

P R E S S R E L E A S E

17 SEPTEMBER 2021

IMPROVED STANDARDS FOR NEW MIGRANT WORKER DORMITORIES TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH RESILIENCE AND ENHANCE LIVEABILITY

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Ministry of National Development (MND) and Ministry of Health (MOH) have developed improved standards for new migrant worker dormitories to strengthen resilience against future pandemics and enhance liveability. The new standards will apply to all new dormitories¹, including Purpose-Built Dormitories (PBDs), Factory-Converted Dormitories (FCDs), Construction Temporary Quarters (CTQs) and Temporary Occupation Licence Quarters (TOLQs).

2 The Government has conducted a comprehensive review of existing dormitory standards in consultation with public health and infectious diseases experts, taking reference from local and international standards. A set of standards was piloted at the Quick Build Dormitories (QBDs)². These standards were subsequently refined, based on our experiences with the QBDs and in managing the COVID-19 outbreak in the dormitories. The review also took into consideration the feedback from stakeholders including employers, dormitory operators, migrant workers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and architects.

Improved standards for new dormitories

3 The improved standards will reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases in dormitories by:

- a. Reducing intermixing amongst dormitory residents by modularising dormitory living and segmenting communal facilities (e.g. cooking, dining and laundry facilities). Examples include: Room occupancy capped to 12 residents, en-suite toilets, and segmentation of communal facilities for dedicated use by 120 residents per section.
- b. Improving ventilation of dormitory rooms and toilets to reduce virus accumulation within enclosed areas. Examples include: Requiring at least one exhaust fan per toilet and adequate number of fans in dormitory rooms to ensure sufficient air circulation.

¹ These standards will apply to all new applications submitted on or after 18 September 2021 to the relevant Government agencies for clearance to develop a dormitory. For existing dormitories, we are reviewing the improvements that are feasible within current built infrastructure constraints.

² The standards piloted at QBDs include 10 residents per room, en-suite toilets and ensuring communal facilities (e.g. cooking, dining and laundry facilities) cater to residents in smaller groups.

- c. Facilitating early detection and quick isolation of unwell residents. Examples include: Increased isolation facility capacity and requirements to facilitate wastewater surveillance.

4 The standards will also enhance liveability for dormitory residents. Residents will have more spacious rooms (at least 4.2sqm living space per resident) and in-room Wi-Fi coverage to allow them to communicate with their families and friends.

5 The improved standards will complement existing safeguards such as enhanced Safe Living and Safe Working Measures at dormitories and worksites, including the implementation of infection prevention and control (IPC) practices, and the multi-layered strategy to detect, isolate and contain outbreaks. A longer-term medical support plan is also being developed to ensure migrant workers have access to comprehensive and timely primary care.

6 The key changes in the improved standards are summarised in Table 1 below. Please refer to Annex A for more details on the key improved standards.

Standards	Current³	Improved
Occupancy per room	No maximum residents per room. In practice, 12 to 16 residents per room. No requirement for spacing between beds, mostly double-decker beds	≤ 12 residents per room ≥ 1 meter spacing between beds, double-decker beds allowed
Occupancy per floor	≤ 240 residents	≤ 240 residents, capable of being divided into self-contained sections of 120 residents
Communal facilities (e.g. cooking, dining, laundry facilities)	No segmentation required	Designed to allow segmentation for dedicated use by ≤120 residents per section
Ventilation	Subjected to BCA's prevailing requirements for natural ventilation ⁴ , e.g. windows or openings to be at least 5% of the floor area of the room	<u>Additional requirements:</u> ≥ 1 exhaust fan per toilet Adequate number of fans, reasonably spaced out throughout room, to provide sufficient air circulation

³ The current standards refer to standards that were applied to dormitories licensed under FEDA.

⁴ Permanent dormitories (i.e. PBDs and FCDs) are subject to the BCA Approved Document for Building Control Regulations, and temporary dormitories (i.e. CTQs and TOLQs) are subject to the BCA Building Control (Temporary Building) Regulations.

Standards	Current ³	Improved
		<u>If air conditioning is provided in room</u> , additional requirement, i.e. install a filter of at least MERV14 rating, to reduce transmission risks in enclosed areas
Toilets	≥ 1 set of common or en-suite toilet, bathroom, sink and urinal: 15 residents	≥ 1 set of en-suite toilet, bathroom, sink: 6 residents
Isolation facility	≥ 1 isolation bed per 1,000 bed spaces during peacetime ≥ <u>Additional</u> 19 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces to be stood up during pandemics	≥ 10 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces during peacetime ≥ <u>Additional</u> 15 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces to be stood up during pandemics
Living space <u>excluding</u> shared living facilities ⁵	≥ 3.5sqm per resident	≥ 4.2sqm per resident
Wi-Fi	Wi-Fi in common areas for residents	Wi-Fi in common areas and rooms for residents ⁶

Providing sustainable housing options for migrant workers

7 To ensure sufficient housing for our migrant workers and support efforts to reduce the density of existing dormitories, the Government will be launching two new PBD sites (at least 12,500 beds) at Kranji and Jalan Tukang, to be completed in the next three years. To ensure the timely construction of PBD beds in the current economic climate, the Government will construct and own these dormitories, while the day-to-day operations will be managed by a dormitory operator. The Government will continue to monitor and assess the overall housing needs of the migrant workforce and launch new PBD sites, where necessary. Given our limited land area, some dormitories may have to be located closer to residential areas. We hope that Singaporeans will continue to give their support to these workers who build and maintain our homes and public spaces.

End of Release

⁵ The current standard of a minimum living space per resident of 4.5sqm today includes shared living facilities (e.g. en-suite kitchen, toilets, yard spaces). Excluding the shared living facilities, this broadly works out to a minimum living space per resident of 3.5sqm.

⁶ Provision of in-room Wi-Fi should be priced into the bed rental rates charged. Hence, residents should not be separately charged for their Wi-Fi usage.

For media queries, please contact

Yen Chow

Communications and Engagement
Department, Ministry of Manpower
HP: 8727 857
Email: chow_yen@mom.gov.sg

Veronica Lim

Strategic Communications, Ministry of
National Development
HP: 9761 4007
Email: veronica_lim@mnd.gov.sg

Usha Nadarajan

Corporate Communications Division,
Ministry of Health
Contact: 9791 4060
Email: usha_v_nadarajan@moh.gov.sg

Annex A: Key improved standards for new dormitories⁷

Standards	Current ⁸	Improved	Intent
Occupancy per room	No maximum residents per room. In practice, 12-16 residents per room.	≤ 12 residents per room during peacetime	Enable modularisation of dormitory living to limit transmission of infectious diseases
	No requirement for spacing between beds, mostly double-decker beds	Minimum 1 meter spacing between beds, double-decker beds allowed	Reduce spread of infectious diseases among residents in the same room
Occupancy per floor	≤ 240 residents	≤ 240 residents, capable of being divided into self-contained sections of 120 residents	Enable modularisation of dormitory living to limit transmission of infectious diseases
Communal facilities (e.g. cooking, dining and laundry facilities)	No segmentation required	Designed to allow segmentation for dedicated use by ≤120 residents per section	Enable segmentation of communal facilities for dedicated use of smaller sections of residents to limit transmission of infectious diseases
	<u>Cooking facilities</u> ≥ 1 cook stove : 6-8 residents	<u>Cooking facilities</u> ≥ 1 cook stove : 6 residents	Increase provision of cooking and dining facilities to enhance liveability for residents
	<u>Dining facilities</u> ≥ 1 seat : 6-8 residents	<u>Dining facilities</u> ≥ 1 seat : 6 residents	

⁷ The full list of improved standards for new dormitories will be incorporated into the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act (FEDA) Licence Conditions, and other relevant legislation and guidelines.

⁸ The current standards refer to standards that were applied to dormitories licensed under FEDA.

Standards	Current ⁸	Improved	Intent
	<u>Laundry facilities</u> Ensure sufficient and convenient laundry hanging facilities	<u>Laundry facilities</u> Ensure sufficient, convenient and sheltered laundry hanging facilities	Ensure sufficient provision of laundry drying facilities that are sheltered
Outdoor recreation area (games court, socialising area, open area with turfing etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>50-1,000 residents</u>: Encouraged • <u>1,001-5,000 residents</u>: ≥ 0.3 sqm per resident (comprising at least 1 x 240 sqm hard court and 1 other outdoor recreational facility) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>50-300 residents</u>: ≥ 100 sqm • <u>301-500 residents</u>: ≥ 150 sqm • <u>501-1,000 residents</u>: ≥ 250 sqm • <u>1,001-5,000 residents</u>: ≥ 0.3 sqm per resident (comprising at least 1 x 240 sqm hard court) and ≥ 0.15 sqm per resident of open grass field (comprising at least 1 field ≥ 100 sqm) <p>One set per dormitory cluster of 5,000 residents</p>	<p>Increase provision of recreation areas to enhance liveability for residents</p> <p>Reduce intermixing and virus spread across dormitory clusters, to allow each cluster to be self-contained during pandemics</p>
Toilets	≥ 1 set of common or en-suite toilet, bathroom, sink and urinal: 15 residents	≥ 1 set of en-suite toilet, bathroom and sink: 6 residents	Enable modularisation of dormitory living to limit transmission of infectious diseases, whilst enhancing liveability for residents
Wastewater surveillance	No requirement	<p>Segregation of sanitary lines to serve blocks and groups of blocks, including separate sanitary lines for isolation facilities</p> <p>Minimum of 1 inspection chamber receiving sewage from sanitary lines for every ~1,000 residents</p>	<p>Facilitate non-intrusive virus surveillance that complements clinical testing</p> <p>Detect viral fragments to prompt follow-up tests to facilitate early case identification</p>

Standards	Current ⁸	Improved	Intent
Isolation facility	<p>≥ 1 isolation bed per 1,000 bed spaces during peacetime</p> <p>≥ <u>Additional</u> 19 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces to be stood up during pandemics</p>	<p>≥ 10 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces during peacetime</p> <p>≥ <u>Additional</u> 15 isolation beds per 1,000 bed spaces to be stood up during pandemics</p>	Enable early isolation of suspected or confirmed cases of infectious diseases, thereby containing disease spread
Living space, <u>excluding</u> shared living facilities ⁹	≥ 3.5sqm per resident	≥ 4.2sqm per resident ¹⁰	Reduce spread of infectious diseases among residents in the same room whilst enhancing liveability for residents
Ventilation	<p>Subjected to BCA's prevailing ventilation requirements for natural ventilation, e.g. windows for openings to be at least 5% of the floor area of the room¹¹</p> <p>Mechanical ventilation (e.g. fans) must be provided when NV is inadequate for daily living activities</p>	<p>Additional requirements include:</p> <p>Each toilet should be equipped with ≥1 exhaust fan</p> <p>Provide adequate number of fans in rooms, reasonably spaced out throughout room, to provide sufficient air circulation</p> <p><u>If Air Conditioning (AC) option is provided in room, additional</u></p>	<p>Enhance natural ventilation</p> <p>Reduce moisture in toilets and reduce virus accumulation</p> <p>Reduce transmission risks within enclosed areas</p>

⁹ The current standard of a minimum living space per resident of 4.5sqm today includes essential living facilities (e.g. toilets, yard space). We estimate that this roughly works out to about a minimum of 3.5sqm of sleeping space when other shared living facilities (e.g. en-suite kitchens, toilets and yard spaces) are excluded, in comparison to the improved standard of 4.2sqm.

¹⁰ The new standard of 4.2sqm of living space per resident includes the sleeping and living areas in the rooms. However, it excludes designated functional areas, such as the en-suite toilets, kitchens and yard spaces.

¹¹ Permanent dormitories (i.e. PBDs and FCDs) are subject to the BCA Approved Document for Building Control Regulations, and temporary dormitories (i.e. CTQs and TOLQs) are subject to the BCA Building Control (Temporary Building) Regulations.

Standards	Current ⁸	Improved	Intent
		requirements include: Install filter at least of MERV14 rating for air cleaning.	
	Minimum block spacing required by SCDF Fire Code requirements, based on factors such as building height, extent of openings etc.	Minimum 12 metre spacing between dormitory blocks, over and above SCDF Fire Code requirements [to be piloted in upcoming two new PBDs]	Enhance natural ventilation and wind flow between dormitory blocks
Wi-Fi	Wi-Fi in common areas for residents ¹²	Wi-Fi in common areas and rooms for residents ¹³	Meet essential needs of residents (e.g. electronic salary payment/remittance), and allow residents to communicate with their families and friends
Power sockets	No requirement	Minimum 1 power socket per resident per sleeping area Sufficient number of power sockets in common areas encouraged	Provide residents with easy access for charging of devices
Potable water	Provide adequate water (including potable water) to the dormitory	1 x hot / normal water dispenser : 24 residents per floor ¹⁴	Provide residents with easy access to potable water

¹² If the dormitory declares air-conditioning as their ventilation mode, it would be required to comply with the following additional requirements: install (i) a filter of at least MERV14 rating, (ii) system to introduce fresh air in the room, and (iii) pre-cool unit to cool and de-humidify the fresh air before it is introduced into the room.

¹³ Provision of in-room wi-fi should be priced into the overall bed rental rates charged. Hence, residents should not be separately charged for their wi-fi usage.

¹⁴ Alternatively, the dormitory could provide at least 2 water kettles for the designated use of one dormitory room of 12 residents.

Annex B: Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will the Government ensure dormitory operators adhere to the improved standards?

The improved standards for new dormitories will be incorporated into the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act (FEDA) Licence Conditions, and other relevant legislation and guidelines. Dormitory operators are required to seek the appropriate agencies' in-principle approval before being allowed to start on the construction of the site.

2. Why did the Government decide to construct and own the two new Purpose-Built Dormitories (PBDs)? Will this model apply to all future new PBDs?

Pre-COVID-19, land was released for commercial operators to bid, build and operate PBDs.

Given the need to ensure timely construction of PBD beds in the current economic climate, the Government will construct and own these dormitories, while the day-to-day operations will be managed by a dormitory operator.

The Government will review the ownership and operating model for subsequent new PBDs, depending on the demand for beds and market conditions at that time.

3. Where will two new PBDs be launched at, and how many bed spaces will be provided at each site? Why were these sites chosen?

The Government will launch two new PBDs (at least 12,500 beds) early next year. The PBDs will be launched at a site in Kranji (at least 10,000 beds), and a site at Jalan Tukang (around 2,500 beds) in Jurong.

We selected suitable land parcels that have no competing uses and with largely ready infrastructure (e.g. water, road) to support the PBDs. These sites are also in industrial estates, so that migrant workers can live closer to their workplaces, reducing the need for long commutes.