

Singapore: Unions launch scheme to help delivery workers, freelance private-hire and cab drivers injured at work

Monday 18 December 2023, by [GOH Timothy](#) (Date first published: 6 December 2023).

SINGAPORE - Delivery workers and other freelance drivers who are injured at work will soon be able to apply for grocery vouchers to help tide them over during their recovery.

Workers who are members of the National Trades Union Congress' (NTUC) affiliated associations – National Delivery Champions Association (NDCA), National Private Hire Vehicles Association and National Taxi Association – can get support in the form of \$250 worth of FairPrice vouchers from Jan 15.

They will be eligible for the scheme if they have been prescribed medical or hospitalisation leave for a continuous period of at least five days.

Applications will have to be submitted within two weeks from the issue date of the medical or hospitalisation leave, or two weeks after the person is discharged from hospital. The issue date of the medical leave or hospitalisation leave cannot be more than two weeks from the date of injury.

Workers can claim the vouchers up to twice a year.

NTUC secretary-general Ng Chee Meng noted that freelance point-to-point and delivery workers are primarily concerned about sustaining their income when they encounter hardships at work, including injuries.

“This is where NTUC has leveraged its collective strength, pooling together a care fund that is specifically targeted at workers in such dire situations,” he added.

“Our affiliated associations will strive to disburse the relief within three days of applications, and we hope this will go some way in providing immediate relief to affected members while they focus on their recovery.”

NTUC has committed \$120,000 to the scheme, with contributions from affiliated associations. The labour movement plans to review the programme in 2024 to decide if a second round of funding is needed.

NDCA member Suhada Abdullah, a full-time delivery driver, told The Straits Times on Dec 6 that her income was significantly impacted when she was injured in two accidents earlier in 2023.

The single mother of five noted that the vouchers will not be enough for workers due to the rising cost of living, but that the scheme is “better than nothing”.

NDCA president Goh Yong Wei, a freelance driver, said he had to rely on his savings when he

suffered an arm injury in 2020 that prevented him from working for six months.

He said the new scheme is designed such that the vouchers can be distributed quickly, and will help workers while they wait for more long-term assistance such as from personal insurance.

“This scheme will not solve any financial issues in the long term, but at least it will help to cushion the initial impact,” he said.

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The Strait Times

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/new-scheme-to-support-delivery-workers-freelance-private-hire-and-taxi-drivers-who-suffer-injuries-during-work>