

CEA Ref: N23-20

Date: 9 May 2020

By Email

To: Key Executive Officers and Salespersons

Dear Sir / Madam,

**[NOTICE 23-20] 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 COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020 and COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020.

Background

2. In 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 1 June 2020 (inclusive), except for essential services and their related supply chains and service providers. Estate agency work is not categorised as an essential service. You may refer to the Ministry of Trade & Industry (MTI)'s website (<https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>) for the list of businesses that are permitted to operate.

3. On 28 April 2020, CEA issued Notice 18-20, where all Estate Agents (EAs) and RESs were advised to suspend their work that requires physical interactions from **7 April 2020 to 1 June 2020 (inclusive)** and to adopt digital or online tools for their estate agency work.

Updated advisory

4. CEA has received feedback that some RESs have not been advising their clients to defer physical viewings. We wish to remind you that the aim of the elevated set of measures is to reduce much more significantly movements and interactions in public and private places. The real estate agency industry

must continue to play its part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes advising and encouraging their clients to defer physical viewings. 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 18-20 dated 28 April 2020.

On-site property transaction activities

6. All on-site, physical property transaction activities should be postponed until after 1 June 2020 or such time that the suspension of activities at workplace premises is removed or relaxed. These include physical viewing of properties, face-to-face marketing activities, distribution of property advertisement flyers, going on-site to deal with handover or takeover matters for their client, etc. Similarly, EAs and RESs should advise their clients to postpone physical interactions for their property transactions. 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 updated advisory to all developers with a sale licence to close their show galleries from 7 April to 1 June 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.

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

and property transaction service providers such as bankers and lawyers, and to conduct property transaction activities online (e.g. online viewing or meeting).

Performing business functions from home

10. 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.

On-going transactions

11. 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 still 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 residence, RESs should not meet or accompany their clients.

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

Enforcement actions

13. CEA takes a serious view of any EA or RES who fail to comply with the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act 2020 and its Regulations, which are in place for the safety of all Singaporeans. Under the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act, offenders face a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both; or in the case of a second or subsequent offence, a fine not exceeding \$20,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both.

Keep safe and stay healthy

14. We attach an updated list of frequently-asked questions and answers in the Annex for your information.

15. In view of these challenging times, we seek your continued support and 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 \(updated as at 9 May 2020\)](#)
(PDF,164KB).

Superseded by Notice 24-20