

# Singapore Relocation Guide



By Appointment To  
Her Majesty The Queen  
Removals and Storage Contractor Abels

# ABELS™

THE ART OF MOVING

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<b>TELEPHONE:</b>	Country code (0065) + Area code.
<b>STANDARD TIME:</b>	GMT + 8 hours.
<b>WEIGHTS &amp; MEASURES:</b>	Metric.
<b>ELECTRICITY:</b>	220v/230v/240, 50Hz single phase.
<b>INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:</b>	Recommended for Hepatitis and Typhoid.
<b>PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:</b>	New Year's Day - 1st January, Chinese New Year – varies Labour Day – 1st May, Vesak Day – first full Moon in May Hari Raya Puasa holiday to mark the end of Ramadan, National Day – 9th August, Hari Raya Haji holiday 10th day of Islamic month of Dhul Hijj, Deepavali celebrated 15th day of Kartike (October/November), Christmas Day 25th December.
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	Normally 09.00hrs to 13.00hrs and 14.00hrs to 17.00 hrs and often Saturday 08.00 to 12.00.
<b>BANK HOURS:</b>	Normal 09.30 to 15.00 hours with some Banks having extended hours as well as Saturday opening.
<b>EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:</b>	999 - Police 995 - Fire/Ambulance
<b>UK HIGH COMMISSION IN SINGAPORE:</b>	British High Commission 100 Tanglin Road 247919 Singapore 1024 Tel: (+65) 6424 4200
<b>SINGAPORE HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON:</b>	9 Wilton Crescent Belgravia London SW1X 8SP Tel: 0207 235 8315

## Part 1 – Background information on Singapore

### Background

Singapore was founded as a British trading colony in 1819. It joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963 but separated two years later and became independent. It subsequently became one of the worlds most prosperous countries with strong international trading links (its port is one of the worlds busiest in terms of tonnage handled) and with per capita Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) equal to that of the leading nations of Western Europe.

### Geography

Singapore's main territory is a diamond-shaped island, although its territory includes surrounding smaller islands. The farthest outlying island is Pedra Branca. Of Singapore's dozens of smaller islands, Jurong Island, Pulau Tekong, Pulau Ubin and Sentosa are the larger ones. Most of Singapore is no more than 15 metres above sea level.

The highest point of Singapore is Bukit Timah Hill, with a height of 165 m (538 ft) and made up of igneous rock, granite. Hills and valleys of sedimentary rock dominate the northwest, while the eastern region consists of sandy and flatter land. Singapore has no natural lakes, but reservoirs and water catchment areas have been constructed to store fresh water for Singapore's water supply.

Singapore has reclaimed land with earth obtained from its own hills, the seabed, and neighbouring countries. As a result, Singapore's land area has grown from 581.5 km<sup>2</sup> in the 1960s to 723.2 km<sup>2</sup> today, and may grow by another 100 km<sup>2</sup> by 2033.

### Climate

Tropical, hot, humid rainy weather. Two distinct monsoon seasons – Northeastern monsoon from December to March and Southwestern monsoon from June to September. Inter-monsoon – frequent afternoon and early evening thunderstorms. Temperatures only range from 24°C to 32°C.

### Population

It is estimated at just under 5.75 million.

### Environmental Issues

Singapore's rapid economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s was accompanied both by increased air and water pollution and by increasingly effective government efforts to limit environmental damage. The government established an Anti-Pollution Unit under the Prime Minister's Office in 1970, set up the Ministry of the Environment in 1972, and merged the Anti-Pollution Unit with that ministry in 1983 to ensure unified direction of environmental protection. The new unit, subsequently renamed the Pollution Control Department, had responsibility for air and water pollution, hazardous materials, and toxic wastes. Singapore first moved to limit air pollution, closely monitoring oil refineries and petrochemical complexes and limiting the sulfur content of fuel oil for power plants, factories, and diesel motor vehicles. Because motor vehicles were the main source of air pollution, the government required emissions controls on engines and reduced (but not eliminated) the lead content of gasoline. The government also acted, partly for environmental reasons, to restrict private ownership of automobiles through very high (175 percent) import duties, high annual registration fees, and high charges for the entry of private automobiles to the central business district. [Source: Library of Congress \*]

Between 1977 and 1987, the Ministry of the Environment carried out a major program to clean up rivers and streams by extending the sewer system, controlling discharges from small industries and workshops, and moving pig and duck farms to resettlement areas with facilities to handle animal wastes. The success of the program was demonstrated by the return of fish and aquatic life to the lower Singapore and Kallang rivers. Singapore, the world's third largest oil refiner, also acted to prevent the pollution of coastal waters by oil spills or discharges from the many large oil tankers that traversed the Strait of Malacca. The Port of Singapore Authority maintained oil skimmers and other equipment to clean up oil spills, and a comprehensive plan assigned both the oil companies and Singapore's armed forces responsibilities for dealing with major oil spills.

## Currency

The unit of currency is the Singapore dollar (SGD or S\$) divided into cents. Currency in circulation is in the following denominations:

- Notes: 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1,000 and 10,000 dollars.
- Coins: 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and S\$1 coin.

## Economy

Singapore has a highly developed and successful free-market economy. It enjoys a remarkably open and corruption-free environment, stable prices, and a per capita GDP higher than that of most developed countries. Unemployment is very low. The economy depends heavily on exports, particularly of consumer electronics, information technology products, medical and optical devices, pharmaceuticals, and on its vibrant transportation, business, and financial services sectors.

The economy contracted 0.6% in 2009 as a result of the global financial crisis, but has continued to grow since 2010. Growth in 2014-16 was slower than during the previous decade, at under 3% annually, largely a result of soft demand for exports amid a sluggish global economy and weak growth in Singapore's manufacturing sector.

The government is attempting to restructure Singapore's economy by weaning its dependence on foreign labor, addressing weak productivity growth, and increasing Singaporean wages. Singapore has attracted major investments in advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and medical technology production and will continue efforts to strengthen its position as Southeast Asia's leading financial and technology hub. Singapore is a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership negotiations with the nine other ASEAN members plus Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. In 2015, Singapore formed, with the other ASEAN members, the ASEAN Economic Community.

As of 2017 Singapore's unemployment rate is around 2.2%.

## Education

Education in Singapore is compulsory from the age of 6 to 15 years.

Although education in Singapore is free, all families must pay small 'miscellaneous' fees, which are explained by the Ministry of Education. These fees are fairly small for public schools, but don't necessarily cover additional costs for things like uniforms, transport and school materials. Independent schools, even if part government funded, can charge fees beyond the small amounts seen in the public school system.

Singapore has a huge range of international schools, teaching in English and other major world languages. Schools might use the International Baccalaureate syllabus, or a variant of another national curriculum such as the American core or Australian standard curriculum. International schools are generally of a high standard, and therefore typically competitive, with testing and interviews to secure admission. You can expect the fees to vary widely depending on the specific school and the programme they offer.

## Language

The Singapore government recognises four official languages: English, Malay, Mandarin, and Tamil.

## Healthcare

Healthcare infrastructure in Singapore consists of both public and private healthcare facilities with both offering high quality of medical care but generally different level of service and comfort. Health plans, insurance, and benefits vary largely and depend typically on your immigration status and the employer. Singapore citizens and permanent residents are entitled to subsidised government healthcare services through compulsory national savings scheme whereas foreigners holding various work passes get the health coverage either through their employer or purchase it privately on their own. It is not mandatory for employers in Singapore to provide health insurance benefits.



## Religion

Together with Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, Christianity is considered one of the four main religions today. Christianity in Singapore is not tied to a particular ethnic or racial group, although most Christians are Chinese.

*Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Abels Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date Abels cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.*

## Part 2 – Singapore Import Customs Regulations

**To the best of our knowledge, the following is required to import household and personal effects into Singapore.**

### Household Goods for Non-Singaporeans

Documents required:

- Packing inventory in English, prepared by us.
- Photocopy of owners' passport (picture and detail pages).
- Employments pass (for Goods and Services Tax GST Relief entry. Not more than six months from date of issue).
- Employment pass application, acknowledgement letter from Ministry of Manpower with a letter from employer OR Approved-In-Principle letter from Ministry of Manpower, will suffice if actual employment pass not in-hand.

GST Relief must be claimed within six months of owners' official arrival in Singapore.

GST, if applicable is 7% of shippers' declared value of goods (used value – NOT insured value).

Owner of goods doesn't need to be in Singapore to clear goods if all paperwork completed in advance with copy of passport.

Shipments can be cleared without employment pass if owner is willing to pay GST. Shipper must declare "used value" for GST assessment.

### Household Goods for Singapore Nationals or Permanent Resident

Documents required:

- Packing inventory in English, prepared by us.
- Photocopy of owners' passport (picture and detail pages).
- Proof of Employment outside Singapore or copy of resident visa in origin country.

GST relief if goods are all for personal use and owner has lived abroad for more than six months. (Date of leave for overseas assignment).

### Diplomatic Removal Goods

Documents required:

- Packing inventory in English.
- Verification in writing from Embassy.

Embassy's verification with authorised signatory.

Duty exemption entry.



### **Automobiles and Motorcycles (Import strongly discouraged unless for diplomatic use)**

Motor vehicles imported into Singapore are subject to high taxes and duties. Import is subject to securing a Certificate of Entitlement in open bidding at market rates. Vehicles over three years old are not allowed to be imported.

If you are thinking of shipping a car, please contact us.

### **Prohibited Items**

- Firearms (including air-rifles and guns).
- Drugs and narcotics.
- Radio transmitters.
- Pornography.
- Martial art weapons of any kind.

Importation of illicit drugs is subject to imprisonment and the death penalty.

Prescription drugs are permitted with doctor's certificates.

### **Ornamental Swords and Knives**

You will need a permit issued by the Arms and Explosives Authority.

Items will be examined by authority, resulting in additional charges and delays.

Items must not be mis-declare items to avoid licensing.

### **Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco**

All these items are subject to high duties and taxes, and additional customs clearance rates and delays in clearance.

Due to the high customs duties, it is best not to including any liquor in the used household goods shipment.

If included, it must be packed together and declared on Alcohol list.

Customs use powerful x-ray scanners which are able to detect liquors. If falsely declared or without declaring, you may be subjected to customs duties and severe heavy penalties for evading taxes. It is a serious offence in Singapore.

### **DVDs, CDs, Video Tapes, Laser Discs and Video Discs (visual)**

- Detailed listing of all titles, and must be packed together.
- Import is allowed but subject to screening by authorities prior to release.
- Charges for screening are approximately US \$ 4.00 per hour per tape.
- Generally cartoons and other childrens tapes are passed over from screening.
- Nudity, strong language, culturally insensitive subject matter is more likely to be edited. Editing charges are additional.

### **Food**

Please do not include food items in your consignment.



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## Pets

Please see further information for relocating your pets to Singapore:

<http://www.ava.gov.sg/explore-by-sections/pets-and-animals/bringing-animals-into-singapore-exporting/bringing-in-transshipping-dogs-cats>

## Endangered Species

A CITES certificate is normally required. There is a worldwide ban on the movement of Ivory without a CITES Certificate. **Please note old pianos usually have ivory keys and a CITES certification will be required.**

For information on obtaining a CITES certificate please visit:

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/endangered-species-application-for-import-and-export-permit>

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