



P R E S S R E L E A S E

14 September 2020

DORMITORY OPERATORS AND EMPLOYERS TO WORK OUT CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS ON DORMITORY RENTALS FAIRLY AND REASONABLY

Employers with migrant workers currently residing in cleared dormitories or other accommodation can choose to move their migrant workers to alternative housing to better comply with COVID-Safe Restart Criteria set out by sector agencies.

2 For example, employers may wish to cohort more of their migrant workers working on the same project from different accommodations into a dedicated accommodation or reshuffle them within the same accommodation, to better prevent transmission between worksites and living spaces.

3 To facilitate the re-housing of workers, the Ministry of Manpower (**MOM**), the Building and Construction Authority (**BCA**) and the Economic Development Board (**EDB**) have consulted relevant stakeholders and developed the following guidelines to encourage dormitory operators and employers to come to a mutual agreement on their existing rental contracts:

For employers

- Resolve outstanding rental arrears with your dormitory operators, even if your contracts have expired or if you wish to terminate or modify the rental contracts.
- Discuss with your dormitory operators on alternative ways to achieve the desired segregation for your workforce.
- Consider reasonable termination clauses if offered by the dormitory operator. For example, the dormitory operator may require a reasonable notice period for termination of your rental contracts.

For dormitory operators

- Consider allowing existing tenants the option of early termination of the rental contract if the tenants provide a reasonable notice when moving to other accommodation, and to waive termination penalties in this situation.
- Consider allowing existing tenants to terminate their rental contracts without penalties if they are moving to other rooms which might have different costs, within the same dormitory.
- Consider providing some rental rebate to employers who had temporarily shifted their migrant workers to alternative accommodation, which are not government facilities and continued to pay for their dormitory accommodation with a view to return. This takes into consideration that the operator would not have to incur

utilities and manpower costs to take care of the migrant workers who had temporarily moved out of the dormitory. Similarly, employers are advised to not demand for a full waiver of the rental fees as operators incur costs in maintaining the empty room during this period.

4 Employers and dormitory operators who are re-locating migrant workers must abide by the [procedures](#) outlined previously on relocating workers to another residence before moving their migrant workers from or to the cleared dormitories.

5 Government agencies will monitor and review the effectiveness of these guidelines to facilitate the cohorting of migrant workers, as well as re-housing arrangements. We will take further steps to expedite the process if necessary. Industry representatives may also consider forming a mediation panel to expedite the resolution of contractual disputes, if necessary.

FURTHER ADVISORY

6 During this period, some migrant workers living in dormitories may have been temporarily rehoused by the Government at other housing facilities, moved to isolation facilities, or to other medical facilities. MOM issued an advisory on 7 May 2020 to inform employers to continue paying dormitory rental according to their rental contracts for workers originally housed at those dormitories, as they are not incurring the cost of accommodating these workers at the government provided facilities. The requirement continues to apply until employers have re-negotiated or terminated their rental contracts with the dormitory operators.

7 [Dormitory operators](#) and [employers](#) are reminded to put in place and maintain Safe Living measures. Employers and workers will also need to do their part and observe such measures.

<End of Release>