

Anticipated Questions on the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL)

Updated as at 27 Feb 2026

A. On the policy

Q1: Which countries or regions can I hire from under the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL)?

Firms in the Manufacturing and Services sectors may hire Work Permit holders from the following countries under the NTS OL:

- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Cambodia
- India
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Philippines
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand

Q2: How many Work Permits from Non-Traditional Sources (NTS) can I hire under the NTS Occupation List (NTS OL)?

Firms in the Manufacturing and Services sectors may hire up to 8% of their Total Workforce, provided they have not exceeded the overall Dependency Ratio Ceiling (DRC) for their sector.

Example:

NTS quota for a firm in the Manufacturing or Services sector already hiring 10 local workers and 2 Malaysian/North Asian Sources (NAS) Work Permit holders = $8\% \times (\text{total workforce} [12] + 1) = 1$ (rounded down to the nearest whole number)

Note:

Total workforce

Total workforce = Latest 3-month average number of local employees earning at least the local qualifying salary + Number of issued Work Permit holders + Number of issued S Pass holders.

Firms can check their current workforce profile data using [WP Online](#).

Dependency Ratio Ceiling (DRC)

The overall DRC for:

- a Manufacturing firm is 60%
- a Services firm is 35%

For more details on calculating the number of Work Permit holders a firm can hire, refer to [MOM's guidelines on how to calculate your quota and levy bill](#).

Q3: Can I reduce the fixed monthly salary of my Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL) Work Permit holder below the minimum of \$2,000.

All Work Permit holders on the NTS OL must be paid a fixed monthly salary of **at least** \$2,000. You will have to cancel the Work Permit if you cannot meet the qualifying salary of \$2,000.

Q4: Why is the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL) not expanded to include more occupations?

Today, some firms hire non-PMET workers on S Passes due to source restrictions at the Work Permit level. To allow employers to retain their existing S Pass holders affected by the qualifying salary increases, MOM will allow employers to hire NTS Work Permit holders for a selected list of non-PMET occupations.

For each occupation added, there are trade-offs to local employment outcomes, infrastructural capacity and our social fabric, which we need to closely monitor. We will continue to review our Work Permit framework to enable firms to have access to higher quality workers from diverse sources to support productivity driven growth.

B. On the eligibility criteria**Q1: Why is the addition of heavy vehicle drivers onto the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL) restricted to NTS workers with valid heavy vehicle (Class 4 / 5) licence as of 1 September 2025?**

The expansion of the NTS OL is to enable businesses to hire and retain higher-skilled workers who are affected by S Pass qualifying salary increases.

However, given the high demand for Class 4 and above licences, there is currently a 10-month waiting time for Class 4 and above training lessons and testing slots. As such, for a start, we are extending the NTS OL only to heavy vehicle drivers who already hold Class 4 or 5 licences as of 1 September 2025. This will enable employers of existing NTS S Pass holders with valid Class 4 or 5 licences to retain them on a Work Permit if they do not meet the new S Pass qualifying salary from 1 September 2025.

When the backlog of training lessons and testing slots is cleared, we will work with Traffic Police to review this requirement.

Q2: With the inclusion of cooks in the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL) from 1 September 2025, what will happen to NTS cooks in Indian restaurants?

With the inclusion of cooks in the NTS OL, all restaurants with a valid Singapore Food Agency (SFA) Food Shop licence, including Indian restaurants, can apply for a Work Permit for NTS cooks.

C. On the application process

Q1: Do I need to update MOM of my Singapore Food Agency (SFA) Food Shop/Food Processing Establishment or Slaughterhouse licence to be eligible to hire cooks / food processing worker under the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL)?

No, you do not need to update MOM about your SFA licence. MOM will verify this directly with SFA.

However, the licence information may take time to be updated in our records if your company has just recently obtained or renewed its SFA licence (for a food shop, food processing establishment or slaughterhouse).

If you encounter a message while applying for a Work Permit under the NTS OL stating that MOM does not have a record of your SFA licence, you can submit a copy of your SFA licence for verification at <https://go.gov.sg/sfa-licence-ntsol>.

Q2: Can my Work Permit holder hired under the Non-Traditional Sources Occupation List (NTS OL) in my Manufacturing or Services firm change their occupation?

Your worker can only change their occupation within the allowed occupations on the NTS OL. You need to submit a request using [WP Online](#) before they can change their occupation.

If your worker is changing to one of the NTS OL occupations listed below, they will also need to meet the additional requirements:

Occupation	Additional requirement
Cooks	- Worker must be hired in an account classified under the Services sector. - Firm must have a valid SFA Food Shop licence.
Food processing worker	Firm must have a valid SFA Food Processing Establishment or Slaughterhouse licence.
Manufacturing related roles (e.g. welders, flame cutters, machine operators)	Worker must be hired in an account classified under the Manufacturing sector.
Heavy vehicle driver	Worker must possess a valid heavy vehicle (Class 4 or 5) licence as of 1 September 2025