

New Tripartite Standard on Age-friendly Workplace Practices

On 27 April 2018, the Tripartite Partners - the Ministry of Manpower, the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation - jointly launched the Tripartite Standard on Age-friendly Workplace Practices at the Conference for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices.

This is the eighth Tripartite Standard since the first one was launched in July last year. We examined the other Tripartite Standards in our previous updates in [December 2017](#) and [March 2018](#).

The Tripartite Standard on Age-friendly Workplace Practices

This Tripartite Standard recognises that many older employees (i.e. employees aged 60 and above) would want to continue working if their workplace provides a conducive and inclusive environment for employees of all ages. Age-friendly workplaces would also enhance employers' ability to attract and retain these older employees.

Employers who adopt this Tripartite Standard are expected to:

- > avoid using age as a selection criterion when advertising for, shortlisting or selecting job candidates.
- > appoint a member of the senior management to champion age-friendly workplace practices.
- > train older employees to perform their jobs effectively.
- > implement workplace health programmes for older employees (e.g. implementing ergonomics intervention programmes, briefings on choosing healthier food options, exercise programmes and regular body check-ups).
- > design the jobs and workplace to be age-friendly. The employers will need to demonstrate that such design meets the following three criteria:
 - "Easy"- makes the work physically easy (e.g. the use of larger screen displays, the use of machines to reduce strenuous activities);

- “Safe” - minimizes the risk of injuries (e.g. the installation of handrails and lights along travel routes, slip-resistant walking surfaces and ergonomic office chairs); and
 - “Smart” - frees up time for knowledge-based activities (e.g. the use of technology to automate routine tasks and re-training of employees to operate machines).
- > give annual increments to older employees who are not at the maximum of their salary ranges and have satisfactory work performance, if other employees are also given annual increments.
- > engage employees on re-employment issues at least six months before they reach the retirement age of 62, and for any subsequent extension of the re-employment contract. Employees are offered re-employment contracts at least three months before they are to be re-employed, with a duration of at least one year.

Commentary

With the introduction of this voluntary Tripartite Standard, employers in Singapore will now have a useful set of guidelines that they can refer to and adopt for their age-friendly workplace policy. As highlighted by the Second Minister for Manpower, in view of Singapore’s ageing population, there is a need to find more ways to unlock the potential of seniors in the Singapore workforce. The adoption of age-friendly workplace practices by employers would be a positive and progressive step to capitalise the wealth of experience of this group of employees.

As of 2 July 2018, 262 employers had adopted the Tripartite Standard on Age-friendly Workplace Practices. As the Tripartite Standards become more prevalent, we expect that more employers will embrace them to distinguish themselves in specific employment and workplace practices.

Last but not least, the Tripartite Partners will be rolling out a Tripartite Standard on the conduct of retrenchment exercises in the near future.

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