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ADVISORY ON THE NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR FOREIGN WORKER ACCOMMODATIONS

This advisory is supported by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

As the construction industry begins to restart, one of the most critical issues employers need to solve is the accommodation for their foreign workers.

In order to prevent a second wave of COVID-19 and to contain any outbreak as quickly as possible, BCA and MOM have implemented new measures such as Safe Worksite, Safe Workforce, Safe Accommodation, and Safe Living.

SCAL has engaged with the relevant agencies and have collated the new measures required for all new and existing accommodations. The key requirements have been tabulated for your easy reference. (Refer to Appendix A)

Additionally, we have included the SCAL Specifications for new CTQ/TOLQ and sample design for reference, which can be used till the end of this year. (Refer to Appendix B and Appendix C)

The objectives of the new measures are to keep safe distancing, to reduce communal activities and intermixing amongst large numbers of FW, to facilitate better upkeep of hygiene and cleanliness, and to maintain the FW's well-being and health.

SCAL strongly encourages its members to implement these new measures in the right spirit, as each of us have a responsibility to the industry to prevent a second wave of COVID-19.

As the Purpose Built Dormitories are being progressively cleared in the coming months, SCAL would like to encourage its members to work with the PBD operators to reorganize their own employees within their current place of residence, such that the requirements for Safe Accommodation can be achieved.

TYPES OF FOREIGN WORKER ACCOMMODATIONS

(1) NEW CTQ/TOLQ

It is recommended to house your main workforce in a dedicated accommodation, where only workers working at the same worksite are housed together. This will help you to fulfil BCA's Safe Accommodation and Safe Worksite requirements.

SCAL has worked with the BCA and the other authorities to develop a CTQ/TOLQ specifications document, which takes into consideration site constraints. Included in this document are some sample base designs that you may refer to. (Refer to Appendix C)

Accommodation in basements are strictly prohibited, due to ventilation concerns.

Please note that the measures, although more stringent, are meant to protect the health and safety of your employees.

(2) NEW CONVERTED SPACES (TEMPORARY, >40 PAX)

For employers/contractors who wish to convert existing spaces into temporary FW accommodation. These spaces can be factories, warehouses, vacant buildings, etc.

For conversion of spaces for no more than 40 persons, please refer to the Temporary Living Quarters (TLQ) scheme.

Accommodation in basements are strictly prohibited, due to ventilation concerns.

(3) EXISTING CTQ/TOLQ & (4) EXISTING FCD

MOM and BCA recognize the challenges and constraints faced by the operators/employers to implement the new measures.

With the exception of a few compulsory measures, compliance will not be unreasonably imposed by the authorities. Best efforts must be demonstrated, and alternatives can be proposed.

MOH has identified the shared toilets as one of the hotspots where the risk of transmission is high. Do take more precautionary measures with shared toilets.

SCAL strongly recommends demonstrate your best efforts to implement these measures, as this will lower the risk of a spread of an infection and will only serve to protect your business and employees.

For the time being, no changes in regulations will be made. However, all FCD will have to comply to new permanent specifications and requirements when they are released in the future and will be given sufficient time by the authorities to comply.

(5) NEW TEMPORARY LIVING QUARTERS (TLQ)

Employers seeking to convert your workplaces (factory or office space) to Temporary Living Quarters (TLQs) to house your foreign workers (including workers affected by Malaysia's Movement Control Order) may apply online (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/apply-for-tlq>) with the completed "Form A – Checklist for TLQ". The maximum period of usage is 6 months.

This scheme is only a stop-gap solution, but will be useful for operators of existing CTQ/TOLQ and FCD to temporarily expand their space to comply to the new measures. Do note that the maximum occupancy is 40 persons.

Employers can convert workplaces in the following areas:

- Land zoned in Business 1, Business 2 and Business Parks.
- Site offices at construction sites.
- Addition of new modules (containers or partitions) to existing construction temporary quarters (CTQs) at construction sites.

Accommodation in basements are strictly prohibited, due to ventilation concerns.