

CEA Ref: N13-20

Date: 5 April 2020

By Email

To: Key Executive Officers and Salespersons

Dear Sir / Madam,

**[NOTICE 13-20] 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.
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's press release](#) (PDF, 162KB) for the list of essential services and related supply chains.
3. Estate agency work is not categorised as one of the essential services, and the real estate agency industry must play its part to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Estate agents (EAs) and RESs should co-operate and minimise movements and interactions in public and private places, and stay home unless necessary for essential purposes.

4. The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) advises all EAs and RESs 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, wherever possible.

5. EAs and RESs are advised to observe the advisory as outlined in the ensuing paragraphs.

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 and face-to-face marketing activities. 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 special circumstances or regulatory requirements, such as the requirement for wet ink signatures for completion of property transactions, RESs should follow the latest MOH's advisory on safe distancing measures and should not 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 virtually (e.g. online viewing).

Performing business functions from home

10. EAs should operate their business functions via telecommuting. However, if there are key business functions (e.g. administration and accounting support services to process commission payments to RESs) which must continue but cannot be performed remotely from the office, you can apply to MTI for a time-limited exemption at <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg>.

11. Should the time-limited exemption be granted, EAs 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

12. If there are property transactions where the tenancy agreement, the option to purchase, or sale and purchase agreement have been signed prior to 7 Apr 2020 and the transaction is yet to be completed, EAs and RESs are to assist their clients to finish these transactions where it may not be possible to

delay such transactions. You should practice safe distancing measures and reduce in-person contact when doing so.

13. 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

14. CEA understands that EAs and RESs may find these measures disruptive and require adjustment to how estate agency work is conducted. We attach a list of frequently-asked questions and answers at Annex for your information.

15. 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](#) (PDF,137KB)