at <https://www.mom.gov.sg/passess-and-permits/work-permit-for-foreign-worker/housing/foreign-worker-dormitories#/>.

² Supply works premises include:

- (a) Conventional precast concrete yard;
- (b) Integrated construction and prefabrication hub (ICPH);
- (c) Prefabricated prefinished volumetric construction (PPVC) fit-out factory;
- (d) Prefabricated bathroom unit (PBU) fit-out factory;
- (e) Prefabricated mechanical, electrical and plumbing factory;
- (f) Ready-mixed concrete (RMC) plant; and
- (g) Sand and aggregate terminal.

With this change, the “Approved to Start Work” category of the AccessCode will display “Yes” on the SGWorkPass for all foreign construction workers. Workers who have also met the other four conditions, namely, cleared of COVID-19 infection; not on Stay-Home Notice (SHN); have installed the TraceTogether app; and are staying in COVID-cleared accommodation, would have had their AccessCode³ turned to ‘green’, and be allowed to resume work. About 40,000 workers are expected to benefit from this.

4. However, for deployment of workers at construction sites and supply works premises, main contractors are still required to apply for BCA’s approval to resume work. To minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, main contractors will have to set out in their applications to BCA the necessary safe management measures. Main contractors will continue to make the application on behalf of its subcontractors and the subcontractors’ workers for such works.

Review of COVID-Safe Accommodation criteria

5. As almost all dormitories have been cleared, ***BCA, with immediate effect, will temporarily suspend the 10-accommodation restriction to facilitate a faster construction restart.*** During this time, employers should work towards cohorting their foreign workers together in their accommodation, minimally by employer.

6. Employers are to continue to work closely with accommodation operators to ensure safe living measures are practised at the workers’ accommodation premises, and provide dedicated transport for their foreign workers to go to work, as stated under the COVID-Safe Restart Criteria. Contractors should take into account the larger number of workers on-site and enforce strict zoning of their workforce, and ensure that workers residing in different accommodation or performing different activities do not intermingle on site. BCA will closely monitor the situation, including stepping up audits and inspections at worksites.

³ Employers can check the details of their workers’ AccessCode status via MOM’s Safe@Work eService at <https://www.mom.gov.sg/eservices/services/safe-work>.

Cohorting of workers in FEDA-Licensed Dormitories and allowing workers to start work

7. With the support of MOM and ITF, BCA and the Economic Development Board (EDB) will work with operators of FEDA-licensed dormitories to facilitate cohorting of workers in dormitories minimally at company level, to minimise intermingling of workers.

8. The exercise involves 43 FEDA-licensed dormitories housing approximately 160,000 workers. Employers and workers will be informed of the cohorting schedule in advance, so that workers can prepare for the shift, including packing their personal belongings. In the meantime, workers who are living in cleared dormitories with 'green' AccessCode on their SGWorkPass app will be allowed to leave the dormitories to work, while the cohorting exercise is underway. Firms will need to cohort their workers by 30 September. Otherwise, the AccessCode of their workers will turn 'red' and the workers will no longer be able to work.

Reminder to Firms to Book Swab Test Appointments

9. The government has taken steps to implement measures to mitigate a resurgence of COVID-19 outbreaks, including regular swab tests for the construction workforce. The Health Promotion Board (HPB) has developed a Swab Registration System to facilitate the booking of swab test appointments by employers, allowing firms flexibility to manage the swab appointments of their workers more easily. Employers who have not arranged for their workers to be swabbed within the 14-day timeframe are reminded to do so immediately. BCA urges all industry stakeholders to play their part in stepping up vigilance against COVID-19 transmission as more construction workers return to work.

Reminder to Firms to Apply for Construction Restart Booster support

10. The \$525 million Construction Restart Booster was earlier announced on 13 July 2020 to help construction firms defray costs in procuring additional material/ equipment to comply with COVID-Safe Worksite requirements. Firms need not submit an application for the COVID-Safe firm-based support. However, in order to receive the one-off firm-based support that will be credited to their registered bank account by 31 August 2020, eligible contractors are reminded that they must have a bank account registered with Vendors@Gov by 20 August 2020. For COVID-Safe project-based support, main contractors must submit an application⁴ by 7 September 2020, and

⁴ Applications can be submitted via FormSG at <https://go.gov.sg/construction-restart-booster>.
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have a bank account registered with Vendors@Gov by 20 September 2020, in order to receive the project-based support by 30 September 2020.

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About BCA

The Building and Construction Authority (BCA) of Singapore champions the development of an excellent built environment for Singapore. BCA's mission is to shape a safe, high quality, sustainable and friendly built environment, as these are four key elements where BCA has a significant influence. In doing so, it aims to differentiate Singapore's built environment from those of other cities and contribute to a better quality of life for everyone in Singapore. Hence, its vision is to have "a future-ready built environment for Singapore". Together with its education arm, the BCA Academy of the Built Environment, BCA works closely with its industry partners to develop skills and expertise that help shape a future-ready built environment for Singapore. For more information, visit www1.bca.gov.sg.