



HEALTH ADVISORY ON SARS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, PRIVATE APARTMENTS AND ESTATES

General information on SARS

1. The World Health Organisation has issued a global alert on outbreaks of a new acute respiratory disease known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in several areas. The affected areas are Hong Kong, Guangdong Province, Shanxi, Taiwan, Hanoi (in Vietnam), Toronto (in Canada) and Singapore.
2. The main criteria for Suspect Cases of SARS are:

Main Symptoms:

- High fever (more than 38 degree celsius)
- Respiratory symptoms including cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulty;

AND

Travel / Close Contact History:

- Travel history to affected areas within 2 weeks of onset of the symptoms;
- or have been in close contact* with person(s) diagnosed with SARS

**Close contact means having cared for, having lived with, or having direct contact with respiratory secretions and body fluids of a person with SARS*

3. Not everyone who has travelled to the affected areas will be infected with SARS. Singaporeans returning from these areas can return to work as long as they are well. However, they should monitor their health closely and if they develop any of the symptoms listed at para 2, they should seek immediate medical attention as outlined in the Health Alert Notice they would have received upon arrival in Singapore.

Cleaning of Apartment Blocks

4. In general, the routine cleaning and maintenance procedures for a commercial building or apartment block and its surroundings are sufficient. There is no need to disinfect the entire block and its neighbouring premises. For added precaution and peace of mind of tenants and residents, the estate management may wish to disinfect the lifts, staircase railings and other common areas daily as follows:
 - Clean the lifts, staircase railings and other common areas at least once daily with a chemical household germicide/ disinfectant and allow to air dry
 - Workers doing the cleaning should wear disposable gloves and wash their hands immediately with soap and water after removing the gloves.
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5. All cleaners should go about their normal cleaning and maintenance routine with their normal protective wear. There is no need to wear masks as SARS is spread through close contact* with an infected person.
 6. If a case of SARS is identified as a resident of a particular apartment block, and if the estate management so wishes, the estate management can do a more thorough one-off cleaning of the block.

SARS patients

7. All SARS patients have been isolated for treatment at TTSH/ CDC, and those who had close contact with infected persons but do not have any symptoms have been quarantined at home under the Infectious Disease Act. Only SARS patients who have recovered will be discharged. After discharge, they will be given medical leave for another 14 days and advised to stay at home. From the available evidence so far, they are no longer infectious after discharge from hospital.
8. As such, there is no need for tenants or residents to adopt additional precautionary measures. Tenants or residents may wish to adopt the following hygiene measures:
 - Maintain good personal hygiene, and wash hands with soap and water frequently.
 - Avoid sharing towels or eating utensils.
 - Cough or sneeze into tissue or paper napkins and dispose.
 - Do not spit onto the floor/ ground

Further information on SARS

9. For further information on SARS, please call the Ministry of Health Hotline at 1800-2254122 or visit the MOH website at www.moh.gov.sg.