



**Manage COVID-19, Protect Your Employees
Q&As from Live Webinars February 17 – 21, 2020**

#SingaporeTogether: Caring for our Client Community

As a proud contributor to the Singapore Community, we at Mercer are striving to live our purpose of making a difference to our colleagues, clients, and the community in which we operate. The health and safety of our clients and their employees during this challenging time remains a prime concern. To help steer us through, we put our best teams forward to address key questions on how to manage and limit the impact on business and our people.

The webinars were hosted from February 17 to 21, 2020. Over 700 participants connected to our webinars and learnt how other employers in Singapore are managing government and employee responses on COVID-19. This question and answer document serves as a reference to all queries posed to our senior consultants during these sessions; some of the answers have been edited for clarity. This document is based on general / aggregate views of best practices in the HR industry, and our present understanding and knowledge of the evolving COVID-19 situation. It is not intended to be legal advice, medical advice or professional advice as regards your insurance policy coverage or the needs of a specific organization.

Should you have further queries on best practices applied during this time, please contact Shireen Kwan, Mercer Singapore's Growth Leader on Shireen.kwan@mercer.com

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Other useful insights on COVID-19:

[SG Pulse Survey Findings: Manage COVID-19](#)

[How to Limit the Impact of Coronavirus on Your Business](#)

[How to Put People First as the Coronavirus Outbreak Grows](#)

[Coronavirus: One Step Back for the Global Economy](#)

[Are More Pandemics Inevitable? What the Coronavirus Can Tell Us](#)

[The Novel Coronavirus May Damage Aviation More Than SARS](#)

[Pandemic Readiness: Risk Finance & Mitigation Strategies](#)

This document is based on general / aggregate views of best practices in the HR industry, as well as the present understanding and knowledge of the evolving COVID-19 virus situation. This document should not be taken to be professional advice that has been specifically tailored to the needs of an individual organization. We encourage our readers to regularly check official websites such as the relevant countries' health ministry and manpower ministries' websites to stay updated on the evolving situation, and to contact the relevant hotlines of the respective government ministries for specific information / guidance. Please also note that any questions as regards insurance coverage (such as, whether an insurance policy covers the COVID-19 virus) is subject to the specific terms and conditions of your policies and underwriter determinations, and the information in this document does not, and should not be taken to, address the coverage of any policies that you may have with your insurer(s). Please also obtain your own legal advice (including, but not limited to data privacy issues and employment law), as appropriate.

Implementing Adaptive Working Arrangements

<p>1. When should employers implement split-team working arrangements?</p>	<p>Many employers activated split team working upon elevation to DORSCON-orange. Most felt it was important to test their BCP and adaptive working set-ups ahead of potential elevation.</p> <p>Some considerations for activating split-team arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Split working helps minimize the risk of an entire workforce being unavailable to perform the critical business activities – Identify the more critical activities, functions, and processes; including services or functions that are outsourced – Allocate staff, supporting resources, and budget; take into consideration the information and communication technology (ICT) requirements, data accessibility, and information security – to support working from multiple sites or remotely – Teams may operate from alternative sites, for example: an alternative building belonging to another business unit or division, a business partner or temporary rented business office; across different floors of an office building (note, recent Ministry of Health (MOH) guidelines on what to do should a confirmed case occur on your floor provides the view that split teams could also be set up in different sections of the same floor) – Working from home may provide another alternative site, but requires additional considerations to ensure productivity. Please see answers in the section titled Employee support and engagement in times of COVID-19. – If split-site or remote working is not feasible, teams may operate in shifts; however, it is recommended to ensure that the workplace is cleaned and disinfected before the next team starts their shift. <p>Other important factors that should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) needs to be effective in the event of a partial, and / or a full closure of the primary or permanent work place, due to a suspect or confirmed case – Work with the critical contractors and service providers, and, if necessary, ensure they have also activated their BCP, and their services will not be disrupted (for example, no or too few cleaners deployed to clean your work sites) – Where teams are unfamiliar with alternative sites or remote working arrangements, productivity may be reduced until
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	<p>levels of familiarity achieved; this reduced level of operation should be anticipated and managed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure procedures are implemented to isolate a suspect or confirmed case; minimize the possibility of spreading COVID-19 to healthy employees and contract staff; conduct drills to rehearse and test these procedures. Please refer to MOH guidelines specific to this. – For rented premises, especially multi-tenanted offices, work with the landlord or managing agent to ensure the necessary procedures are implemented, rehearsed, and communicated – If necessary, provide proper personal protection equipment (PPE) for example: gowns, face shields, gloves, shoe covers for employees assigned to handle such cases. We suggest reaching out to the websites / hotlines of the relevant government ministries for further guidance on PPE (e.g. when is necessary, what type of PPE).
<p>2. What are the various way of structuring split-team arrangements?</p>	<p>Given the pace at which this occurred, most of our responding organizations arranged for team A to work from office and team B to work from home, alternating on a weekly basis. Organizations have said that their workplaces will be cleaned and disinfected during the weekend.</p> <p>There is however an opportunity to enhance employee engagement and collaboration by planning for alternative site working, rather than work from home. Engineering the office space e.g. strategically placing split teams across different business unit teams, mixed job grades, strategic partners, can lead to positive outcomes – diversity, relationship building, creativity, excitement, appreciation of broader teams etc.</p> <p>We have seen clients start to pull back from initial split team structures and instead take a more strategic approach in anticipation that the situation continues for longer than expected.</p>
<p>3. Is alternate-day split team arrangement less effective than a weekly switch in minimizing risks of infection?</p>	<p>The recommendation made is based on generally accepted good practices. Some considerations and benefits of splitting teams on a weekly basis are:</p> <p>Generally, this period may be more appropriate for employees to complete their processes or activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This may minimize the need to hand over tasks to the next person that requires information that can only be processed at the office – This may also minimize human errors and miscommunication

	<p>Sanitizing and disinfecting workplaces properly may take longer than the usual basic cleaning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The weekend allows the cleaning crew or service provider adequate time – If a shorter time is allocated for this, more cleaners need to be mobilized – From past experience, many cleaning service providers face a shortage of cleaners – Some cleaning workers either refused to work in the night and/or certain sites – Some even quit for fear of their own health and safety – Some do so because they are urged by family members to do so <p>Ensuring that the workplace is cleaned and disinfected properly will also provide employees with better assurance and peace-of-mind that the workplace is safe for them to work. A weekly switch should allow for more time for cleaning.</p>
<p>4. Should employees structured to work in split-teams be allowed to interact? How will this reduce the effectiveness of the split-team arrangement?</p>	<p>The approach is to understand the impact to the organization and its business value chain - if a worker is infected, and cross infects all team A employees, what is the impact?</p> <p>Whereas, if team B remains distant and not infected, what is the impact? Assuming team B employees can still deliver critical services and fulfil major obligations, albeit at a reduced service or production level, the outcome should be acceptable, depending on the needs of your organization.</p> <p>If, however, some workers are able to interact between teams and one is unfortunately infected, they could effectively undermine the risk mitigation of going to split teams and potentially destabilize the whole organization.</p> <p>Interactions should be carried out through telephone, email or video conferencing.</p>
<p>5. How prevalent is split-team arrangement and working from home among employers in Singapore?</p>	<p>There are no published survey results to substantiate the number of organizations that have implemented split-team and/or work from home arrangements. However, it is widely accepted international general good HR practice for organizations to do so.</p> <p>In addition, organizations also need to identify their critical business partners, service providers and vendors; to ensure that these dependent organizations have also implemented such measures.</p>

	The key principle is that the critical business functions and processes need to continue or recover, and the business continuity plans can only be effective if the appropriate (human) resources are available.
6. What is the percentage of companies that have implemented working from home? What trends on "working from home" do we see in the coming 1-2 weeks?	See page 15 for responses to our live poll questions on adaptive working arrangements.
7. What best practices can employers apply around working from home?	It is advisable that companies set clear expectations about working from home, particularly around colleagues being available via phone/ instant messaging / email during working hours, daily manager-colleague check-in on expectations, meeting attendance virtually, taking breaks, and dress expectations (for video conferencing). It is also advisable to organize regular open office hours where staff can dial in to ask questions and raise concerns about the current working situation and the impact it has on them and the team.
8. While companies are implementing working from home, does that mean employees are not able to attend external meetings when needed?	Based on our understanding of the current situation, generally, external meetings with clients can still continue. However, it is recommended that the organization takes measures to ensure that employees from teams A and B do not meet the same clients' employees at all times. If anyone from team B needs to attend a meeting with team A and their clients, the recommendation will be for the team B member to attend via audio and/or video conference.
9. What are the flexible working alternatives available for employees working in assembly lines where working from home is not feasible?	<p>If the company currently operates two or more shifts, the approach may require shift schedules to be adjusted or shortened.</p> <p>If the company operates only one shift, then consider rescheduling and operating two daily shifts.</p> <p>An alternative option is staggered shifts. For example, shift one operates from Monday to Wednesday, and shift two from Thursday to Saturday, or AM & PM.</p> <p>Common considerations for all approaches is to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Work areas are cleaned and disinfected before the next shift starts work – Employees in each shift should not come into contact with employees scheduled for the next shift or from the previous shift

<p>10. What are some methods to engage employees working under flexible working arrangements?</p>	<p>Key to managing engagement when employees are not working from their usual location, is maintaining trust and open communication while focusing on outputs and results. Managers should set up daily touchpoints with colleagues, using technology available to create a sense of belonging without being in the office. For example, organizations can consider releasing work from home best practices / FAQs to ensure healthy working. It is also important to set clear expectations on results for colleagues working remotely. Recognizing good performance and outcomes should continue, as well as sharing concrete feedback on improvement areas – by using daily check-ins via phone or web meetings.</p>
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Ensuring Health & Safety for Your Employees

<p>11. Knowing that we're in a critical phase of COVID-19 now, what is the recommendation for employers to monitor whether an employee is unwell or working remotely as part of BCP?</p>	<p>Based on our understanding of the present situation, we think that companies should set up a simple health declaration form for staff to complete when they are feeling unwell and need to work from home or be out of office. The form should indicate key dates, doctors note, any required LOA or quarantine requirements, and whether MC was obtained prior to absence from office.</p> <p>Declaration forms should be submitted to either line managers or direct to HR for compilation, bearing in mind the confidentiality obligations that may be in the relevant employment contracts, and the applicable data privacy laws / regulations.</p>
<p>12. Which insurers are covering virus treatment for employees?</p>	<p>The Life Insurance Association (LIA) and Group Insurance Association (GIA) have stated that generally, Group Hospital & Surgical, Group Term Life, and Group Personal Accident policies should cover hospitalization costs related to COVID-19. In addition, the GIA also released a circular on February 10, 2020 announcing that Work Injury Compensation (WICA) policies will also cover COVID-19 for work related injuries.</p> <p>To-date, virtually all insurers have confirmed that their Group Hospital & Surgical policies will cover hospitalization, subject to certain limits and exclusions that may be specific to certain policies. We recommend you review your policies with your broker and insurer.</p> <p>Lastly, a few insurers have announced that until the World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 a pandemic, it will be covered under Group Hospital & Surgical policies. As</p>

	of March 3, 2020, WHO has not declared COVID-19 a pandemic.
13. The Singapore government has issued a directive for issuance of five days of medical leave to patients showing symptoms of the virus. What can employees do if they have exhausted their entire 14 days medical leave entitlement?	<p>If an employee is displaying symptoms of cold/ flu, then the likelihood is that they will need medical leave to recover. We encourage companies to ensure employees take what is required.</p> <p>If an employee does not require the full five days or if symptoms are mild, then employers may support working from home if remote working is feasible.</p> <p>If an employee's role does not suit working from home, then employers may consider a number of options and outline the policy to reporting managers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers may adopt flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting and teleconferencing, to allow employees on leave of absence (LOA) / stay home notice (SHN) to work from home/ alternate work locations. • If remote working is not possible, employers are encouraged to provide additional paid leave over and above the employees' annual leave entitlements for the LOA/SHN, especially if the travel was work-related. If that is not feasible, employers can consider the following options, or a combination of the options, for employees on LOA/SHN: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Treat employees' LOA/SHN as paid hospitalization leave or paid outpatient sick leave; – Allow employees to apply for annual leave; – Allow employees to use advanced paid leave or apply for no pay leave, for employees who have used up their leave entitlements; or – Other mutually agreed arrangements between the employers and employees / unions. <p>The above, of course, should be read together with the relevant terms in the employment contracts, and bearing in the mind the latest government regulations on this.</p> <p>Employers and employees have a joint duty to ensure that employees behave responsibly during the LOA period. MOM reserves the right to take action against the employer or employee, if they fail to comply with the LOA/SHN order.</p> <p>For more information, please refer to the FAQs issued by the Ministry of Manpower.</p>

Employee support and engagement in times of COVID-19

<p>14. How do we keep employees engaged at this time, and minimize productivity loss?</p>	<p>Employers should be empathetic, show employees that you understand the situation and the risk, but that you are prepared for possible scenarios or escalation.</p> <p>Encourage employees to maintain their day-to-day normal activities and routine where possible. Remember that the anxiety is often triggered by lack of information and feelings of unsafety. Timely, transparent and repeated communications are critical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct them to your preferred source of information e.g. MOH website and subscribe to Gov.sg WhatsApp subscription service to remain updated on a daily basis. • Explain your Business Resiliency Management, Security and Business Continuity Planning Approach. • Reiterate the precautions your company and building management are taking • Remind them of the support available e.g. Employee Assistance Plan service, insurance coverage, external Telemedicine Providers, and basic personal hygiene requirements. <p>From our research, trust in management is based on competence and concern for employees. The more aligned your leaders are, and the more constant your communications are, the more likely you will build confidence in your employees to reduce anxiety and allow them to carry on with business-as-usual.</p>
<p>15. In what ways may employees be engaged while they work from home through an extended period of time?</p>	<p>Their line manager is key. Having a manager who can clearly communicate expectations and changes, builds trust, helps to remove barriers, and continues to discuss their progress and development, will greatly enhance a remote employee's experience. Organizations with successful remote working set-ups tend to be very disciplined in creating structured plans and processes to effectively equip their remote employees – daily huddles, video conferencing, providing appropriate equipment, etc.</p> <p>Remember, long-term remote workers often experience isolation and limited opportunity to connect with others. The 'out of sight, out of mind' challenge can lead to long-term remote workers being delegated more simple tasks, which can impact their overall career trajectory if not carefully managed.</p>

<p>16. What pay and reward, or monetary support is recommended for employees working under split-team arrangement or working during non-office hours?</p>	<p>At this time, it is advisable to continue with the existing rewards practices applicable in the company, wherever possible. In case of working during non-office hours, overtime pay and time-off-in-lieu should be provided, depending on the agreement in place for the employee, and in accordance with applicable employment regulations.</p> <p>For those employees working in split-teams, normal compensation should continue when both teams are working from a location that is low risk. However, in case of employees going to worksites where risk of infection may be higher (for example, medical sales representatives visiting doctors and hospitals) some employers are considering additional incentives or allowances.</p> <p>Most recently, we've seen some of the worst impacted industries start to make pay adjustments for senior leaders e.g. reduction in base salary, hold back of bonus award, reduced working hours. Whilst not widespread, this does point to concern in financial sustainability given the recent financial market reactions. We recommend employers start to look at financial levers as part of your continued BCP.</p>
<p>17. Is it the employer's responsibility to provide accommodation to employees who are in (self-imposed) quarantine for the 14 days?</p>	<p>To the best of our knowledge, there is no specific requirement or guideline regarding responsibility for employee accommodation during the 14-day stay home notice (SHN) period.</p> <p>However, foreign employees may seek assistance from their employers. Employers should assist impacted employees, ensure impacted employees have proper accommodation, and adequate food and water to serve out the SHN.</p>
<p>18. Should employers be tasked with finding alternative accommodation for employees or should this responsibility stay with the affected employees?</p>	<p>In case of employees returning from business travel or having to extend their stay abroad on a business trip due to quarantine measures and / or travel restrictions imposed by governments and companies, it is good practice for employers to support the search and funding of alternative accommodation. Not assisting employees in times of need may result in reputational and goodwill damage in the long term.</p>
<p>19. Is it the employer's responsibility to provide transportation for returning employees from the airport to the approved premises?</p>	<p>We have observed that employers are providing transportation to returning employees.</p>

Mobility & Business Travel

<p>20. How do we balance business continuity (BC) with our Duty of Care obligations?</p>	<p>A growing number of countries are introducing new travel restrictions alongside some 'host' entities responding differently in terms of the BCP.</p> <p>For business travel to essential overseas meetings, the BC arrangements overseas should be aligned to the BC arrangements implemented at the host office. For example, if you meet team A employees at the host's office, do not meet team B employees. That is, the meeting arrangements need to be discussed and agreed in advance with the host, to minimize risk of infection.</p> <p>Likewise, such arrangements may also need to be implemented if you are the host.</p>
<p>21. Is there a need to impose personal travel declarations within the company?</p>	<p>An employer may not be able to legally oblige employees to declare personal travels, but in principle it would be possible to introduce a company policy in response to the crisis situation, in order to protect other employees and office tenants.</p> <p>In general, it is perfectly reasonable for the employer to request their employees to be socially responsible and notify the organization of their recent trips.</p>
<p>22. What advice on travel should employers and employees consider during this time?</p>	<p>The first consideration organizations should have is whether travel is essential. Organizations must consider whether that trip can be replaced with a virtual meeting. If it's possible to replace it with a virtual meeting, then definitely that should be exercised in the first instance. If it cannot be replaced, then can it be postponed?</p> <p>However, if travel is essential, then additional precautionary measures definitely need to be put in place. When traveling for business, employers should provide employees with travel accommodation.</p> <p>If, due to local legislation a 14-day quarantine or LOA is imposed, organizations need to ensure that accommodation is being provided, depending on whether there are any other requirements in the local jurisdiction. Hotels also should provide internet connection so employees can consider working remotely in the first 14 days after arrival.</p> <p>Many a times when employees travel on business, very little thought is given to things like emergency contacts and repatriation hotlines. It is paramount that organizations, when</p>

	<p>sending employees out during these challenging times, reiterate the support measures that are available to them. Ensure that employees have travel cards with emergency contact numbers in the event that they require repatriation or medical assistance.</p> <p>Typically, your service provider will have contact centers that provide 24/7 support. Make sure employees are well-briefed on all these support services available to them so that they are prepared during their travel.</p> <p>And definitely, when they return, to make sure that they are also observing any LOA that may be in place in Singapore, especially if the travel was to any of the affected regions.</p>
<p>23. Can an employee say no to a request for business travel to a country with low numbers of cases reported, such as Vietnam?</p>	<p>This is very contextual, and dependent on the situation. It is also dependent on the criticality of the trip and how many precautions the employer is going to put in place to protect the employee.</p> <p>Employees should discuss any concerns with their managers to reach a mutually agreed decision as to whether the meeting is absolutely necessary or whether it can be postponed or held remotely via web/ video conferencing. Bear in mind that the other parties in the meeting may have similar concerns about receiving visitors from Singapore.</p> <p>It is reasonable to articulate any concerns and to ensure that all questions are addressed.</p>
<p>24. To what extent may employers advise employees on personal travel to affected areas, or social interactions outside office hours?</p>	<p>Personal trips by an employee to affected regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a travel restriction is imposed by the government, then both the organization and the employee will have to comply. • If there is no travel restriction, but a travel advisory has been issued by the government to limit travel only for essential purposes, then the employee should be encouraged to follow the advisory, and to postpone or cancel the trip. • If there is no travel restriction or advisory, and if the employee makes the personal trip, some organizations will require their employees to work from home for 14 days; more as a precaution and to avoid other employees raising this as a concern. <p>It has also been observed that being concerned for their own health and safety, most employees will independently postpone or cancel their personal trips and social activities.</p>

<p>25. Are there any statistics on how companies in Singapore are managing business travel?</p>	<p>Yes, we recently conducted a Pulse Survey. So please get in touch with us if you want more information regarding this.</p>
<p>26. In addition to organization-wide initiatives, what are some practical steps for mobility teams to consider?</p>	<p>Contact the health insurance provider to confirm the coverage for foreign nationals in the respective countries. In addition, clarify what would be the first thing that foreigners need to do in case they need to be hospitalized.</p> <p>In cases where the assignees are already in locations where multiple cases have been confirmed, clarify whether foreigners need to be hospitalized or quarantined. Also confirm whether foreigners should be taken to a local national safe virus facility or to an international hospital in that particular location. HR teams need to consider language barriers when employees visit medical facilities in a foreign location.</p> <p>Another practical step is to encourage foreign employees to stay in touch with the embassies of their respective home countries. This might be a good alternative to receive some support if and when needed.</p> <p>Consider using the support of an external organization specializing in providing advice, support, guidance, and coordination – and also, if necessary, evacuation services.</p>
<p>27. What types of support can employers provide to employees who are already in risky locations?</p>	<p>The first thing is to decide if evacuation or repatriation is the best solution at that particular point in time.</p> <p>Of course, that may be very different for every individual depending on their role, organizational structure, and whether they can perform their role from a location other than the home country. All these factors need to be assessed and considered carefully before taking a decision.</p> <p>This also implies that it is important to have an idea of what level of risk would justify and trigger an evacuation.</p>
<p>28. Are mobile employees at higher risk than others?</p>	<p>The general rule is that mobility will always increase the risk. The more you move, the more you are in touch with other people; the more you are at the risk of being exposed.</p> <p>At the opposite end of the spectrum there is “isolation” or “quarantine”. Somewhere in between is really that sweet spot where organizations need to operate in terms of continuing to run their business, taking precautions, and going ahead with any meetings that are essential, but eliminating any meetings and any trips that are not essential.</p>

	<p>We recommend paying particular attention to business travelers because some business travel may be unplanned and take place without prior notice.</p> <p>Some organizations find it hard to keep track of employees on business trips, especially if the travel is arranged through a personal assistant or the secretary, rather than a centralized process. It is not uncommon for business travelers to decide on the spot to change the itinerary, so it is hard to know where every employee is at any point in time. Fortunately, there are apps now that make it easier to track where your employees are, using geolocation functionality.</p>
<p>29.What changes should we consider in terms of HR practices, such as Rewards, Performance, etc.?</p>	<p>Decide on how to compensate the assignees in the event of evacuation or quarantine, in terms of base remuneration, assignment-related allowances, and support provided on location (for example, accommodation, meals, transportation). Adjust the assignment and the assignee's KPIs, targets, and performance metrics accordingly, to reflect any restrictions in their ability to deliver results.</p> <p>Monitor fluctuations in the availability and price of goods and services and consider adjusting the allowances, if necessary. If it is absolutely necessary to deploy or retain staff in risky areas, consider paying a Hardship Allowance (for the inconvenience caused by travelling restrictions, availability of goods, disruption to services, etc.).</p> <p>Finally, while it is important to protect international assignees and their families, ensure that foreign and local staff are treated equally and fairly, in terms of precautions, support, and advice.</p>
<p>30.What kind of support are other companies offering in the instance where an assignee has decided to remain in his home country after the chinese new year (CNY) holidays and his children are not able to return to school in China?</p>	<p>We haven't seen many such instances, but obviously if the employees' children are not able to return to their schools in China, I think the company may want to assist by providing some sort of tuitions to ensure that the children are not disadvantaged in terms of curriculum.</p> <p>It would be worth checking whether the schools in China are actually working, since we have seen many cases of schools being closed, so the child in this hypothetical scenario would not be missing any lessons. Hence, what is important is having access to the information and to ensure that the studying schedule of children that may not go back to school in China is more or less aligned and synchronized with what it would have been if those children had been able to go back to China.</p>

	In general, whatever support the company can provide should be made available to the employee, so that when the children can eventually rejoin the schools in China, they are not going to be disadvantaged or behind in comparison to the kids who actually stayed in the country.
31. Should an employee evacuate from the host location for a period (that is, 1-2 months), would companies typically continue with the COLA payments?	The answer is no, because typically Cost of Living Allowances (COLA) compensate for cost of living differences between the home and the host location. Therefore, if the employee is repatriated all assignment-related allowances would typically cease.
32. If an employee insists to move to another country temporarily to avoid a high-risk contagion country, can an employer say no due to complicated tax issues which may arise from the move?	In principle, moving employees to another location in response to a crisis should be done on the basis of a clear BCP, rather than at the employee's request.

Effective Communication

33. How often is communication on COVID-19 recommended to ensure optimal effectiveness?	<p>At this stage of the outbreak, proactive mass communication to employees has likely stabilized to become less frequent than in the earlier days/weeks of the outbreak.</p> <p>Proactive communication might include activities like a webinar 'sit in' with the China team to show solidarity and support across the company, calls with global or regional Senior Leaders who are 'checking in' to show their support, reminders of the importance of good hygiene, the precautions /measures that have been taken at your company, as well as a reminder about where employees can find the information they need to address their questions and concerns about COVID-19.</p> <p>In terms of passive communication, it is still best practice to keep posters and other materials in the office and on your intranet that promote good behaviors, provides links to relevant resources, etc.</p> <p>In terms of reactive communication (responding to something else that happens), employers should be looking to communicate as quickly as possible following official news (even if that means sending an email on the weekend!) and whenever there is a change in circumstances. Some examples of change could include if the DORSCON level</p>
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	changes (up or down), if there is a change to or implementation of the BCP (that is, start of split-teams), if the company announces an impact to the business as a result of the outbreak (remember that employees should learn things from the company, not from the media).
34.To date, we have been sending theme-based communication, for example working arrangements, health and safety guidelines, travel information, and government directives. What other information is important and should be included?	Some other topics for consideration that we see other companies communicating include updates on the business (any impact as a result of the outbreak), status of the team(s) in China and how they are doing, information around personal benefits such as flexible spending accounts and insured benefits and how employees can make the most of their benefits during this time, communication specific to people managers in having conversations about COVID-19, CSR and contributions by your company to support the cause, and broader sharing of business continuity planning to a lesser degree of detail.
35.What methods of communication best engage employees who are working under flexible working arrangements at this time?	

Government employee support schemes

36.Please share details on the application and use of SNEF fund and the LED scheme for HR related projects.	<p>SNEF has a pilot initiative to help employers look into important human capital functions which include Talent Attraction, Strategic Workforce Planning, Performance Management, Learning and Development, Talent Management, and Succession Planning and HR Management. The funding is for 70 percent of a SGD 30,000 project. However, the initiative has run its course and the window for application closes in March 2020. The scheme is not publicly available.</p> <p>Contact Adrian How for more information Adrian.how@mercer.com</p> <p>Alternatively, there is the Lean Enterprise Development (LED) Scheme which is an umbrella of funding grants from different agencies. The LED team will be able to advise which grants are most suitable for your organization.</p> <p>More information can be found on SG Workforce.</p>
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Appendix:

Adaptive Working Live Poll

Have you already started implementing split team arrangements?

42%
Yes

43%
No

10%
We are planning to

How are you structuring your split teams?

89%
Work from
home / office

13%
Alternative
sites

11%
Alternative
floors

7%
AM / PM
shifts

If you have implemented work from home, is it discretionary or mandatory?

64%
Discretionary

30%
Mandatory