

Frequently Asked Questions on the Dormitory Transition Scheme (DTS)

- 1. Why did MOM decide to introduce the interim standards retrospectively on existing dormitories?**
 - a. The interim standards are being imposed retrospectively to improve public health resilience within dormitories at the earliest opportunity to mitigate the spread of future pandemics. As the risk of large-scale disease outbreaks such as COVID is rising steadily due to several reasons, there is urgency to complete the DTS as soon as practically possible.¹
 - b. Imposing the New Dormitory Standards (NDS) only upon the expiry of existing dormitories' leases would have resulted in existing dormitories remaining vulnerable to disease spread for a much longer period of time.

- 2. Will MOM consider appeals/waivers, such as from dormitory operators facing constraints?**
 - a. As the DTS interim standards are critical for public health, all existing dormitories are required to undergo the DTS unless they meet the exemption criteria and/or meet the interim standards.
 - b. If a dormitory faces significant infrastructure constraints, the dormitory can write in to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) to explain the constraints and propose other measures to mitigate the risks of disease outbreak in the dormitory.

- 3. Will dormitories not licensed under the Foreign Employee Dormitories Act (FEDA) (dorms with capacity of 6 or fewer beds) be required to undergo DTS?**
 - a. No, DTS is not applicable to non-FEDA dormitories with such low capacities per room as the risks of mixing and disease outbreak are minimal, and thus there is relatively lower impact on public health resilience.
 - b. We encourage such dormitories to meet DTS interim standards or NDS where possible.

- 4. Why do the interim standards not require improvements to other requirements, such as the provision of wi-fi in all rooms?**
 - a. The DTS focuses on critical infrastructural changes within dormitories to improve public health resilience.
 - b. Some other NDS requirements, such as redesigning sewage to enable wastewater surveillance or further segregation of common facilities within dormitories, will be difficult for existing buildings to comply with major and costly renovations.
 - c. MOM also regularly reviews the FEDA licensing conditions (LCs) to continuously uplift standards and living conditions in dormitories. Changes to LCs will be made as and when MOM deems them necessary, in consultation with the dormitory industry. These changes will take place independently of the DTS.
 - d. In light of MOM's overall efforts to improve dormitory standards, MOM would welcome voluntary early adoption of standards that exceed the interim standards, especially if they also meet or exceed the NDS.

- 5. Can dormitories choose to move straight to NDS now or within the DTS window?**
 - a. Yes, dormitories may retrofit directly to NDS within the DTS window or at their own discretion before 2040.
 - b. MOM encourages dormitories to inform MOM of their plans early, so that MOM and other agencies can ensure sufficient bed supply.

¹ Taken from the White Paper on Singapore's Response to COVID-19: Lessons for the Next Pandemic. Some of the reasons stated were population growth in both animals and humans, closer proximity to wildlife in urbanised landscapes and increasing global travel.

- 6. Can dormitories choose when to undergo the DTS? Can dormitories start work earlier and meet the interim standards before 2027 if they want to?**
- MOM will open applications by 2025 for dormitories to apply for their preferred year to complete transition within the window of 2027-2030. However, there will be a cap on the number of beds that can transition each year to spread out the impact on bed supply. More details of the scheduling and application process will be shared when ready.
 - MOM encourages dormitories that intend to start work earlier to inform MOM early of their plans, so that MOM and other agencies can assess and manage the impact to bed supply.
- 7. Are there any dormitories that would have to complete the transition under DTS before 2027? How will dormitories be informed that they should start earlier?**
- Only a small handful of dormitories need undergo the DTS before 2027 and they have been informed.
 - The vast majority of dormitories will transit to the interim standards between 2027 and 2030.
 - MOM will announce more details on the transition schedule at a later date.
- 8. Will MOM provide support for the transition?**
- As the DTS provides broader health benefits to Singapore and Singaporeans, MOM will provide financial support to dormitories that undergo DTS.
 - MOM's financial support will partially defray the significant costs to dormitory operators of retrofitting existing buildings to meet new standards. This is in recognition that the Government usually does not require retrospective retrofitting to existing buildings to meet new infrastructure standards.
 - Dormitories will still be required to co-pay as they too derive benefits from improved public health resilience and business continuity.
 - More details will be announced at a later date.
- 9. Will non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating dormitories and shelters undergoing DTS be provided with financial support?**
- Yes, NGO-operated shelters and dormitories licensed under FEDA will need to undergo DTS. Likewise, the Government will support their transition to the DTS interim standards, per other dormitories.
 - Based on the 2027-2030 transition timeline, retrofitting works will start on or after 2025. We are still assessing the cost implications. More details will be announced at a later date.
- 10. When and how will dormitories be invited to apply for their preferred year of transition under the DTS?**
- MOM is still working on the details of the application process and will inform and brief dormitory operators when ready.
 - Tentatively, MOM will open applications once a year from 2025 to 2027, with each year having a corresponding completion date (e.g., applications in 2025 will be for dormitories that will complete the transition by 2027).
- 11. Who should I contact if I have any questions?**
- Please get in touch with the Dormitory Association of Singapore Limited (DASL) or your relevant trade association and chambers (TACs). MOM has been in close contact with them, and they will convey your feedback to MOM.
 - Alternatively, you can contact MOM directly.