

## **FACTSHEET ON MEASURES TO RAISE THE QUALITY AND FACILITATE MORE OPTIMAL DEPLOYMENT OF THE FOREIGN WORKFORCE**

As part of the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) Committee of Supply (COS) 2015 initiatives to raise workforce quality and facilitate more optimal deployment of the foreign workforce, the Government will be:

- (a) enhancing the R1 criteria in the Process sector;
- (b) allowing employers to hire experienced Work Permit holders (WPHs) who have come to the end of their WP term; or with the consent of the previous employer, for the Process sector; and
- (c) allowing WPHs in the Construction, Process and Marine sectors to take on driving as a secondary job function.

### **Measures to raise Process sector foreign workforce quality**

#### ***Desired outcome of the policy changes***

The policy changes for the Process sector seek to encourage retention of skilled and productive workers in the sector. Refinements to the R1 criteria ensure that only genuinely skilled and productive workers are recognised as R1.

## **Enhancements to R1 criteria in the Process sector**

2 Currently, Process WPHs with any of the following certifications are recognised as skilled (R1) workers:

**Table 1: List of Certifications for R1 recognition in the Process sector**

Type of qualification	Certificates needed
<b>Academic qualifications</b>	<b>Malaysia</b> - Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or equivalent <b>North Asian sources (NAS)</b> - High school certificates <b>People's Republic of China (PRC)</b> - Diploma
<b>Skills Evaluation Test (SET) conducted by ITE</b>	SET Level 1 or National ITE Certificate (Nitec)
<b>Trade test</b>	3G and above in welding based on internationally recognised standards
<b>Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ)</b>	WSQ Composite Assessment for Generic Manufacturing (Process)

3 In the next few years, we will make progressive enhancements to the skills recognition framework in the Process sector to be more robust and reflective of market-relevant skills and experience. It will help the industry attract and retain higher quality, more productive, workers in Singapore, as firms enjoy a lower levy for R1, compared to lower-skilled R2 WPHs.

**Table 2: Levy Rates for Work Permit Holders in the Process sector**

	<b>Current</b>	<b>1 Jul 15</b>	<b>1 Jul 16</b>
<b><u>Basic Tier</u></b> <b>≤ 87.5%</b>	300/450	300/450	300/500
<b><u>MYE waiver</u></b> <b>≤ 87.5%</b>	600/750	600/750	600/800

## **From 1 June 2017**

4 From 1 June 2017, Process WPHs will be able to obtain R1 status via 2 pathways:

- (a) Skills Test + Salary: WPHs who possess qualifications/certifications which are currently recognised under the R1 framework (i.e. certifications listed in Table 1) and paid a minimum Fixed Monthly Salary (FMS)<sup>1</sup> of \$1,200; or
- (b) Experience + Salary: WPHs with a minimum Period of Employment (POE) in Singapore of at least 2 years and paid at a minimum FMS of \$1,200.

## **From 2019 (or 1 year after the roll-out of the WSQ programmes for Process sector)**

5 The list of skills tests for R1 recognition will shift from the current list of qualifications/certifications to only recognise selected WSQ programmes for the Process sector<sup>2</sup>. The specific list of WSQ programmes identified for R1 recognition for the Process sector will be made available at the later date.

6 Process WPHs will then be able to obtain R1 status via 3 pathways:

- (a) Skills Test + Salary: WPHs having successfully completed relevant WSQ programmes for the Process sector and paid a minimum FMS of \$X\*;
- (b) Experience + Salary: WPHs with a POE of at least 3 years and paid a minimum FMS of \$X\*; or

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<sup>1</sup> Fixed monthly Salary (FMS) = Basic Monthly Salary (BMS) + Fixed Monthly Allowances (FMA). For more information on FMS, please refer to <http://beta.mom.gov.sg/en/faqs/employment-pass-faqs/what-is-a-fixed-monthly-salary> .

<sup>2</sup> In 2018, WDA will be rolling out new WSQ programmes under the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system for the Process sector to provide clearer skills upgrading and multi-skilling progression pathways.

(c) Skills Test + Experience: WPHs having successfully completed relevant Process WSQ programme(s) for the Process sector and with a POE of at least 3 years.

\*: \$X will be a higher salary threshold to be determined nearer to 2019.

**Table 3: Timeline of Changes to R1 criteria**

Before 1 June 2017	1 June 2017	2018	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Skills Test only</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Skills Test + \$1,200</li> <li>• \$1,200 + 2 years experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full roll-out of WDA's new WSQ programmes for the Process sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSQ + 3 years experience</li> <li>• WSQ + salary</li> <li>• Salary + 3 years experience</li> </ul>

***Allowing employers to hire experienced WPHs who have come to the end of their WP term; or with the consent of the previous employer, for the Process sector***

7 Currently, Process sector employers can only apply WP for workers from Non-Traditional Sources (NTS)<sup>3</sup>, North Asian Sources<sup>4</sup> (NAS) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) if they are not in Singapore at the point of work permit application. This is to deter foreigners from coming to Singapore just to search for work.

8 From 1 June 2017, MOM will allow Process sector employers to hire WPHs who already have some work experience in Singapore, including applying for their work permits when the workers are in Singapore. Process employers will be allowed to hire experienced WPHs: (i) with their current employers' consent within WP

<sup>3</sup> Non Traditional Source (NTS) countries refer to Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand and the Philippines.

<sup>4</sup> North Asian Source (NAS) countries refer to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and South Korea.

validity; and (ii) at the end of their WP period, without them having to leave Singapore. For those without prior work experience in Singapore, their work permit applications will still have to be made when the applicants are not in Singapore.

9 We will release more information before June 2017 on how employers can do this.

**Measure to facilitate more optimal deployment of the foreign workforce in the Process, Construction and Marine sectors**

<b>Allowing WPHs in the Construction, Process and Marine sectors to take on driving as a secondary job function.</b>	
<b>Objective:</b> To improve labour productivity and to achieve more optimal deployment of the foreign workforce in the Process, Construction and Marine sectors.	
<b>Currently</b>	<b>From 1 June 2015</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WPHs in the Process, Construction and Marine sectors cannot drive for work unless they are specifically hired as “Driver”, and they would have to obtain valid driving licences. This is to ensure that WPHs only drive when they are properly licensed to do so.</li> <li>• Employers have provided feedback that this restriction impeded labour productivity as they could not optimally deploy their WPHs, especially when driving duties are typically done only for transport to and from worksites.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MOM will <b>lift the current restriction</b> to allow WPHs in these sectors to drive, as an incidental activity to their primary job as a Process, Construction or Marine worker.</li> <li>• This reduces the need for firms to hire additional foreign workers as dedicated drivers. The total number of workers that can drive as an incidental activity <b>will be capped at a Sub-DRC of 20%</b>, i.e. 20% of the firm’s total workforce, and they must possess a valid driving licence. The 20% cap serves as a safeguard against errant Process, Construction or Marine firms, which want to hire more WPHs to be illegally deployed as full-time drivers.</li> <li>• For more information on how employers can designate their workers to take on incidental driving duties, refer to <b><u>Annex A</u></b>.</li> </ul>

**INFORMATION ON HOW EMPLOYERS CAN DESIGNATE THEIR WORKERS TO  
TAKE ON INCIDENTAL DRIVING DUTIES**

Employers and employment agencies engaged by firms in the construction, process and marine<sup>1</sup> sectors may log on to Work Permit Online (WPOL) to do the following:

(i) Apply for new workers:

Select the worker-cum-driver occupation for your sector when you make a new work permit application.

- Construction sector: Construction Worker-cum-Driver
- Process sector: Process Maintenance & Construction Worker-cum-Driver
- Marine sector: Marine Trades Worker-cum-Driver

If the application is approved, the work permit card will reflect the worker-cum-driver occupation.

(ii) Re-designate existing workers:

Apply to re-designate your existing worker to a worker-cum-driver occupation via WPOL's "Change Occupation to Worker-cum-Driver" module. You will need to enter your CPF submission no. and the worker's work permit no. If the application for conversion is successful, you will be able to print the approval letter. You do not have to apply for a new Work Permit card to be issued stating the new occupation of the worker. However, you must give your worker a copy of the approval letter so that it can be shown to enforcement officers when requested. The new occupation will be printed on the work permit card when you renew your worker's work permit.

<sup>1</sup> *Shipyards can also apply on behalf of all Common Contractors (CCs) and their own Resident Contractors (RCs).*