

## JOINT STATEMENT

MR No.: 012/20

### **(Updated) Implementing Safe Distancing Measures at Retail Establishments**

1. On 24 March 2020, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced stricter safe distancing measures<sup>1</sup> to reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19. Tightened measures include reducing the size of group gatherings outside of work and school, and ensuring physical separation of at least one metre between one another.
2. In line with this announcement, Enterprise Singapore (ESG), Housing & Development Board (HDB), the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) have drawn up safe distancing measures for retail establishments to provide a safer shopping experience. All retail establishments – including retail outlets in shophouses and malls, supermarkets and department stores – must comply with these enhanced safe distancing measures, which will take effect from 26 March 2020, 2359 hours until 30 April 2020.

#### **Safe distancing measures for retail establishments:**

3. **Crowd and queue management:**
  - a. Space out customer queues for fitting rooms and at cashiers. Shoppers should be at least one metre apart from one another.
  - b. Use floor markers to mark queueing positions for shoppers.
  - c. Limit the number of shoppers within the store to allow for at least a metre spacing between them. Shoppers must not be in groups exceeding 10 persons.

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<sup>1</sup> Tighter measures to minimise further spread of COVID-19: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/tighter-measures-to-minimise-further-spread-of-covid-19> (Ministry of Health, 24 March 2020); Stricter safe distancing measures to prevent further spread of COVID-19 cases: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/stricter-safe-distancing-measures-to-prevent-further-spread-of-covid-19-cases> (Ministry of Health, 20 March 2020)

- d. Encourage the use of self-checkouts, cashless or contactless payment, to speed up payments and reduce cash-handling.

**4. Communication:**

- a. Train service staff to provide clear communication on safe distancing measures.
- b. Put up simple signage to clearly communicate these practices to shoppers.

**Other measures to ensure the well-being of shoppers:**

5. All retail establishments must implement temperature screening and health declaration by employees each time they report for work; ensure cleanliness and hygiene practices; and comply with MOH health advisories.
6. Establishments must implement the sanitation and hygiene practices recommended under the SG Clean campaign.
7. In addition, retail establishments must:
  - a. Place hand sanitisers close to high touch surfaces like door handles as well as at cashier and entrances so that staff and shoppers to sanitise their hands, after touching these surfaces as well as before and after entering the establishment.
  - b. Disinfect common spaces, high touch surfaces and interactive components such as self-checkout kiosks frequently.
  - c. Remove product testers and samples that require customer contact, e.g. cosmetics and food samples.
8. In implementing the abovementioned measures, employers should establish open communication channels with their staff and shoppers. Employers, staff and shoppers must be regularly reminded to exercise social responsibility by observing good personal hygiene and monitoring their health conditions. Those who are unwell, even with mild flu-like symptoms, must see a doctor and stay at home to prevent spreading illness to others.

## **Enforcement of measures**

9. Government agencies will be stepping up enforcement of these safe distancing measures. Non-compliance to the safe distancing measures is an offence under the Infectious Diseases Act. Penalties for non-compliance include a fine of up to S\$10,000 or imprisonment of up to six months or both. In addition, existing levers under the Infectious Diseases Act, including the temporary suspension of operations, may be used against persons and operators who do not comply with the Regulations.
  
10. The Government encourages trade associations and chambers to explain these precautionary measures to their respective members. We seek your understanding on the safe distancing arrangements and your cooperation in adopting these measures.

**Enterprise Singapore  
Housing & Development Board  
Singapore Tourism Board  
Urban Redevelopment Authority**

**Updated as of 26 March 2020**

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## Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### 1. **Is it mandatory for retail establishments to exercise safe distancing?**

Retail establishments must comply with safe distancing measures. These precautionary measures can help reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19. Businesses which do not implement or comply with the government's safe distancing advisories may be ineligible for government grants and loan assistance.

Any non-compliance to the safe distancing measures may be prosecuted under the Infectious Diseases Act and any regulations promulgated thereunder. The penalty for an offence under the Regulations would be a fine of up to S\$10,000 or imprisonment of up to six months or both. In addition, existing levers under the Infectious Diseases Act, including the temporary suspension of operations, may be used against persons and operators found to be non-compliant with the Regulations.

### 2. **Smaller retail establishments may find it challenging to practise safe distancing. Any recommendations for them?**

The Government understands that smaller retail establishments might experience space constraints when implementing safe distancing measures. The general principle is for retail establishments to regulate the number of shoppers within the store, so that a metre spacing between them could be maintained while retail operations continue normally.

### 3. **Are standalone stores (e.g. IKEA and COURTS Megastore) considered as retail establishments?**

Standalone stores are required to comply with safe distancing measures applicable to malls<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the safe distancing measures for shopping malls and standalone stores.