

SIA offers cabin crew early retirement following cost minimisation efforts

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Dhaka: Singapore Airlines is offering its cabin crew the option of early release or retirement, as the carrier seeks to further minimise costs and mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic

The COVID-19 Voluntary Release Scheme is also open to cabin crew members who are on probation, and will come with payouts and benefits, a spokesperson for SIA said on August 12. It is not applicable to trainee crew members.

The scheme was introduced in light of the adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic and a "slower projected trajectory recovery for international air travel", the spokesperson added.

Cabin crew members from both Singapore Airlines and SilkAir have until August 31 to apply for the scheme.

“Applications are subject to approval and cabin crew who apply for the VRS will be

informed on the outcome of their application by mid-September,” the spokesperson noted.

Each application will be considered on its merits, with SIA taking into account operational requirements in its review of the applications, the spokesperson claimed.

The terms and benefits under the scheme were determined by SIA and the Singapore Airlines Staff Union, according to a notice sent out by the airline to cabin crew members on August 12.

“We continue to work closely with our unions on the way forward where staff measures are concerned,” the spokesperson said. “We will announce any additional measures, if necessary, at the appropriate time.”

According to the notice, cabin crew members will receive varying benefits depending on their employment status and contract with the group.

Those still serving their bonds as of August 1 will have any outstanding bond repayment waived should their application to leave early be approved, the notice read.

They will also have any outstanding settling-in loans waived, and be accorded notice pay-in-lieu based on their basic salary at the point of departure, said the notice. Those still on probation will receive one month's basic salary while confirmed crew members will receive three months' pay.

Meanwhile, cabin crew members serving the last year of their current contract will be able to receive pro-rated gratuity without having to complete their current contract. The gratuity amount ranges between SD 4,000 and SD 20,000, depending on their rank and how many contracts they have had with the group.