

JOINT STATEMENT

MR No.: 013/20

Implementing Safe Distancing Measures at Shopping Malls and Standalone Stores

1. On 24 March 2020, the Ministry of Health (MOH) announced stricter safe distancing measures¹ 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), Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) have drawn up safe distancing measures for shopping malls and standalone stores (e.g. IKEA and COURTS Megastore) to provide a safer shopping experience for customers. These are in addition to the Retail and F&B advisories issued.
3. All shopping malls and standalone 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 shopping malls and standalone stores:

4. **Crowd and queue management:**
 - a. Limit the number of people entering the premises to minimise overcrowding, especially during peak periods, so that the occupant load does not exceed one person per 16 square metres of usable space.

¹ 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)

- b. Do not allow groups of more than 10 persons to form. Quickly disperse any such group.
- c. Allow tenants to mark queue spots outside their unit, to ensure shoppers in queues stand at least one metre from one another.
- d. Allow tenants to extend temporary seating or queues beyond their premises to spread out the crowd where space permits. No enforcement action will be taken by the relevant authorities, provided:
 - Fire escape routes, fire engine access lanes and pedestrian walkways are not blocked
 - Pedestrians are not obstructed
 - Nearby residents (especially in heartland estates) are not disturbed
 - Products are not displayed or advertised
 - Mall owners seek relevant landowner's consent for such temporary seating and queue areas, if the spillover area is not owned by the mall operator
- e. Mall operators with office tenants must stagger the office and lunch hours for their workers to ease peak hour congestion

5. Suspension of large group and communal activities:

- a. Close common amenities such as infant and children's play areas or playgrounds, both indoors and outdoors.
- b. Close all bars and entertainment venues like nightclubs, pubs, discos, cinemas, theatres, karaoke outlets, arcades and other similar venues.
- c. Suspend all centre-based tuition and enrichment classes.
- d. Fitness studios may continue to remain open but must adhere to the applicable safe distancing measures².
- e. Defer or cancel all events (e.g. exhibitions), regardless of size.
- f. Suspend open atrium sales and promotional activities³.
- g. Cease activities such as busking or live music performances, which are likely to cause patrons to congregate.
- h. Groups of diners or shoppers must be limited to 10 persons or fewer⁴.

² <https://www.sportsingapore.gov.sg/Newsroom/Media-Releases/2020/Advisory-for-Sport-and-Physical-Exercise-Activities>

³ Except for supermarket retailers where atriums may be used for sale of goods to disperse crowds from their stores. However, the number of shoppers within the area must be limited to allow for at least one metre spacing between them.

⁴ F&B and retail establishment should refer to the advisories on safe distancing measures for F&B and retail establishments for more information.

6. Other measures to ensure the wellbeing of patrons

- a. Place hand sanitisers close to high touch surfaces like door handles and entrances and exits so that staff and patrons can sanitise their hands after touching these surfaces.
 - b. Frequently disinfect common areas in accordance with the sanitation and hygiene advisory issued by the National Environment Agency⁵. The frequency of cleaning and disinfection should be increased and be commensurate with the volume of traffic in the shopping mall or standalone store.
 - c. Train service staff to provide clear communication on safe distancing measures.
 - d. Put up simple signage at common areas like store entrances, common corridors, lifts, escalators and concierge, to clearly communicate these practices to shoppers.
7. These safe distancing measures complement the sanitation and hygiene practices recommended under the SG Clean campaign and are in accordance with MOH health advisories.

Enforcement of Measures

8. 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.
9. 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**

⁵ Sanitation and Hygiene Advisory:
<https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/public-cleanliness/environmental-cleaning-guidelines/advisories/general-sanitation-and-hygiene-advisory-for-premises-owners-and-operators>

As of 26 March 2020

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **Is it mandatory for malls and standalone stores to implement and comply with safe distancing measures?**

Shopping malls and standalone stores are required to comply with safe distancing measures. These precautionary measures can help reduce the risk of local spread of COVID-19.

Businesses, including mall operators and their retail and F&B tenants that do not implement or comply with the government's safe distancing advisories will be ordered to suspend their operations.

2. **How should malls and standalone stores compute the number of people allowed in their premises based on the 1 person per 16 sqm usable space rule?**

Usable space refers to the approved Gross Floor Area (GFA) of the retail component of the development. For example, a standalone mall with an approved GFA of 32,000 sqm for the retail component will have an allowable visitor capacity of 2,000 persons at any one time.

Non-visitors, i.e. staff of the mall management, tenants and term contractors, will not be included in the visitor capacity computation.

Individual tenants within shopping malls will not be subjected to this rule. However, other safe distancing measures are to be applied e.g. dispersion of groups larger than 10, physical distancing of at least one metre in queues.

3. **How can a mall/ standalone store manage the number of shoppers to ensure compliance with the 1 person per 16 sqm usable space rule?**

Malls and standalone stores can consider reducing the number of entrances and deploy staff to control the number of visitors entering and leaving the premises, or issuing tickets to ensure compliance with the allowable visitor capacity. The reduction in the number of entrances should not lead to a congregation of visitors outside the mall. Mall must make sure that there is at least one metre spacing between persons standing in queues, including those outside the mall.

4. **Malls that connect to transportation nodes, office buildings etc tend to be more crowded and may face difficulties complying with the measures. Any suggestions for them?**

Malls can consider creating a dedicated passageway to guide the people transiting through the mall. If malls can ensure this is done, people transiting through the mall will not be counted towards the allowable visitor capacity.

5. **Will malls be held accountable if their tenants do not comply with the safe distancing measures?**

Government agencies will step up enforcement efforts to ensure the proper implementation of these safe distancing measures. If establishments are found to be non-compliant, they will be guided on finding suitable solutions. Subsequently, periodic checks will be conducted to ensure compliance. Mall operators are to provide assistance to tenants who may need it.

Businesses, including mall operators and their tenants, which do not implement or comply with the government's safe distancing advisories, will not be eligible for government grants and assistance, and could be ordered to suspend their operations via the Regulations under the Infectious Diseases Act.