

# Thinking globally

## Singapore News Flash

Latest News on law, tax and business in Singapore

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## UPDATE ON HR MATTERS

### > Additional hurdles to Employment Pass applications

On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017, in an unannounced change, the Ministry of Manpower (the “**MOM**”) added new questions to the Employment Pass (“**EP**”) application form to be answered by companies sponsoring foreign employees.

The questions seek details about companies’ hiring practices, efforts to hire local candidates for the job and reasons why companies decided not to hire a local candidate.

#### Why the change?

This new set of questions reinforces the government’s commitment that local candidates be considered fairly by employers during the recruitment process. Such change is in line with the government’s push to encourage companies to hire locally and is making the hiring process more competitive for foreigners.

#### Impact

Companies now need to gather information regarding their hiring practices in order to be able to submit EP applications without delay.

#### New set of questions

Companies are now asked the following:

1. whether they have searched for candidates for the job using recruitment methods and channels other than from the Jobs Bank? For example, job advertising websites; newspapers, trade publications/magazines; employment agencies; personal networks of existing employees, etc.
2. to provide the number of Singapore citizens, permanent residents and foreigner who (a) applied for the job; (b) were interviewed for the job; (c) were offered the job; (d) were hired for the job.
3. to state the reasons why they decided not to hire local candidates. For example, lack of technical skills or expertise; lack of "soft skills"; lack of industry or target market experience; lack of good qualifications, etc.

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4. how they have sourced for the EP applicant. For example, local or foreign job advertising websites; newspapers, trade publications/magazines; local or foreign employment agencies; personal networks of existing local or foreign employees, etc.
5. whether they have considered other candidates for the job (in the event that the company in question did not advertise the role on the Jobs Bank and has not searched for candidates using other recruitment methods and channels).

### > Increased qualifying salary criteria for work pass holders to bring their dependents to Singapore

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, Employment Pass and S Pass holders (“**Work Pass Holders**”) will need to meet a minimum salary criteria of SGD 6,000 (previously SGD 5,000) to obtain a Dependent’s Pass (“**DP**”) for their legally married spouse and unmarried children under 21 years old or a Long Term Visit Pass (“**LTVP**”) for their common-law spouse, unmarried handicapped children above 21 years old and unmarried step-children under 21 years old.

Additionally, Work Pass Holders who wish to obtain a LTVP for their parents will need to earn a fixed monthly salary of at least SGD 12,000 (previously SGD 10,000).

New DP and LTVP applications received before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 will be assessed on existing criteria. DP holders or LTVP holders who have their passes renewed on or after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 will not be affected provided that the Work Pass Holder remains with the same employer.

### Why the change?

The MOM updated the DP/LTVP qualifying salary in order to ensure that Work Pass Holders are able to upkeep their dependants in Singapore.

### > Use of NRIC by companies

The Personal Data Protection Commission (the “**PDPC**”) has proposed changes in relation to how companies handle NRIC numbers, physical NRICs or copies of NRICs. The NRIC number is a unique identifier assigned by the Singapore government to each Singapore resident. Note that similar treatment may apply to other unique identifiers and identification documents (e.g. passport).

According to the PDPC’s proposed guidelines, organizations should not collect, use or disclose an individual’s NRIC number or a copy of the NRIC except where the collection, use or disclosure of the NRIC number or copy of the NRIC is required under the law (e.g. seeking medical treatment; enrolling into a child care centre; checking into a hotel; subscribing to a mobile telephone line) or where it is necessary to accurately establish and verify the identity of the individual (e.g. entering into high value contracts such as property transactions, and applications for healthcare or travel insurance).

Scenarios where the collection, use or disclosure of NRIC number or a copy thereof is not required under any law include redemption of free parking, online purchase of movie tickets, signing up for retail membership and lucky draw.

Further, organizations should not retain an individual's physical NIRC unless required under the law, or where necessary to accurately establish and verify the identity of the individual. For example, organizations should not retain an individual's NRIC when renting a bicycle or when issuing a visitor badge.

Organizations will have a period of 12 months from the issuance of the advisory guidelines to review and implement the necessary changes to its policies and processes on the collection, use or disclosure of NRIC numbers, physical NRICs or copies of the NRIC.

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*„The great artistry of the human towers lies in its variety. Our towers thus always differ by height, width and shape. The foundation however, remains unchanged, acting as a reliable, unyielding and open advocate of change."*

*Castellers de Barcelona*



*„Each and every person counts" – to the Castellers and to us.*

Human towers symbolise in a unique way the Rödl & Partner corporate culture. They personify our philosophy of solidarity, balance, courage and team spirit. They stand for the growth that is based on own resources, the growth which has made Rödl & Partner the company we are today.

*„Força, Equilibri, Valor i Seny" (strength, equilibrium, valour and common sense) is the Catalan motto of all Castellers, describing their fundamental values very accurately. It is to our liking and also reflects our mentality. Therefore Rödl & Partner embarked on a collaborative journey with the representatives of this long-standing tradition of human towers – Castellers de Barcelona – in May 2011. The association from Barcelona stands, among many other things, for this intangible cultural heritage.*

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