



Dear HR Colleagues and Members of HR Community,

I hope you are all taking good care of yourselves during this difficult times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Extraordinary times calls for extraordinary measures. HR professionals like you and me are at the heart of helping our organisations and workers respond to this crisis. From travel disruptions, flexible work arrangements, safe distancing, Stay Home Notices, Leave of Absence, containment, sanitisation, giving our employees assurances and assessing vulnerable segments of the workforce, we are called upon to do everything possible to mitigate risks and ensure operational readiness of our businesses, while ensuring the safety and well-being of our employees.

In Singapore, Government advisories are being announced and updated frequently given the evolving COVID-19 situation locally and globally. Last Friday (20 March 2020), the Government introduced additional safe distancing measures to limit close contact and large gatherings of people in close proximity over a prolonged duration.

This is the time for the HR community to demonstrate our leadership in progressive people practices, delicately balancing business needs, national needs and staff well-being, to help our businesses tide over this crisis, and to come out of it stronger. As a start, we must quickly familiarise ourselves with the advisories that has been pushed out as the situation unfold. The latest being the safe distancing measures that have just been sent out by tripartite partners (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/advisory-on-social-distancing-measures>).

One key measure in the advisory is for employers to facilitate telecommuting for their employees, especially vulnerable employees. Take advantage of this opportunity to intensify the implementation of flexi-work arrangements at the workplace through the use of technology. For some of us who may not have the systems in place to support large-scale work from home for your employees at this time, there are other simple yet impactful measures that we can take. Enabling staggered work and lunch hours, splitting teams across different work sites and even encouraging employees to take-away food instead of eating at crowded food establishments can all contribute to greater social distancing and “flattening the curve”.

Other measures in the advisory will require working closely with your business leaders, unions and other stakeholders to put in place measures such as ensuring physical separation in meeting rooms, canteens, rest areas, between work desks and even within the lift. Not all solutions cost a lot of money and key is to adopt a new way of working without close contact. This is an opportunity for HR to step up and implement meaningful measures that support business continuity and the well-being of employees.

By doing our part as the HR community to ensure safe distancing at our workplaces, we contribute to the overall national effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Singapore. Our Government agencies can also focus on other efforts to suppress the spread of COVID-19 in Singapore.

Some immediate best practices as compiled from the HR community:

1. Telecommute where possible
2. Staggered/ Flexible Working Arrangements for employees that need to come back to the office
3. If commuting to the office is necessary/ needed, try to stagger hours by minimum 3 time slots, with no more than 50% of employees at any time slot. This helps spread out commuting times, especially during peak periods
4. Avoid crowded places and practice social safe distancing for any face to face meetings
5. Pack lunch from home or order take outs rather than eating at crowded places
6. Don't share food and avoid buffets.
7. Create a buddy system to remind each other to practice proper hygiene
8. Take care of each other and safe distancing does not mean isolation – so do keep in close contact with each other, safely!

Finally, I encourage you to continue to keep in close contact with your HR community and tap on SHRI to guide and advise you as we journey through this difficult phase together.

Together, as SGUnited, we will overcome COVID-19!

Meanwhile, Stay safe, Stay healthy!

Yours Sincerely,

Peck Kem, President

Alvin Goh, Executive Director

SHRI

**Latest update and advisory on COVID-19:**

<https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19>

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