

TRIPARTITE ADVISORY ON ENSURING SAFE OPERATIONS OF LIFTS AND ESCALATORS, AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INDUSTRY IN VIEW OF COVID-19

This advisory provides recommendations on measures that service buyers and providers should adopt to ensure the safe operations of Lifts and Escalators (“L&E”), and sustainability of the industry in view of COVID-19.

Safe Operations and Sustainability of L&E Sector

2. Given Singapore’s high-rise built environment, L&E is an essential mode of vertical transportation that facilitates the mobility of people and goods within a building.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruptions to business operations, which has in turn affected the L&E sector. Whilst L&E maintenance is an essential service that is allowed to continue operating during a Circuit Breaker period, any unsustainable practices will compromise L&E service outcomes and business continuity of the service providers. Such an outcome would be detrimental to building owners, L&E maintenance firms, their maintenance personnel as well as the general public.
4. L&E owners play a critical role in ensuring the sustainability of the L&E industry. This entails making reasonable business arrangements that facilitate the sustainability of L&E maintenance firms, to ensure that their L&E can be properly maintained for the lifespan of the assets.

Recommendations

5. **Continue routine maintenance.** Like any moving equipment or machinery, L&E must be regularly maintained to ensure optimal performance and safety. This is especially important for L&E located in buildings with public access, such as shopping malls and residential properties. Building owners should ensure L&E maintenance services continue to be carried out dutifully, in compliance with regulatory requirements.
6. **Pay L&E maintenance service providers appropriately.** L&E maintenance firms should be paid as per contract terms if there is no change in L&E maintenance services rendered. Specifically, L&E owners should not ask for reduced contract fees on the basis that their appointed L&E maintenance service providers are receiving wage support through the enhanced Jobs Support Scheme, which is intended to help enterprises retain their local employees during this period of economic uncertainty. If there is any significant change in L&E maintenance services rendered, L&E owners and service providers should engage each other to reach a mutually agreed revision to payments for the services.

7. **Ensure COVID-Safe practices and measures among maintenance personnel.** Employers must comply with requirements on Safe Management Measures at the workplace¹. In particular, L&E maintenance firms should ensure that their workers are of good health, before dispatching them to carry out maintenance work. Safe Management Measures such as regular temperature taking and health monitoring, use of masks and hand sanitisers, ensuring safe distancing and personal hygiene at all times should be standard practices adopted by L&E maintenance firms. They must also ensure that they do not dispatch workers who are unwell to carry out maintenance or repair work. Service buyers should support such COVID-Safe protocols and precautionary measures when the L&E maintenance personnel are on site to carry out their work.

8. **Remunerate L&E maintenance personnel appropriately.** L&E maintenance firms should ensure that their workers are remunerated appropriately, especially if they are required to work overtime to make up for any shortage of manpower.

9. **Seize opportunity to upskill workers.** L&E maintenance firms should consider taking this opportunity to send their workers, particularly those with decreased workloads, for training and upskilling. They can tap on Government support, such as the Workfare Training Support² and Enhanced Training Support for SMEs where applicable, to help defray training costs as well as receive absentee payroll funding.

Conclusion

10. The COVID-19 pandemic is a difficult period for both building owners and L&E maintenance service providers. All stakeholders should share the responsibilities arising from changes in how L&E maintenance services are rendered. The tripartite partners urge all stakeholders to work together, to ensure that L&E maintenance is carried out dutifully for public safety and that the industry remains sustainable.

11. For further queries, please contact:

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¹ For more information on these requirements, see www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures.

² Enhanced as the Workfare Skills Support scheme from 1 Jul 2020.
www.mom.gov.sg/-/media/mom/documents/budget2020/factsheet-workfare-skills-support-scheme.pdf

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This tripartite advisory is issued by the Building and Construction Authority, Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress and its affiliated unions in the L&E industry, Singapore National Employers Federation, Singapore Lift & Escalator Contractors & Manufacturers Association, and the Tripartite Cluster for Lift & Escalator Industry