

Are business trips back for Singapore-based employees?

With Singapore finally easing border restrictions, you may be starting to consider whether some of your employees could finally travel for business purposes again, and if so, where to.

Indeed, the length of the stay-home notice (“**SHN**”) (i.e. mandatory quarantine or self-isolation period upon return from abroad) when coming back to Singapore has been significantly reduced (or entirely removed for some countries) and the possibility to serve this SHN at home is now available for more and more countries. In addition, Singapore just announced that a Vaccinated Travel Lane (“**VTL**”) would open up to 9 additional countries: Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom (the “**U.K.**”) and the United States (the “**U.S.**”) as from 19 October, 2021, and South Korea as from 15 November, 2021. Therefore, provided the destination country has also relieved the border restrictions on its side, business trips could be envisaged for more fully vaccinated employees.

You will find below (1.) an overview of the new general rules that apply in case of return to Singapore, as well as (2.) an overview of the rules that apply depending on the country the employee was in the course of the 14 days prior to his/her arrival to Singapore, and (3.) a recap of rules that apply to enter the territory of other selected APAC countries, the E.U., the U.K., the U.A.E., and the U.S. for Singapore residents traveling there.

Note the following:

- We chose countries where it used to be common for Singapore-based employees to travel to for work-related reasons,
- We did not cover rules for the Construction, Marine shipyard or Process sector which benefit from a specific regime in Singapore,
- We focused on the perspective of sending a fully vaccinated employee (i.e. who received 2 shots of a Covid-19 vaccine) and who is a resident of Singapore (having spent 14 days there) overseas,

- Vaccination requirements differ from one country to another depending on the competent local health authorities (i.e. vaccines are not recognized equally everywhere),
- This overview is not exhaustive and we voluntarily kept our indications general so as for you to understand what the general trend is,
- These rules are changing very quickly.

In view of all this, please reach out to us should you have any specific situation to deal with. Our team based in multiple offices across APAC will be able to assist you.

1. New general rules in order to return to Singapore

Since 7 October, 2021, border measures for incoming travelers are now determined based on the travelers’ recent travel history in the last 14 days, instead of 21 days. This means that they could be spending some time in Estonia (Category III) but then only 14 days in France (recently moved to Category II) and still benefit from the rules applying to Category II countries. It also means that the VTLs are now open to travelers having spent ‘only’ 14 days (or less if coming directly from Singapore) instead of 21 days in one or more VTL country.

This rule is especially important to remember when booking employees’ flights, since a transit country placed in a different category could have an impact on the type of SHN the employee will be subject to when coming back to Singapore. The employer would then need to cancel the re-entry approval and obtain a new one.

From 1 November, 2021, all work pass holders, their dependents and Students’ Pass holders will be required to be fully vaccinated before entering Singapore regardless of the country they are coming from, i.e. including those coming from countries in Categories I and II (except if below 18 years

old on the date of entry – those between 12 and 18 will however be required to be vaccinated within 2 months of their arrival) and those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. The second dose must have been administered at least 14 days prior to arrival.

2. New rules depending on the country of origin, in order to return to Singapore

General travel lanes

All travelers except Singapore citizens and permanent residents are required to obtain an entry approval prior to travelling back to Singapore. This approval may be requested between 3 to 30 days prior to returning to Singapore using the dedicated SafeTravel online platform. The approval can be requested before the employee leaves Singapore.

The main changes recently brought to traveling rules are the following:

- The duration of SHN for countries in Categories III and IV is reduced from 14 days to 10 days,
- New countries were added to Category II (see full list below, effective 12 October, 2021),
- New countries were added to Category III (see full list below, effective 12 October, 2021),
- Travelers coming from Category III will also now be able to serve their SHN at home provided they are fully vaccinated and their home meets certain conditions.

	Category I	Category II	Category III	Category IV
Countries	Hong Kong Macao Mainland China Taiwan	Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Bhutan, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the U.K., the U.S., and Vatican City	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Slovenia	All other Countries/ Regions (<u>Excluding</u> Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Pass holders with travel history to any of these excluded countries are not permitted for entry, including those with prior entry approvals.)
PCR test before departure	No	Yes. 48 hours before departure.	Yes. 48 hours before departure.	Yes. 48 hours before departure.
PCR test upon arrival (at the airport)	Yes (and self-isolation until a negative result comes out, i.e. approximately 24 hours)	Yes	Yes	Yes

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	Category I	Category II	Category III	Category IV
SHN	No	Yes. 7 days. At home or self-sourced hotel or serviced apartment by default. The choice must be made at the time the re-entry approval is requested.	Yes. 10 days. At assigned hotel by default or at place of employee's choice provided they complete an application 3 days before arrival (home, chosen hotel or serviced apartment) if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ they are fully vaccinated, ■ and they are (i) either alone (i.e. with no domestic helper for instance), or (ii) with fully vaccinated household members sharing the same travel history and SHN duration (or unvaccinated children below the age of 12). 	Yes. 10 days. At assigned hotel by default (except critical medical condition) (now SGD1,450 instead of SGD2,000 previously excluding tests).
Tests during SHN	N/A	No.	Yes. Self swab tests on Days 3 and 7.	Yes. Self swab tests on Days 3 and 7.
PCR test upon exit from SHN	N/A	Yes. On day 7.	Yes. On day 10.	Yes. On day 10.

Additional remarks:

- Travelers doing their SHN at their place of residence or chosen accommodation must wear an electronic bracelet. In-person and/or video checks are carried out to ensure compliance,
- The main difference for travelers coming from Category II countries and Category III countries is that travelers coming from Category II are authorized to serve their SHN at home even if they have roommates/family/a helper living with them, provided they can isolate in a bedroom with bathroom preventing any mingling with the rest of the household. On the contrary, travelers coming from Category III countries must be all alone in the place they choose.

Specific travel lanes

Reciprocal Green Lanes

A Reciprocal Green Lane is available only with Brunei and Mainland China. All other RGLs have been suspended.

From Singapore to 6 provinces of Mainland China (Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang), the process is the following:

- A single-entry document only for short-term essential business and official visit,
- Only for Singapore residents,
- The application must be completed through a host company or a government agency 2 to 5 weeks prior to traveling (with 7 days processing at the maximum),
- A controlled itinerary must be provided at least a day before arrival for the first 14 days of the trip,
- PCR tests are required 48 hours before departure and upon arrival in China (self isolation until results come out) but no further quarantine,
- No PCR test is required before departing from Mainland China but one is required at the airport upon return to Singapore,
- No quarantine in Singapore upon return,
- Tracing apps must be used in both countries.

The RGL is still in place with Brunei but is no longer really reciprocal since a 7-day SHN at home or self-sourced hotel or serviced apartment must be served when returning to Singapore. However a VTL is now in place with Brunei as well (see below).

VTLs

The VTLs offer the possibility to travel without any quarantine upon return to Singapore. It is currently open with Germany and Brunei and 9 countries are soon going to be added to the list:

Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the U.K. and the U.S. as from 19 October, 2021, and South Korea as from 15 November, 2021.

The main requirements are the following:

- It is only available for travelers fully vaccinated either in a VTL country or in Singapore – it is now also open to unvaccinated children under 12,

- An application must be made between 7 and 30 days prior to departure for Singapore,
- A single-entry is then granted for a period of 6 days after the intended date of entry,
- PCR tests are required 48 hours before departure and upon arrival in Singapore (self-isolation is required until a negative result comes out),
- Travel is allowed exclusively on VTL designated flights,
- PCR tests on Days 3 and 7 of arrival in Singapore will no longer be required after 19 October, 2021.

3. Entry conditions to selected APAC countries, the E.U., the U.K., the U.A.E and the U.S.

While APAC countries are for the most part still quite closed to foreigners (with the exception of Thailand), the rest of the world is now opening up.

In addition to the health measures listed in the table below, whether flights are still in place, whether lockdowns are in effect, the cost of medical treatment should your employee become infected by Covid 19 while traveling, and whether re-entry approvals back to Singapore are obtained easily for that destination will need to be considered at the time of deciding whether to send an employee on business trip.

Also the cost of these health measures (quarantine, medical coverage, tests) to be supported by the employer in case of workrelated trip must be carefully assessed.

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	Are foreigners allowed?	Is an entry approval required?	Is a predeparture test required?
Thailand	The Tourist Visa Exemption Scheme including Singapore and France is still in place and allows foreigners to stay for a max of 45 days. Other foreigners must apply for a visa.	Yes (Certificate of Entry)	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
Cambodia	Visa exemptions and tourist visas are currently suspended. Therefore foreigners must apply for a visa.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
Indonesia	Only very specific categories of foreigners are authorized to enter for business purposes.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
Lao	Only very specific categories of foreigners are authorized to enter for business purposes.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
Malaysia	Only longterm visas are currently granted in Malaysia so no business travel. From Singapore to Malaysia, a Periodic Commuting Arrangement is in place but only for stays lasting 90 days at the minimum.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
Vietnam	Only very specific categories of foreigners are authorized to enter for business purposes, on a case by case basis.	No	Yes, PCR test within 3 to 7 days prior departure.
Australia	Only very specific categories of foreigners are authorized to enter the territory, notably foreign nationals with critical skills or working in critical sectors in Australia.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.
The E.U.	Usual conditions apply. E.U. passport holders are allowed in the E.U. without any formality for a maximum duration of 3 months. Foreigners must apply for a short-term Schengen visa, which can be used for workrelated reasons for a maximum period of 90 days.	No	No if fully vaccinated in most countries. For unvaccinated travelers, PCR test performed within 72 hours of departure or antigenic one within 48 hours.
The U.K.	Singaporean passport holders and E.U. passport holders are allowed to enter the U.K. territory. Depending on the actual work they would need to perform in the U.K. they may need to apply for a Standard Visitor Visa.	No	No, if fully vaccinated and coming from Singapore.

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The U.A.E	Depending on nationality, an on-arrival visa may be available (it is the case for French citizens and for Singaporean citizens) which authorizes a stay from 30 to 90 days (the duration varies depending on nationality).	No	Dubai Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure. Abu Dhabi Yes, PCR test 48 hours prior departure.
The U.S.	Singapore residents are authorized in the U.S. according to the Visa Waiver Program, provided they completed the Electronic System for Travel Authorization prior to traveling.	No	Yes, PCR test 72 hours prior departure.

	Is a quarantine required? If so where and for how long?	Is a test required upon arrival?	Is a specific medical coverage required?
Thailand	Yes, 7 days for fully vaccinated travelers, 10 days for unvaccinated ones. All quarantines to be served in a designated hotel booked prior departure. Starting 1 November, 2021 there will be no more quarantine for travelers coming from Singapore considered as a safe country. ¹	Yes	Yes, with a minimum coverage of USD100,000 and including Covid-19.
Cambodia	Yes, 14-day quarantine in a designated hotel (which must be booked 3 days at the minimum prior to traveling) if one or more passengers on the flight tests positive upon arrival, or at home under supervision of local authorities if all test negative.	Yes	Yes, with a minimum coverage of USD 50,000 (or register with the one chosen by the Cambodian government).
Indonesia	Yes, 8 days in a designated hotel.	Yes	No
Lao	Yes, 14 days in a designated hotel, prebooked.	Yes	Yes, mandatory coverage provided by the National Task Force.
Malaysia	Yes, 14 days in a designated hotel or at home upon application for fully vaccinated travelers only. It can be extended up to 21 days by decision of local authorities.	Yes	No

¹ Also note that the SandBox and Samui programs allow fully vaccinated travelers to travel to Phuket, Surat Thani, Phang-Nga, and Krabi and Samui where they can travel freely during 7 days under the condition they stay in a designated hotel and report daily to that hotel (and self isolate until they receive results of the on-arrival PCR test). Travelers need to book a minimum of 7 nights in the designated hotel. After the end of this 7-day period, they are allowed to go around freely in the rest of Thailand.

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Vietnam	Yes, for fully vaccinated travelers, 7 days in a designated hotel followed by 7 days at home.	No	Yes
Australia	Yes, 14 days in a designated facility	Yes, within 48 hours of arrival	No
The E.U.	No, if fully vaccinated in most countries.	No	No
The U.K.	No, if fully vaccinated from Singapore.	No	No
The U.A.E	No quarantine for fully vaccinated travelers from Singapore.	Dubai No Abu Dhabi Yes	No
The U.S.	No, if fully vaccinated from Singapore.	No	No

	Are additional tests required during the stay?	Are unvaccinated travelers authorized to enter?
Thailand	Yes, PCR test at the end of quarantine.	Yes
Cambodia	Yes, PCR test on Day 13 of quarantine.	Yes
Indonesia	Yes, PCR test on Day 7.	No
Lao	No	Yes
Malaysia	Yes, PCR or antigenic test on Day 10.	Yes
Vietnam	Yes, 2 PCR tests during quarantine.	Yes
Australia	Yes, between Day 10 and Day 12.	Yes
The E.U.	No	Yes
The U.K.	Yes, PCR test within 2 days of arrival.	Yes
The U.A.E	Dubai No Abu Dhabi Yes, PCR test on Day 6	Yes
The U.S.	No	Yes

Your contact



Laudine Daniel

Attorney-at-Law (Paris Bar)
Registered Foreign Lawyer
Singapore
T +65 6408 8000
laudine.daniel@luther-lawfirm.com

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