

Employment & Benefits

Heightened Safety Period is Extended till 31 May 2023 and Additional Measures Introduced to Improve Workplace Safety and Health

On 10 February 2023, the Ministry of Manpower ("**MOM**") announced an extension to the Heightened Safety Period and the implementation of additional Workplace Safety and Health ("**WSH**") measures to run in tandem with the extended Heightened Safety Period ("**HSP**"). The HSP was first introduced on 1 September 2022 and was due to end on the 28 February 2023. It included measures targeted at addressing the rising number of workplace fatalities that occurred in 2022.

Extended Heightened Safety Period

The HSP has been extended by three months and will run from 1 March 2023 to 31 May 2023. In its announcement, MOM highlighted that during the initial HSP the annualised workplace fatality rate improved. However, during that same period the annualised workplace major injury rate increased. Further, the impact of the HSP was uneven across sectors. MOM's concerns are that major injuries are reflective of persistent safety lapses within the workplace, and these types of injuries are likely to have debilitating effects. Hence, the need to extend the HSP.

Additional Measures During the Extended Heightened Safety Period

Four additional measures will be implemented during the extended HSP. These additional measures take into account the recommendations made by the International Advisory Panel for Workplace Safety and Health in January 2023.

The additional measures complement the existing measures of tighter enforcement measures, strengthened support for small and medium enterprises who require assistance to improve their WSH practices and processes via the expansion of StartSAFE, targeted measures for the construction sector, and the setting up of the Multi-Agency Workplace Safety Taskforce ("**MAST**").

The additional measures are:

- (a) **Mandatory half-day in-person workplace safety and health training course for Chief Executives and Board of Directors.** This measure applies to companies found to have serious WSH lapses following serious or fatal workplace accidents. MOM will notify companies whose senior leadership are required to attend this training course. The training course curriculum will



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be an enhanced version of the existing bizSAFE training for senior management and will include additional modules on the Approved Code of Practice for Chief Executives and Board of Directors' WSH Duties, and root cause analysis of top incident types.

This is in addition to existing HSP measures which stipulate that companies found to have serious WSH lapses following serious or fatal workplace accidents may be debarred, for up to three months, from employing new foreign workers. Additionally, MOM continues to require company leaders to personally account to MOM and take responsibility for WSH rectifications.

- (b) **Maximum fines increased.** For breaches of WSH Act subsidiary legislation that could result in death or serious bodily injury, the maximum fine has been increased from S\$20,000 to S\$50,000.
- (c) **Raising awareness of channels to report WSH concerns and protecting workers who speak up.** In April 2023, the WSH Council will launch a National WSH Campaign to encourage workers to report unsafe workplace practices. Workers should first report WSH concerns to their employers to allow for swifter resolution. If the employer fails to act, then the matter should be raised to the authorities. The campaign will also heighten awareness of the types of protection available to workers who report or raise WSH issues. Members of the public can also report unsafe workplaces or acts to the MOM.
- (d) **Bite-sized versions of WSH guidance materials.** From May 2023, the WSH Council will introduce bite-sized versions of WSH guidance materials. This aims to better support companies, especially small and medium enterprises, to cultivate a stronger safe operations culture.

Long Term Measures to Sustain WSH Standards

MOM and MAST will work together to consider further measures to strengthen WSH standards and practices. MOM has stated that these measures will include placing greater accountability on employers and senior management, enhancing safety training, reviewing incentives and penalties, and sectoral strategies.

Click on the following links for more information (available on the MOM website at www.mom.gov.sg):

- [MOM Press Release titled "MOM Extends Heightened Safety Period by Three Months with Additional Measures"](#)
- [Report of the 8th Meeting of the International Advisory Panel 2023 for Workplace Safety and Health](#)

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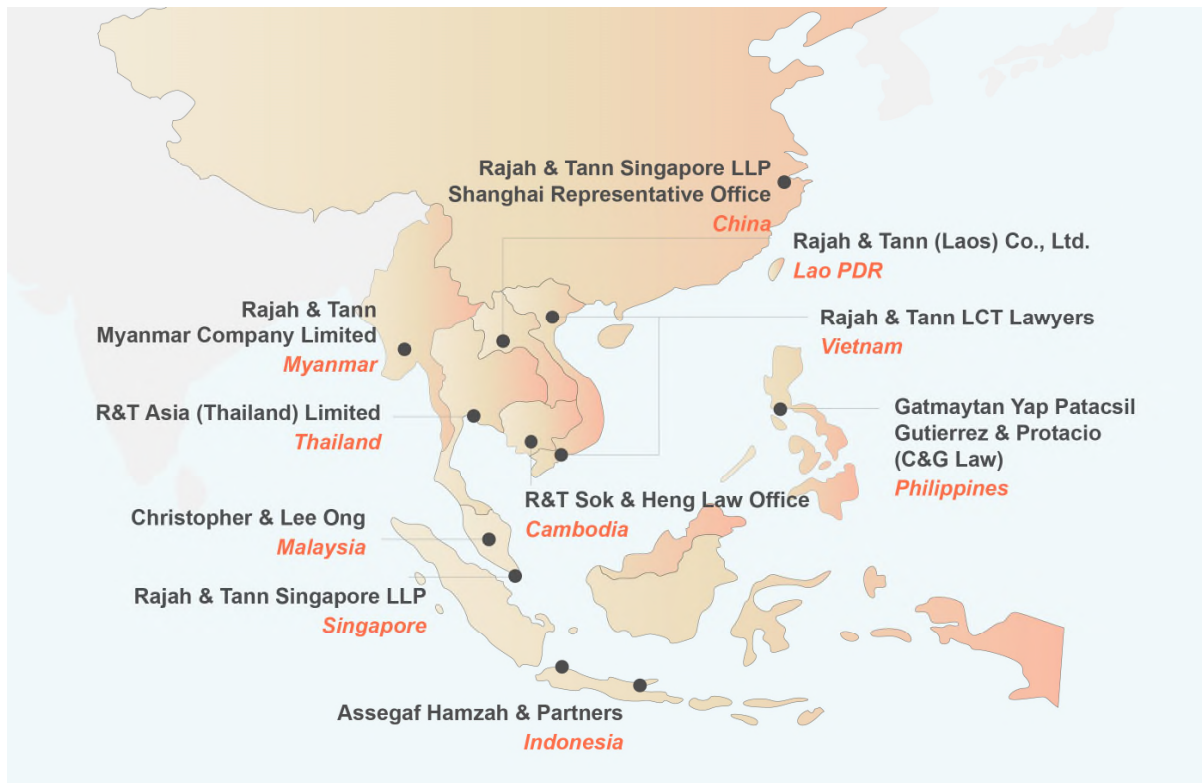
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