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JOINT MOM-MOH-BCA PRESS RELEASE

EXTENSION OF STAY-HOME NOTICES FOR WORK PERMIT AND S PASS HOLDERS IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

All work permits, S Pass holders and their dependents, in the Construction Sector are currently serving stay-home notices (SHN) until 4 May 2020ⁱ. This requirement had been introduced as a precautionary measure, to protect employers and workers from the risk of further transmission of COVID-19 at construction worksites.

2 Since then, agencies have been closely monitoring the infections among construction workers living outside purpose-built dormitories (PBD), where movement restrictions remain in force. The **number of infected construction work pass holders living in non-PBD premises continues to rise**. Their incidence/prevalence remains noticeably higher than the general community. This suggests that transmission at construction worksites among such workers had occurred before the start of the SHN period. The cases that are now being observed could have been incubated earlier or may have spread among the workers' close contacts and house-mates.

3 Unlike most individuals who serve their SHN in isolation, the construction work pass holders are likely to be in shared accommodation where they have continued interactions with one another. **Based on the public health assessment by the Ministry of Health, an extension of the SHN by a further 14 days to cover another incubation cycle will help to break the cycle of transmission.**

4 After careful consideration, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Building and Construction Authority (BCA) have decided to extend the SHN for all work permit holders and S Pass holders in the Construction sector. **They will now serve their SHN until 18 May 2020, 2359 hours.** Similarly, the Dependant Pass holders of these workers will be placed on SHN for the same extended period.

5 We recognise the impact on affected employers and appreciate their cooperation. **Their efforts will help to enable an eventual restart of the sector.** Thus far, the vast majority of employers have looked after their workers well. We will need them to continue doing so for the remaining period of the SHN. They should make arrangements for delivery of food (or groceries to enable cooking) and other daily essentials. They should also ensure their workers consult a doctor immediately when unwell. As far as possible, unwell workers should be isolated as a precautionary measure.

ⁱ The SHN applies to all workers and their dependents in any place of accommodation, or any place which is converted into a place of accommodation on a temporary basis, or otherwise. It excludes those staying in any dormitory gazetted as an isolation area, or any foreign employee dormitory as defined in the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act 2015, as special arrangements have already been catered for them.

6 During a virtual conference, MOH Director of Communicable Diseases Dr Vernon Lee explained the rationale for the SHN extension to members of the Singapore Contractors Association Limited (SCAL) and the Specialist Trades Alliance of Singapore (STAS). We are grateful for their understanding and support, and agree to also commence preparations to help the built environment sector resume operations when conditions allow.

7 SCAL is setting up a SCAL COVID-19 fund to help Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and their employees during this COVID-19 period to maintain employment and keep the SMEs in business. The Government will support SCAL in this effort by providing matching funds to supplement what SCAL is able to raise from the industry. SCAL is in the midst of pooling funds and estimates the overall pot to be between \$800,000 to \$1,000,000, potentially providing assistance to at least 500 SMEs and 5,000 employees. More details will be released by SCAL at a later date.

FURTHER ADVISORY

8 The advisory issued on 18 April 2020 to employers on their obligations for their affected workers will continue to apply.

9 Employers, who have been approved by BCA for their foreign workers to carry out essential services during the SHN, may continue these works unless these approvals have been terminated by BCA. No reapplication is necessary. Foreign workers granted exemption are allowed to leave their places of residence only to perform essential activities; all remaining conditions of the SHN (e.g. employers to ensure workers do not travel elsewhere except to-and-from work, daily declaration of workers' health status) shall continue to apply.

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