

CEA Ref: N16-20

Date: 9 April 2020

By Email

To: Key Executive Officers and Salespersons

Dear Sir / Madam,

**[NOTICE 16-20] ADVISORY ON REAL ESTATE AGENCY WORK DURING
SUSPENSION OF NON-ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES TO MINIMISE FURTHER
SPREAD OF COVID-19**

1. This notice informs Key Executive Officers (KEOs) and real estate salespersons (RESs) on the measures to support Singapore's fight against COVID-19 in view of the new COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act and COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020 which came into effect on 7 April 2020.

Background

2. On 3 April 2020, the Multi-Ministry Task Force (MTF) announced an elevated set of safe distancing measures as a circuit breaker to pre-empt the trend of increasing local transmission of COVID-19. These measures include the closure of most physical workplace premises from 7 April to 4 May 2020, except for essential services and their related supply chains and service providers. Work and business activities that can be carried out via telecommuting from home should continue. You may refer to the Ministry of Trade & Industry (MTI)'s press release (<https://www.mti.gov.sg/-/media/MTI/Newsroom/Press-Releases/2020/03/Suspension-of-Activities-at-Workplace-Premises-to-Reduce-COVID-19-Transmission.pdf>) for the list of essential services and related supply chains.

3. On 5 April 2020, CEA issued Notice 13-20, where all Estate Agents (EAs) and RESs were advised to suspend their work that requires physical interactions from 7 April 2020 to 4 May 2020 (inclusive) and to adopt digital or online tools for their estate agency work. Estate agency work is not categorised as an essential service.

Updated advisory

4. With the new legislation which, amongst others, imposes restrictions on the movement of people and restrictions in relation to premises and businesses, the real estate agency industry must play its part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. EAs and RESs should co-operate and stay home unless necessary for essential purposes.

5. EAs and RESs are advised to observe this notice as outlined in the ensuing paragraphs, which supersedes the previous Notice 13-20 dated 5 April 2020.

On-site property transaction activities

6. All on-site, physical property transaction activities should be postponed until after 4 May 2020 or such time that the suspension of activities at workplace premises are removed or relaxed. These include physical viewing of properties, face-to-face marketing activities, distribution of property advertisement flyers, etc. Similarly, EAs and RESs should advise their clients to postpone physical interactions for their property transactions where possible. This is in line with the MTF's objective of reducing risks of further spread of COVID-19 due to close contact with an infected individual at various settings.

7. Where advisories have been issued by relevant authorities in relation to clients' business activities, EAs and RESs should adhere to these advisories and advise their clients accordingly. For example, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) has issued an advisory to all developers with a sale licence to close their show galleries from 7 April to 4 May 2020.

8. If your clients have scheduled appointments or matters that cannot be delayed due to exceptional circumstances or regulatory requirements, such as the requirement for wet ink signatures for completion of property transactions, they should attend to such matters themselves and RESs should not meet or accompany their clients. For example, the Housing & Development Board (HDB) has limited the attendees of its appointments for the completion of HDB resale flat transactions to only flat sellers and buyers as they are the parties who need to sign the documents. RESs may wish to request their client to update them through phone or text message on the outcome of the HDB appointments. Please visit HDB InfoWEB for its service arrangements from 7 April to 4 May 2020.

9. EAs and RESs are strongly encouraged to adopt information technology (IT) tools in place of physical activities and face-to-face interaction with clients, to conduct property transaction activities online (e.g. online viewing).

10. Physical, in-person handovers or takeovers should be deferred until after 4 May 2020. If there are exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, landlords and tenants may decide to proceed with the handover or takeover. In such circumstances, RESs should not meet or accompany their clients. RESs may wish to request their clients to update them through phone or text message.

Performing business functions from home

11. EAs should operate their business functions via telecommuting. This means, for instance, EAs' staff must not leave home to work in the EAs' premises; and RESs must not leave home to perform estate agency work with clients or drop documents or cheques at the EAs' premises.

12. However, we understand that some EAs may not be able to operate remotely, e.g. support services to process commission payments to RESs. The EA may apply to the MTI for a time-limited exemption at <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>. If granted, the EA should implement the safe distancing and other precautionary measures (e.g. temperature screening, health and travel declarations, workplace safe distancing, wearing of masks, etc.) for the limited number of relevant staff returning to the office for a limited period to perform the key functions.

On-going transactions

13. If there are property transactions where the tenancy agreement, the option to purchase, or sale and purchase agreement have been signed prior to 7 April 2020 and the transaction is yet to be completed, EAs and RESs may assist online or remotely. If your client has to do anything reasonably connected with and for the purposes of moving to another place of accommodation, RESs should not meet or accompany their clients.

14. Please also take note that HDB will not register resale flat applications and schedule new appointments for resale completion for this period.

Keep safe and stay healthy

15. We attach an updated list of frequently-asked questions and answers at Annex for your information.

16. We seek your cooperation to ensure your own safety and that of Singaporeans during this challenging period.

Yours sincerely,

GAVIN NG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (POLICY & PLANNING)
COUNCIL FOR ESTATE AGENCIES

[Annex – Frequently-asked Questions and Answers \(updated as at 9 April 2020\)](#)

(PDF,141KB)

Superseded by Notice 18-20