

ANNEX B: Details on accreditation requirement relating to progressive wages

Cleaners are a group that require special attention. Due to cheap sourcing, the market does not work as well to ensure that training, standards and productivity translate into improved wages in the cleaning sector. As contract prices are locked-in with buyers once entered into, the scope for collective bargaining for wages is also more limited. One result is that the industry suffers from high turnover and manpower shortages, when ensuring that our cleaning services are delivered well and up to standard is important for public hygiene reasons.

For these reasons, as announced during MOM's Committee of Supply debate on 5 March 2012, in enhancing the Clean Mark Accreditation Scheme, a requirement that cleaners employed in accredited companies receive appropriate wages commensurate with the higher training, standards and productivity required is being introduced. To ensure a robust and inclusive process, the Government will base this requirement on the progressive wage model recommended by the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC).

With this requirement for progressive wages, cleaners in accredited companies can look forward to better wages that are commensurate with the higher training, standards and productivity. It will contribute to a more motivated and competent cleaning workforce that can deliver better service and standards to buyers of cleaning services. Accredited cleaning companies will be better able to attract and retain resident cleaners^[1] to meet the manpower shortages in the industry.

Progressive Wage Model by the TCC

The TCC was mooted by the NTUC, and appointed by the Minister for Manpower to develop progressive wage scales for cleaners. It is co-chaired by the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation, and comprises tripartite representatives from the Government, the unions, employers (i.e. cleaning service providers) as well as industry stakeholders such as buyers of cleaning services.

^[1] Cleaning companies can tap into the existing pool of economically inactive residents to meet their manpower shortages. In 2011, there were estimated 544,500 economically inactive residents who have a highest qualification of below secondary level. Source: Report on Labour Force in Singapore, 2011

The TCC released its progressive wage model for cleaners on 18 October 2012. The model comprises three wage ladders for three broad categories of cleaning jobs. These three categories are based on the classification of cleaning sub-sectors under the accreditation scheme.

- (i) Group 1: Office and commercial buildings
- (ii) Group 2: Food and beverage (F&B) establishments
- (iii) Group 3: Conservancy sector

Each wage ladder comprises a series of wage points, which provide a pathway for cleaners to progress to higher wages as they become better skilled, more productive or take on higher responsibilities. The progressive wage model is depicted in Diagram 1.

Accreditation Requirement

Companies seeking accreditation are required to submit their company's progressive wage structure, to demonstrate that they have in place a structure that enables their cleaners to upgrade and progress to their next respective wage levels. In particular, the structure would have to show that cleaners belonging to Group 1 and 2 receive basic wages beginning at \$1,000 or higher, and that cleaners belonging to Group 3 have basic wages beginning at \$1,200 or higher.

For a start, this accreditation requirement on progressive wage levels apply to full-time¹ resident cleaners who are deployed to work under new and renewed public sector contracts called from 1 April 2013. The wages levels for part-time resident cleaners will be pro-rated based on the number of hours that the part-timer is required to work, as compared to the typical contractual hours worked by a full-timer employed by the accreditation company in the same job.

¹ A full-time employee, as defined under the Employment (Part-Time Employees) Regulations, is one who is required to work for 35 hours or more a week. Conversely, a part-time employee is one who is required to work for less than 35 hours a week.

Diagram 1: Progressive Wage Model for Cleaners, by the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners

