

Law Society Advisory on Wuhan Coronavirus



Dear Members,

The Law Society has been monitoring the developments relating to the Wuhan coronavirus/novel coronavirus (nCoV) situation closely. Apart from the need for members to adopt responsible social behaviour (such as staying away from office and meetings if unwell and to seek prompt medical treatment), we issue this advisory to guide members and law practices to adopt the following non-exhaustive precautions:

- i. request all employees/lawyers/partners to provide travel and health declarations for the past two weeks;
- ii. where possible, those who have travelled to and from China (regardless of region) for the past two weeks should be advised to work from home or self-quarantine for a fortnight from the date of their return to Singapore. During those two weeks, they should monitor their health closely and seek medical attention immediately if feeling unwell;
- iii. restrict business travel to China until further notice. Similarly, non-essential travels to China (even on personal account) should be avoided for the time being;
- iv. minimise face-to-face meetings (especially with clients from affected areas) and consider holding virtual meetings instead. You may wish to consider using useful free apps like Zoom and Microsoft Teams for video-conferencing or tele-conferencing; and

- v. record the names and contact details of all visitors to your office in the event that contact tracing is necessary. Where appropriate, ask your clients/guests ahead of their visits if they have travelled from affected areas and the state of their health and take the necessary precautions.

Members may wish to set up work-from-home arrangements for their law practices as part of business continuity planning. To that end, please consider the following in your planning:

- a. encourage staff issued with office laptops to bring them home after work every day in case work-from-home arrangements are implemented on short notice. In doing so, staff should be mindful of cybersecurity and PDPA concerns. All laptops used by staff should also be installed with the latest anti-virus software.
- b. inform clients if you are working from home and provide alternative contact details to your clients to ensure that you remain contactable. Law firms may wish to consider including an email address on their letterheads for email communication.
- c. should law firms decide to close their offices temporarily, please inform the Secretariat via an email to publications@lawsoc.org.sg. We will assist in publicizing such office closures on *Jus News* and our website.
- d. hand over client files to fellow partners promptly and professionally should you fall ill (to the extent that this is possible). Conversely, assist with the clients of fellow partners should the situation call for cover arrangements.
- e. sole proprietors are encouraged to follow the guidance given in the "[Legal Practice Continuity Advisory](#)" relating to the Practice Pal Scheme sent out to members in February last year.

The Law Society will continue to monitor the nCoV developments closely. We will send further advisories to members as and when appropriate and necessary.

All members are encouraged to access the government website www.gov.sg regularly for the latest health and travel advisories. You can also receive the latest updates on the nCoV developments (including preventative measures) from the [Ministry of Health's \(MOH\) website](#).

While we endeavour to carry on business as usual with minimal disruptions, let's all stay alert, vigilant and nimble, as well as take sensible precautions (including those listed above) as a responsible legal profession.

Should you have any queries or clarifications on this advisory or how to manage a specific situation, please feel free to reach the Law Society at membership@lawsoc.org.sg.



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On behalf of Council of Law Society

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