

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRIPARTITE CLUSTER FOR CLEANERS ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE WAGE MODEL FOR THE CLEANING INDUSTRY

1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommendations of the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC) on its review of the Progressive Wage Model (PWM) and training guidelines for the cleaning industry.
- 1.2 The members of the TCC are listed in Annex A.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In December 2016, the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC) recommended enhancements to the Progressive Wage Model's (PWM) Wage Ladder for the cleaning sector, including a mandatory annual bonus to be paid to eligible resident cleaners from 2020 onwards. The TCC's recommendations were accepted by the Government and implemented under the cleaning business licensing regime through the Order imposed by the Commissioner for Labour. The details of the PWM Wage Ladder can be found in the 2016 TCC Report and the 2018 TCC Addendum Report via www.ntuc.org.sg/tripartiteclusterforcleaners.
- 2.2 With the launch of the Environmental Services (ES) Industry Transformation Map in December 2017, the Skills Framework (SFw) for Environmental Services was developed to provide key information on the sector, career pathways, occupations/job roles as well as existing and emerging skills and competencies for ES workers.
- 2.3 To re-affirm the tripartite partners' commitment towards upskilling the cleaning workforce in order for them to stay relevant in the evolving cleaning landscape, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with key industry stakeholders, namely National Environment Agency, Workforce Singapore, SkillsFuture Singapore, Employment & Employability Institute and Environmental Management Association of Singapore on 14 November 2018. The MOU would galvanise the resolve and cooperation among the stakeholders to equip our workers with adaptive, technology and technical skills so as to realise the vision of Worker 4.0. It will ensure that our cleaners will be ready for new jobs/assignments, relevant with right skillsets, and resilient to new ways of working, which will lead to a competent and productive workforce.
- 2.4 Several rounds of consultations and focus group discussions were conducted with tripartite partners including training providers since October 2018. Their active participation in discussing and identifying the necessary skillsets and technical competencies to upskill our cleaners culminated in a set of recommendations, which were deliberated and endorsed by the TCC.

3. REVIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE WAGE MODEL AND TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR THE CLEANING INDUSTRY

3.1 This recommendation report sets out the details of the Enhanced PWM Training Guidelines as well as the Introduction of “Restroom Cleaners” to the PWM Wage Ladder. The key recommendations are summarised as follows:

- (a) The existing PWM Training Guidelines suggested for all resident cleaners to attain at least two Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) Certificate in Environmental Cleaning Modules or equivalent. **The TCC recommends that one of the two WSQ modules to be a mandatory course on Workplace Safety & Health (WSH), and the second WSQ module to be selected from a list of Core Modules that had been validated and endorsed by TCC.** The list of modules will be updated periodically to meet the deployment and training needs of the cleaning businesses. Please refer to sections 4.1 & 4.2 and Annex B for details.
- (b) The enhanced PWM training guidelines (a.k.a. Enhanced PWM Skills Ladder) will take effect in 2022.
- (c) A new job role of “Restroom Cleaners” will be added to the PWM Wage Ladder across all 3 sub-sectors and will be pegged to the wage level of “Healthcare Cleaner”. This will take effect from 1 July 2021 to allow sufficient lead time for the industry to adjust. Please refer to section 4.3 and Annex C for details.

4. RATIONALE FOR THE ENHANCED PWM SKILLS LADDER

4.1 Workplace Safety & Health (WSH) as Mandatory WSQ Module

- (a) The nature of cleaning jobs would require cleaners to use water and various cleaning detergents to perform their jobs effectively. This may expose them to occupational risks of slipping/falling due to wet floors and inhaling toxic fumes from cleaning detergents if used incorrectly. Some cleaners may also be required to work at heights (e.g. roof-top) or in an outdoor environment that is subject to harsh weather elements.
- (b) The number of workplace injury incidents among cleaners due to Slips, Trips and Falls is of major concern to the tripartite partners. The profile of the cleaning workforce today is relatively more senior, hence the importance of WSH cannot be overemphasised.
- (c) In order to encourage cleaners to take precautionary measures to ensure personal safety and due care when carrying out cleaning tasks and to reduce their risks of workplace injuries or fatalities, the introduction of a Mandatory WSH module would ensure all cleaners are fully aware of the related risks and be adequately trained.
- (d) Service Providers play a key role to ensure their cleaners are fully aware of the inherent risks that come with the job (especially those involving working at heights) and must take proactive measures to equip their workers with the necessary know-how to prevent workplace injuries.
- (e) Please refer to Annex B for details.

4.2 Core WSQ Training Modules to Upskill the Workforce

- (a) The Skills Framework for Environmental Services had spelled out the Technical Skills and Competencies (TSC) for various job roles and the corresponding proficiency levels to be attained by the cleaners. Validated by the industry, the SFw for ES serves as a common reference on the ES sector, jobs and skills for workers, employers and training providers. This further facilitates skills recognition and supports the design of training programmes for skills and career development. The SFw for ES will facilitate skills deepening for a lean workforce, enhance business competitiveness and support workers' employment and employability.
- (b) In reviewing the PWM training requirements, the TSC within the SFw for ES serves as the main reference guide to map the relevant skillsets and training modules for each PWM job levels in the three cleaning sub-sectors (i.e. Office & Commercial, F&B Establishments and Conservancy).
- (c) To deepen the technical skillsets of the cleaners so that they could deliver quality cleaning outcomes to their service buyers, a set of Core WSQ training modules has been identified based on the TSC. The TCC recommends that one (1) Core WSQ module be incorporated as part of the cleaning business licensing requirements to enable all cleaning businesses to be on par in terms of meeting the minimum training requirements. However, flexibility is given to cleaning businesses to choose the specific core module that would best suit their and their clients' needs.
- (d) Based on the job description of each role, the proficiency level as indicated in the Skills Framework was designed to ensure that the worker has the required knowledge and ability to perform their duties that commensurate with the job requirements and in turn, the corresponding PWM wages. However, while a job level may only require a certain Proficiency Level, the TCC believes that the WSQ training modules that are at a higher proficiency level should also be made available for cleaning businesses to choose from, should they wish to send their workers for training in higher proficiency skills so as to prepare them for career progression and deployment to higher level job roles.
- (e) The TCC is of the view that for job roles that are more complex in nature and/or require the worker to perform supervisory duties, the proficiency level should be higher.
- (f) Multi-Skilled Cleaners-cum-Machine Operators, Mechanical Drivers, Truck Drivers (Class 4/5) as well as Cleaning Supervisors are required to have a higher level of skills proficiency as compared to other cleaners in general. As these job roles are expected to carry out more complex cleaning tasks and involve a certain degree of autonomy and/or supervisory duties, the WSQ modules that are applicable to these four job roles would be at a higher proficiency level.
- (g) The list of currently available Core WSQ training modules can be found in Annex B and will be periodically updated to ensure relevance. Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) would be engaged to ensure the adequacy of training places ahead of the implementation timeline.

4.3 Introduction of “Restroom Cleaners” as a Job Role in the PWM Wage Ladder

- (a) The TCC received feedback from the industry that the current PWM Wage Ladder should recognise cleaners who spent considerable amount of time performing toilet/restroom cleaning works.
- (b) A dipstick survey with several cleaning companies was carried out and it was found that most cleaning companies were already paying higher salaries to their cleaners who performed toilet/restroom cleaning considering the hardships of toilet cleaning. The higher wages facilitated recruitment of new restroom cleaners and helped retain this group of cleaners.
- (c) Therefore, the TCC recommends introducing “Restroom Cleaners” as a separate job role to the existing PWM. This would ensure resident cleaners who spend 50% or more of their time performing toilet/restroom cleaning duties would be paid higher wages stipulated under the PWM wage schedule.
- (d) The TCC recommends that the PWM basic wage level for “Restroom Cleaners” be pegged to that of Healthcare Cleaner and for it to take effect from 1 July 2021. The implementation month is aligned to the effective month of PWM annual wage increment, and the 2021 timeframe would allow the cleaning industry sufficient lead time to make the adjustments.
- (e) Please refer to Annex C for details.

5. CLOSE PARTNERSHIP AND MUTUAL TRUST ARE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

5.1 Service Providers

- (a) The TCC encourages all cleaning businesses to support their workers on continual skills upgrading and to recognise their workers who have shown commitment to improve their work performance and competencies. TCC applauds those cleaning businesses that continue to invest in their workers’ training and upskilling; and for their support in the transformation efforts to uplift the cleaners’ work prospects in the long run.
- (b) The TCC encourages cleaning businesses to develop their workers’ training plans early and to work with their Service Buyers to take advantage of the available training grants/schemes to upskill their workers. The TCC believes that by equipping their cleaners with relevant skills and competencies, the cleaning businesses would be able to reap the benefits of a more productive and effective workforce and deliver greater value to their clients.

5.2 Service Buyers

- (a) TCC also calls upon Service Buyers to support such efforts by allowing their Service Providers to send their cleaners for training during working hours. TCC encourages Service Buyers to adopt Outcome-Based Contracting and move away from headcount-based contracts; as well as to leverage technology to improve labour productivity. Service Buyers should not insist on replacement headcounts when workers go for training as long as service standards are not compromised. It is important for Service Buyers and Service Providers to develop mutual trust through open communication and frequent dialogues to achieve win-win outcomes.

- (b) To encourage cleaning businesses to place greater emphasis on workers' training, the TCC proposes for Service Buyers to refer to the Skills Framework's TSC and the list of Core WSQ modules and include in their tender specifications additional WSQ modules which they would like the cleaners to attain. This will ensure a level playing field for all interested bidders so that the costs for such training provisions are taken into consideration by the service providers when submitting their bids.

5.3 Cleaners

- (a) While the PWM Wage Ladder will see cleaners benefitting from sustainable wage increments moving forward, it is equally important for cleaners to keep pace with the drive for productivity and to upskill themselves to stay relevant. With the advent of technology and digital solutions to transform the cleaning sector, TCC strongly urges workers to embrace upskilling and be ready to accept new methods and work processes to improve their productivity and employability.
- (b) Cleaners are encouraged to approach their supervisors or company HR personnel to discuss their training needs and highlight any skills gap that they may face. They need to recognise the importance of continual upgrading so as to uplift their professionalism and instill a sense of pride in their work. They must not under-estimate the important role that they play in upkeeping the cleanliness of the environment, which will help to reduce the spread of germs and curb the infestation of pests. This in turn will ensure a clean working and living environment for everyone.

5.4 A highly competent and productive workforce will ensure the cleaning industry can continue to thrive, and everyone would then benefit from a clean environment to work and live in. Our cleaners are our nation's assets who deserve Better Wages, Better Welfare and Better Work Prospects.

5.5 As the Environmental Services sector gears towards a vibrant, sustainable and professional industry that will provide services and solutions to help achieve the zero waste vision and a clean and liveable Singapore, the close partnership and mutual trust among all stakeholders must continue to be nurtured and supported in order to realise this vision.

~ End ~

Annex A: Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC)

Position	Organisation	Representative
Chair	National Trades Union Congress	Mr Zainal Sapari Assistant Secretary-General
Co-Chair	Singapore National Employers Federation	Mr Jeffrey Chua Council Member
Labour Movement	Building Construction and Timber Industries Employees' Union	Ms Noor Irdawaty General Secretary
	National Trades Union Congress	Mr Steven Goh Cluster Lead, Building and Facilities Management Cluster
	Employment and Employability Institute	Mr Gilbert Tan CEO
Industry Association	Environmental Management Association of Singapore	Mr Tony Chooi President
		Ms Sharon Kee Honorary Secretary
		Mr Kelvin Boo Member
Service Buyers / Managing Agents	CapitaMalls Asia Limited	Mr Jason Loy Head, Operations, Singapore
	City Developments Limited	Mr Chia Ngiang Hong Group General Manager
	Town Councils	Ms Juliana Lim General Manager/Secretary, Holland-Bukit Panjang Town Council
	International Facilities Management Association (Singapore Chapter)	Mr Michael Ng Vice President
Government	Ministry of Manpower	Mr Lee Pak Sing Divisional Director, Workplace Policy and Strategy Division
	National Environment Agency	Mr Chew Ming Fai Director-General of Public Health
	Workforce Singapore	Ms Janice Foo Director, Healthcare, Social and Business Services Division
	SkillsFuture Singapore	Ms Chelvin Loh Director, Industry Development Division 1

Annex B: List of WSQ Training Modules (Mandatory and Core) Recommended by the TCC

Applicable to All Cleaners for all Cleaning Sub-Sectors (Office & Commercial, F&B Establishments and Conservancy)

Note: The following lists are based on currently available WSQ Modules and will be updated periodically in consultation with TCC.

Cleaning Businesses are advised to enquire with the Approved Training Organisations (ATOs) for the latest available Environmental Cleaning WSQ training modules. For more details, please visit www.myskillsfuture.sg and refer to section on “How to Search for Training Courses” at end of Annex.

Applicable to PWM Job Levels: General Cleaner / Indoor Cleaner / Outdoor Cleaner / Healthcare Cleaner / Restroom Cleaner / Table-Top Cleaner / Dishwasher / Refuse Collector				
TSC Title	Course Description / Competency Unit	TSC Code	Proficiency Level	PWM Training Requirements
Workplace Safety and Health Practices Implementation	Comply with Workplace Safety & Health Policies and Procedures	EVS-WSH-1006-1.1	1	Select One (1) Mandatory WSH module
	Supervise Workplace Safety & Health Policies and Procedures	EVS-WSH-3006-1.1	3	
Cleaning Chemical Handling	Demonstrate & Apply Understanding of Cleaning Chemicals	EVS-CGO-3001-1.1	3	Select One (1) Core WSQ module
Food Shop Hygiene Maintenance	Clean Food Shops	EVS-CGO-1002-1.1	1	
Furniture and Furnishing Maintenance	Clean Furniture & Furnishings	EVS-CGO-1003-1.1	1	
	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Carpets & Upholstery	EVS-CGO-2003-1.1	2	
Horizontal Surface Maintenance	Perform Basic Cleaning of Hard Floor Surfaces	EVS-CGO-1004-1.1	1	
	Perform Basic Cleaning of Carpets	EVS-CGO-1004-1.1	1	
	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Hard Floor Surfaces	EVS-CGO-2004-1.1	2	
Public Hygiene Maintenance	Perform Manual Cleaning of Escalator, Travellator & Lift Surfaces	EVS-CGO-1005-1.1	1	
	Perform Cleaning of Public Residential Estates (Manual)	EVS-CGO-1005-1.1	1	
	Clean Drains, Scupper Drains & Drop-inlet Chambers	EVS-CGO-1005-1.1	1	
	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Pavements, Grass Verges and Carparks	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Expressways, Roads and Streets	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
	Perform Cleaning of Public Residential Estates (Mechanical)	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
Vertical Surface Maintenance	Clean Vertical Surfaces, Glass & Ceiling	EVS-CGO-1006-1.1	1	
Washroom Maintenance	Perform Basic Cleaning of Washrooms	EVS-CGO-1007-1.1	1	
	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Washrooms	EVS-CGO-2007-1.1	2	

Applicable to PWM Job Level: Multi-Skilled Cleaner cum Machine Operator

TSC Title	Course Description / Competency Unit	TSC Code	Proficiency Level	PWM Training Requirements
Workplace Safety and Health Practices Implementation	Supervise Workplace Safety & Health Policies and Procedures	EVS-WSH-3006-1.1	3	Select One (1) Mandatory WSH module^
Cleaning Chemical Handling	Demonstrate & Apply Understanding of Cleaning Chemicals	EVS-CGO-3001-1.1	3	Select One (1) Core WSQ module
Furniture and Furnishing Maintenance	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Carpets & Upholstery	EVS-CGO-2003-1.1	2	
Horizontal Surface Maintenance	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Hard Floor Surfaces	EVS-CGO-2004-1.1	2	
Public Hygiene Maintenance	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Pavements, Grass Verges and Carparks	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Expressways, Roads and Streets	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
	Perform Cleaning of Public Residential Estates (Mechanical)	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
Washroom Maintenance	Perform Advanced Cleaning of Washrooms	EVS-CGO-2007-1.1	2	
Effectiveness Management	Demonstrate & Apply Understanding of Cleaning Methods & Processes	EVS-PDV-3002-1.1	3	

^A WSH course at proficiency level 2 will be developed

Applicable to PWM Job Levels: Mechanical Driver / Truck Drivers (Class 4/5)

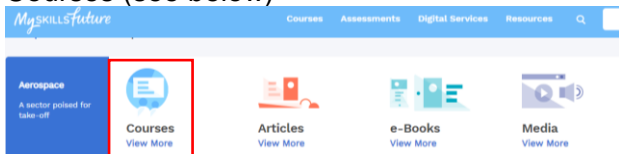
TSC Title	Course Description / Competency Unit	TSC Code	Proficiency Level	PWM Training Requirements
Workplace Safety and Health Practices Implementation	Supervise Workplace Safety & Health Policies and Procedures	EVS-WSH-3006-1.1	3	Select One (1) Mandatory WSH module^
Public Hygiene Maintenance	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Pavements, Grass Verges and Carparks	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	Select One (1) Core WSQ module
	Perform Mechanical Sweeping of Expressways, Roads and Streets	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	
	Perform Cleaning of Public Residential Estates (Mechanical)	EVS-CGO-2005-1.1	2	

^A WSH course at proficiency level 2 will be developed

Applicable to PWM Job Level: Supervisor				
TSC Title	Course Description / Competency Unit	TSC Code	Proficiency Level	PWM Training Requirements
Workplace Safety and Health Practices Implementation	Supervise Workplace Safety & Health Policies and Procedures	EVS-WSH-3006-1.1	3	Select One (1) Mandatory WSH module
Cleaning Chemical Handling	Demonstrate & Apply Understanding of Cleaning Chemicals	EVS-CGO-3001-1.1	3	Select One (1) Core WSQ module
Effectiveness Management	Implement Work Plans & Monitor Performance	EVS-PDV-3002-1.1	3	
Equipment & Inventory Management	Manage Inventory	EVS-EQM-3001-1.1	3	
Customer Management	Manage Operations for Service Excellence	EVS-CFC-3005-1.1	3	
	Supervise Service Operations	EVS-CFC-3005-1.1	3	

How to Search for Training Courses in *myskillsfuture.sg* Portal

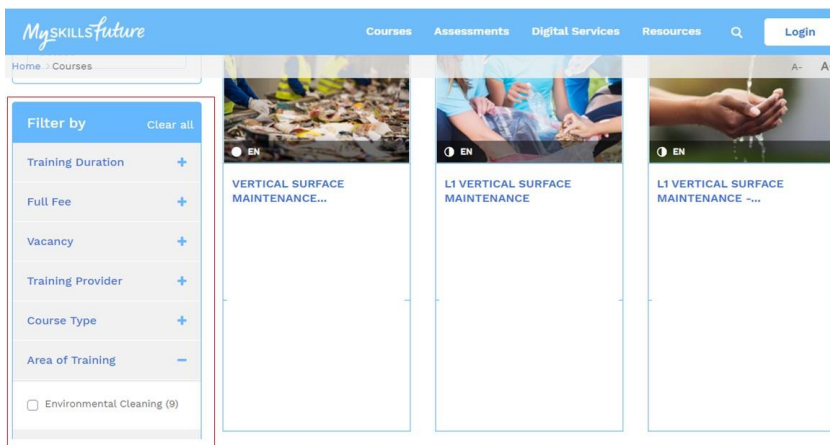
In your web browser, enter **www.myskillsfuture.sg**, scroll down and click on “View More” under Courses (see below)



<https://www.myskillsfuture.sg/content/portal/en/training-exchange/course-landing.html>

Search by Keyword

- Under the Search box, type the TSC Title of the course you wish to search. Please include inverted commas to the TSC title, e.g. “Vertical Surface Maintenance” to have more relevant search results.
- The screen will display all available courses that match the TSC Title.
- To narrow the search, use the “Filter by” feature on the left column (see screenshot below) and select “Environmental Cleaning” under Area of Training or select any other filtering options.



Visit **skillsfuture.sg/skills-framework/environmental-services** for the Skills Framework for Environmental Services

Annex C: Introduction of “Restroom Cleaner” into PWM Wage Ladder

Guidelines and Definitions of Cleaning Job Types

For workers whose job responsibilities fall into more than one job category (e.g. an indoor and restroom cleaner), the said cleaner shall be classified under the job category where he/she spends 50% or more of his/her time in and the corresponding PWM wage level would apply.

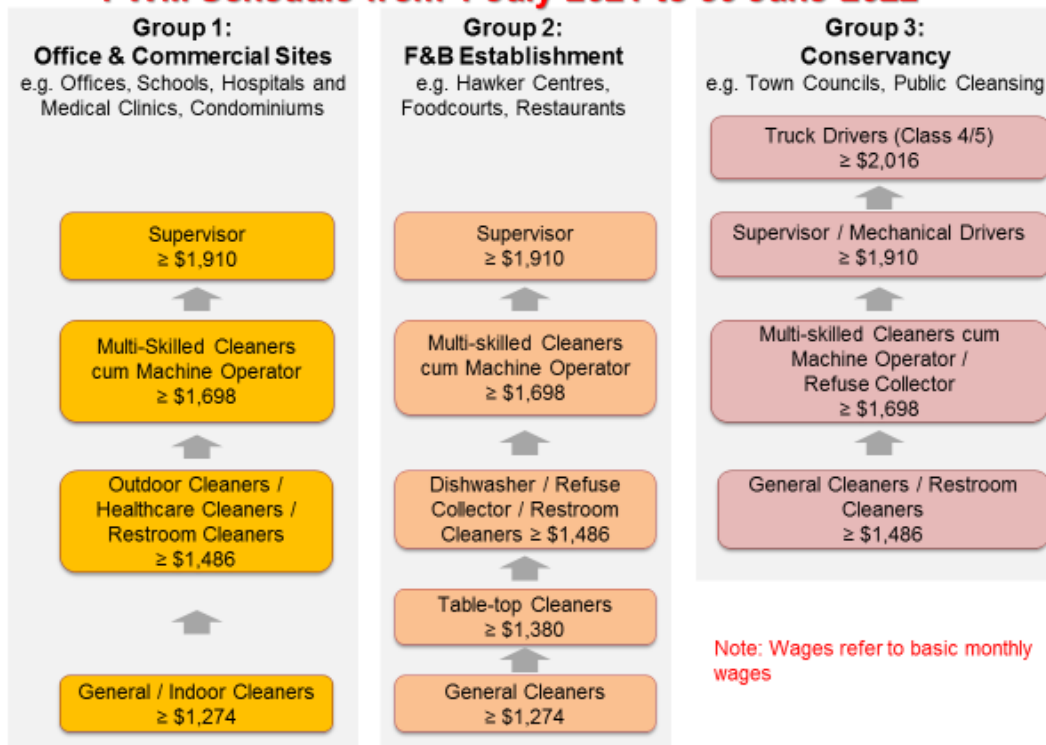
Definition of Restroom Cleaners in all three Cleaning Sub-Sectors (Office & Commercial / F&B Establishments / Conservancy)

A person assigned to perform cleaning duties in restrooms.

Job duties may include cleaning of sanitation fixtures (e.g. cubicles, mirrors, sinks and urinals), topping up of tissues, soaps, air freshener and sanitisers, mopping of floor, clearing of trash and general cleaning.

Annex D – PWM Wage Ladder with effect from 1 July 2021

PWM Schedule from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022



PWM Schedule from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

