

FAQS ON PROVIDING A TIME-LIMITED FLEXIBILITY TO RECRUIT WORKERS FROM PRC WITHOUT HAVING TO ENROL IN OVERSEAS TESTING CENTRES (OTCS) FOR SKILL CERTIFICATION

Q1. Are PRC Work Permit Holders (WPHs) allowed to work in Singapore without Skills certification?

A1. As a number of Overseas Testing Centres (OTCs) in PRC are still gearing up to resume operation, BCA and MOM have worked together on a time-limited flexibility to allow PRC WPHs to obtain their skills certification in Singapore.

Under this flexibility, Employers are permitted to recruit their PRC WPHs without a skills certification but must comply with other prevailing entry approval and work pass requirements. For instance, new PRC WPHs are required to complete the required safety courses, Settling-in Programme and medical clearance within 2 weeks of arrival. The new PRC WPHs have until their pass expiry to obtain their skills certification. Workers that have yet to obtain their skills certification by then will not be able to renew their work permit, and Employers will be responsible for their repatriation back home.

Q2. When can Employers apply for PRC WPHs to obtain their skills certification in Singapore? What are the general procedures to bring these PRC WPHs into Singapore?

A2. From 07 May 2021, Employers can approach the Approved Training and Testing Centres (ATTCs) in Singapore to register the details of the PRC WPHs before their arrival. Employers will receive a confirmation from ATTCs within 2 – 3 weeks if the registration is successful, after which Employers can then proceed to submit work permit application via Work Permit Online (WPOL). After the work permit is approved, Employers are required to apply for entry approval. Employers should not submit the work pass application before receiving a confirmation from the ATTC, as it will be rejected. We strongly encourage Employers to sign up their workers for the next available training and skills assessment with the ATTCs.

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Please refer to the following website for more information on the application process and the list of ATTCs accepting registration:
<https://www1.bca.gov.sg/buildsg/manpower/bca-approved-training-and-testing-centres>

Q3. What is the length of the grace period given for PRC WPHs to obtain their skills certification in Singapore?

A3. Employers are strongly encouraged to send their PRC WPHs to obtain their skills certification at the ATTCs as soon as they arrive in Singapore. BCA and MOM will impose a higher levy if the workers have yet to obtain their skills certification after 3 months from their pass issuance date. Workers that have yet to obtain their skills certification before their work pass expiry will not be able to renew their work permit, and Employers will be responsible for their repatriation back home.

Q4. Are returning PRC WPHs required to register with ATTCs?

A4. PRC WPHs with a valid SEC(K) or equivalent are not required to register with ATTCs. They can submit their work pass application to MOM and apply for entry approval upon approval of the work permit.

Q5. What is the status of the OTCs in China?

A5. The list of OTCs which have restarted are updated at https://www.bca.gov.sg/academy/cop_Testcenters.aspx.

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Q6. What is levy rate for the PRC WPHs brought in under this temporary scheme? How long can they stay in Singapore to work?

A6. New PRC WPHs will be placed on a levy rate of \$700/month upon arrival. However, their levy rate will be adjusted to \$950/month if they fail to obtain their skills certification within 3 months. Hence, we strongly encourage employers to send their workers for skills certification early. Upon obtaining their skills certification, workers will be placed on the prevailing levy tier of either \$300/month (higher-skilled) or \$700/month (basic-skilled).

PRC WPHs brought in under this temporary scheme will be allowed to stay up to 1 year upon pass issuance. Renewal of work pass will be subjected to MOM's work pass requirement. If the workers are unable to obtain their skills certification within their period of stay, they would not be eligible for renewal.

Q7. Upon successful registration with ATTCs, when can we proceed to apply for In-Principle Approval (IPA) for the workers?

A7. Upon successful registration with ATTCs with all necessary details and documents, ATTCs will inform the Employers within 3 working days that they may prepare for the workers for departure to Singapore. ATTCs will notify Employers when they are able to apply IPA for the workers. It will take about 2 - 3 weeks after submitting the registration to ATTCs.