ELIGIBLE MIGRANT WORKERS WILL BE ABLE TO VISIT RECREATION CENTRES ON REST DAYS FROM 31 OCTOBER 2020

After more than two months of trials, and with infection rates in the community and dormitories maintained at low levels over a period of time, the Assurance, Care and Engagement (ACE) Group under the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will allow eligible migrant workers in all dormitories to visit Recreation Centres (RCs) on their rest days from 31 October 2020. This is part of the overall measures to ease restrictions for migrant workers safely within and outside the dormitories.

Migrant workers have so far been required to leave the dormitories only for work and essential errands. From 31 October, recovered workers who still have immunity against COVID-19 and those who have been tested negative recently under the Rostered Routine Testing (RRT) regime will be allowed to visit RCs. They will be able to access amenities and services such as F&B outlets, minimarts, telecommunications shops, barbers and remittance services at the RCs. They will also be able to meet with their friends for activities in the RCs’ communal facilities, with strict safe management measures in place.

Eligible workers will be able to book an Exit Pass via the SGWorkPass mobile application to visit their dormitory’s assigned RC, up to seven days in advance. Checks will be conducted by dormitory operators and the RCs to ensure workers have valid Exit Passes before allowing entry and exit.

As we gradually ease these restrictions, additional measures have been put in place at the RCs to protect the health of workers. To mitigate possible overcrowding at the RCs, workers will be staggered to visit the RCs at different timeslots. The number of Exit Passes issued for each timeslot will be controlled through the application system. In addition, MOM has worked closely with sector agencies and employers to stagger the rest days for workers in the Construction, Marine and Process sectors.

IMPROVING THE EXPERIENCE FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

MOM started trials to allow workers in cleared dormitories to visit RCs on their rest days on 24 August 2020. To date, around 30,000 migrant workers from over 300 dormitories, including a mix of purpose-built dormitories, factory-converted dormitories and temporary living quarters, have booked Exit Passes as part of the trials.
Throughout the trial period, MOM worked closely with the various stakeholders to review and refine the safe rest day measures. For instance, timeslots were increased from two-hour exits to three-hour exits based on feedback from industry associations. An additional 8pm to 11pm timeslot will also be added to cater to workers who perform overtime work on their rest days, in response to feedback from migrant worker MWC Ambassadors.

“The Migrant Workers' Centre has been working closely with MOM and government agencies, and other partners and stakeholders to provide support and render assistance to our migrant workers since the pandemic began, and we have seen first-hand how continued isolation has affected some migrant workers. We hope that the Safe Rest Days initiative at the Recreation Centres will provide virus-cleared migrant brothers respite from the current movement control measures as we transition towards a time when these measures can be removed.” said Mr Yeo Guat Kwang, Chairman of Migrant Worker's Centre.

Ms Dipa Swaminathan, founder of NGO ItsRainingRaincoats said, “We are pleased and heartened to see the initiatives taken by MOM to ensure the workers return to normalcy in a phased manner and this is a welcome step.”

TOWARDS A NEW COVID-19 NORMAL FOR MIGRANT WORKERS

“When there is greater assurance that COVID-19 transmission has been sustained at negligible levels, we will work with our stakeholders to review when dormitory residents could be allowed to visit other popular social and recreational spots beyond the RCs,” said Mr Tung Yui Fai, Chief of the ACE Group under the MOM. “We appreciate the cooperation of workers, employers, dorm operators and NGOs in working towards the goal of letting dormitory residents enjoy their rest days safely.”

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