

Increased processing time for most types of work pass applications starting 11 March 2017



The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) updated their website on 11 March 2017 that the processing time will be longer for most work pass applications.

Why this matters

Employers will need to incorporate additional processing time of work pass applications into their hiring process timeline for foreign hires.

Background

Previously, the processing time for online submission of work pass applications was within seven working days and the turnaround time for manual applications was four weeks.

Effective from 11 March 2017, the processing time for online applications and renewals of Employment Pass, S Pass, Dependant's Pass and Long Term Visit Pass has increased from seven working days to three weeks. Manual application processing time increased from one month to eight weeks for most cases.

It should also be noted that Work Permit online application processing time will now take one week.

Stricter screening and vetting process

The change to the processing time is to facilitate enhancements in the MOM's screening and verification of work pass applications.

Going forward, the MOM may require more time to verify submitted information and documents with other government agencies and overseas organisations, for example, confirming authenticity of an applicant's documents and performing background checks.

Checks on employer's fair employment practices

In addition to the stricter assessment of the applicant's eligibility for a work pass, the MOM also indicated that it will be stepping up checks on employers' fair employment practices especially within the Fair Consideration Framework and the Triple Weak concept.

You may refer to our previous Tax Alerts on [Fair Consideration Framework](#) and [Triple Weak concept](#).

The MOM did not provide any specifics on the processes for screening and vetting of the applicant-related criteria or on the employer's check. However, in-line with the current employment and national security landscape, we understand that these measures are meant to scrutinise the employer's employment practices and to place stringent checks before granting work passes to the applicants.

Impact on employers

Employers should consider the following actions:

- Adjust internal HR hiring process to accommodate the increased processing time to ensure achievable work commencement date of their potential foreign hire.
- Ensure that the application submitted is error-free and provide all requested documents at the point of work pass application.
- Employers should thoroughly evaluate the need for a foreign hire in light of the Fair Consideration Framework and Triple Weak Concept.

For further information, please refer to the MOM webpage [here](#).



How KPMG can help

As a committed tax and immigration advisor to our clients, we welcome any opportunity to discuss the relevance of the above matters to your business.

For further information or assistance, please contact your local GMS professional or one of the professionals listed on this page with the KPMG International member firm in Singapore.

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