

Consumers' frequently-asked questions (FAQs) on property transaction activities by property agencies and agents in Phase Two of post-circuit breaker period

As at 18 June 2020

1. The Multi-Ministry Taskforce has decided to start Phase Two (Safe Transition) of the post-circuit breaker period from 19 June 2020.
2. The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) has issued an updated [Guide](#) to property agencies and agents on the safe resumption of property transaction activities under Phase Two.
3. CEA has adopted the following general principles when the estate agency industry resumes a broader range of property transaction activities in Phase Two:
 - Fighting COVID-19 is everyone's collective responsibility to reduce the risk of a resurgence in community transmission. Even as restrictions are eased in Phase Two, each of us must continue to exercise social responsibility to ensure that community transmission remains low.
 - Safe management measures should be an integral part of property transaction activities, with property agencies and agents adopting a more cautious approach as they resume their work.
4. During Phase Two, physical meetings and viewings will be allowed with safe management measures in place. Nevertheless, property agents should continue to use IT tools and solutions for their work as much as possible and only meet their clients in person if it is absolutely necessary for the property transaction to be conducted.
5. CEA has prepared a set of FAQs from property consumers on how property transactions can be managed in Phase Two.

1. What is CEA's general guidance to property agents when managing on-site property transaction activities?

We have advised property agents to continue to use IT tools and solutions for their work as much as possible, and only meet their clients in person if it is absolutely necessary for the property transaction to be conducted.

Property agents must observe the following when conducting on-site property transaction activities:

- Adopt safety precautions and ensure that all persons at the meeting or activity do the same.
- Record the contact particulars and declarations of all persons they meet and comply with contact tracing requirements.
- Comply with appropriate contactless requirements where necessary.

More details on each of these requirements can be found in FAQs 2 to 4.

2. What are the safety precautions that I should take for property transaction activities?

We have advised property agents to adopt the following safety precautions and ensure that all persons at the activity do the same:

- Wear a mask.
- Maintain a physical spacing of at least one metre between persons.
- Advise any person at the viewing who appears unwell (e.g. exhibits respiratory symptoms or has a fever) not to participate in the activity, and to see a doctor or return home.

Property consumers should similarly adopt these precautions.

3. Will property agents be putting in place contact tracing measures when facilitating on-site property transaction activities?

If the activity is conducted in premises where safe management measures are not in place (e.g. at a client's place of residence) or at the transaction property (whether occupied or unoccupied), it is important for property

agents to keep records of persons they meet to facilitate effective contact tracing when there is a need.

Property agents may choose their method of collecting the records. For instance, they can keep the records manually or using other methods.

Property agents are not required to record the details of their clients if they meet their clients at venues where safe management measures, including the use of SafeEntry QR codes, are already in place.

4. What should I note at property viewings, handovers, or takeovers?

At property viewings, handovers, or takeovers, property agents will advise that you do the following:

- Sanitise your hands using hand sanitisers.
- Request that you refrain from touching surfaces within the premises. Property agents may wear gloves to prepare and facilitate the viewing, handover, or takeover with minimum contact of the property by their clients.

Property agents will also open the doors and windows, and switch on lights in the property so as to minimise their clients touching these during the on-site activity. If the property is occupied, property agents may wish to request that the occupants do so prior to the activity.

You should request that property agents send materials to you electronically instead of providing you with hard copies. These include marketing materials or documents relating to the handover or takeover, such as end-of-tenancy checklist, inventory list, or property condition report.

5. Can I have face-to-face meetings with my property agent for discussions?

CEA encourages property agents to continue using IT tools, such as video or virtual conferencing platforms, in place of face-to-face interactions to meet with their clients.

If the meeting cannot be done virtually (e.g. your agent needs to meet you for the signing of property transaction documents that require “wet ink” signatures), your agent could either meet you:

- In premises where safe management measures are in place, such as the property agency’s office.
- Your place of residence or the transaction property (whether occupied or unoccupied) and comply with the safety precautions in FAQ 2 and contact tracing requirements in FAQ 3.

During these meetings, your property agent should:

- Ensure that no more than five persons are visiting the property at any one point in time. Such persons include your property agent and any other persons who are visiting the property.
- Minimise the time spent with you.

6. Are property agents allowed to conduct in-person viewings in Phase Two?

Yes. CEA advises home buyers and tenants to do their research and view the properties virtually first. You should consider visiting only shortlisted properties in person to reduce the number of physical viewings that you will need to attend.

Sellers and landlords can facilitate the process by arranging for virtual viewings and tours, and by providing photographs and information digitally to potential buyers or tenants before any physical viewings.

When conducting physical property viewings, property agents must:

- Comply with the safety precautions in FAQ 2, contact tracing requirements in FAQ 3, and contactless requirements in FAQ 4.
- Arrange for all viewings to be done on an appointment basis only, with the start and end times clearly stated and known to the attendees of the viewing. Viewings should be kept short and end by the scheduled end time. Property agents must not schedule back-to-back viewings. There should be a time gap between appointments to prevent gatherings or

physical interactions with other persons from taking place in or near the property.

- Ensure that no more than five persons are visiting the property at any one point in time. Such persons include your property agent and any other persons who are visiting the property.

Open houses are not allowed.

7. Can my property agent assist in the handing and taking over of my property?

Yes. However, your agent should first arrange for virtual meetings to discuss handover or takeover matters with the parties involved.

When handing or taking over the property, your property agent should keep interactions short.

In addition, your agent must comply with the safety precautions in FAQ 2, contact tracing requirements in FAQ 3, and contactless requirements in FAQ 4 during the session.

8. How can my property agent help me to market my property in Phase Two?

CEA has instructed all property agents to conduct marketing activities in a safe and responsible manner.

Property agents are encouraged to market properties using non-physical means (e.g. digital or telephone marketing) as much as possible. They have been advised that door-to-door solicitation and marketing activities in public spaces should be deferred until further notice.

With your permission, your property agent may enter your property to photograph or film it in order to conduct online viewings thereafter. In addition, your property agent must:

- Comply with the safety precautions in FAQ 2 and contact tracing requirements in FAQ 3.

- Ensure that no more than five persons visit the property at any one point in time. This includes your property agent and any professionals whom your agent has engaged to assist him with preparing the property for listing or virtual viewing (e.g. video production crew).
- Minimise the amount of time spent in the property.
- Minimise interactions with the occupants if the property is occupied.

9. Can I meet my property agent to sign property transaction documents?

Your property agent should continue to use IT tools and solutions as much as possible, and only meet you in person if it is absolutely necessary for the conduct of the property transaction.

This means that your property agent should:

- Use electronic means to deliver and receive the documents from you.
- Arrange for a phone, video, or virtual meeting to go through and explain the clauses in the documents to you. Your agent must give you sufficient time to read and understand the meaning and consequences of the provisions in the documents.
- Use electronic signatures in place of “wet ink” signatures for signing of the estate agency agreement.

Your property agent must comply with the safety precautions in FAQ 2 and contact tracing requirements in FAQ 3 during such in-person meetings.

10. Are electronic signatures valid for executing a property transaction document?

Electronic signatures may be used in place of “wet ink” signatures when signing the estate agency agreement and certain property transaction documents such as tenancy agreement, Sale & Purchase agreement, and Option to Purchase form.

Different organisations such as banks and transacting parties may have their own policies or preferences on the use of electronic signatures. You should seek advice from appropriate professionals such as lawyers if you

have any doubts in relation to the use of electronic signatures for these documents.

Please note that the Housing & Development Board currently does not allow the exercise of option to be done remotely or electronically. Forms prescribed by HDB such as its Option to Purchase form, require “wet ink” signatures.

11. What should I do during a physical viewing, handover or takeover, if both the other party and myself are Do-It-Yourself (DIY) consumers?

If you and the other party are managing the property transaction on your own without the assistance of property agents, CEA advises that you observe the safety precautions and contactless requirements in FAQs 2, 4-7 during property viewings, handovers, takeovers, and meetings.

We advise you to record the names and mobile numbers of all persons entering the premises for contact tracing purposes, if necessary.

You may also wish to download and use the [TraceTogether mobile application](#).

If you need further advice, you can call CEA’s Customer Service hotline at 1800 643 2555 (Mondays to Fridays from 8.30am to 5.00pm, excluding public holidays) or send us your queries at <https://www.cea.gov.sg/feedback>.