

Cleaning Business Licence FAQ

Background

1. Why is NEA introducing a licensing regime for the cleaning industry?

The new licensing regime will level the playing field by imposing higher standards of employment across the cleaning industry and lead to more professional and reliable services.

2. When are cleaning businesses required to be licensed?

With the Environmental Public Health (EPH) Amendment Bill coming into force on 1 April 2014, all general cleaning businesses in Singapore, even if these services form only part of their overall business, will have to be licensed before 1 September 2014.

Scope of Licensing

3. Who is required to be licensed?

Businesses offering general cleaning services (to either Public or Private sectors or both) at premises or any public places in Singapore will need to be licensed (even if these services are only a part of the overall business), with the exception of those that are under the list of excluded cleaning works. Please refer to **Excluded Cleaning Work** ([http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p;ident=3fbc4cf6-8472-4da3-974b-9f4b118a5c37;page=0;query=DocId%3A006024b3-130e-4cdb-a6f6-34c05a260a83%20Depth%3A0%20Status%3Ainforce;rec=0#Sc-.\)](http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/search/display/view.w3p;ident=3fbc4cf6-8472-4da3-974b-9f4b118a5c37;page=0;query=DocId%3A006024b3-130e-4cdb-a6f6-34c05a260a83%20Depth%3A0%20Status%3Ainforce;rec=0#Sc-.) for more information.

4. If my company directly employs in-house cleaners to clean our premises, does my company need to be licensed? Does my company need to pay progressive wages to these in-sourced cleaners?

Companies employing in-house cleaners to clean their premises are not required to be licensed and hence, are not subjected to the wage requirement.

5. Do cleaning businesses providing housekeeping services need to be licensed?

Cleaning businesses providing housekeeping services to hotels, hostels, serviced apartments and other premises or public places are required to be licensed. Cleaning businesses providing domestic cleaning services at premises occupied as a private residence (but not including any common property of any condominium) do not need to be licensed.

6. How is licensing different from Clean Mark accreditation?

Licensing sets the entry-level standards for cleaning businesses, while accreditation which has more stringent criteria aims to differentiate the quality of services provided by cleaning businesses.

7. If I am already a Clean Mark-accredited cleaning company, do I still need to apply for a licence?

Accredited cleaning companies will still be required to apply for a cleaning business licence. The criteria for accreditation are more stringent than licensing, so accredited companies should be able to comply with the licensing requirements.

Licensing Requirements

8. What are the licensing requirements?

Cleaning businesses must meet the following requirements in order to be licensed:

a) Registration with ACRA or ROS

- Sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, companies registered with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) Singapore **OR**
- Associations/Societies registered with the Registry of Societies (ROS)

b) Track Records

Existing Cleaning Businesses:

- Have at least 1 cleaning contract on-going **OR** completed in the 12 months preceding the licence application

New start-ups:

- Have at least 1 employee:
 - With no less than 2 years of practical experience in supervising cleaning work, **OR**

- o Has attended the requisite training modules under the Environmental Cleaning (EC) Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) as prescribed:

1. Supervise Service Operations; and
2. Demonstrate and Apply Understanding of Cleaning Methods and Processes

c) **Training for Cleaning Workforce**

- Cleaners (employed for 3 months or more as at the date of application) are to attend at least 1 module under the EC WSQ Framework
- Cleaning businesses may send their cleaners for the basic cleaning module
 - o Demonstrate Understanding of the Local Cleaning Industry Environment
- NEA may recognise other non-EC WSQ modules
 - o E.g. ITE Skills Certificate in Housekeeping Operations (Healthcare)
- Requirement to be implemented in phases:
 - o At the point of licence application: 50% Training Compliance
 - o By 1st licence renewal: 100% Training Compliance
- Training requirement has to be maintained throughout the licence period
- Training requirement applies to both resident and foreign cleaners, whether they are full-time, part-time or casual cleaners

d) **Progressive Wage Plan**

- Cleaning businesses have to submit a progressive wage plan
 - o For resident cleaners employed (Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents)
 - o Specifying the basic wage for each class of cleaners
 - o Conforming to wage levels specified by the Commissioner for Labour (COL)
 - Based on the recommendations of the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC)
- Progressive wages will apply to resident cleaners whether they are full-time, part-time or casual employees
- For information on the wage levels specified by the Commissioner for Labour, please refer to the website at <http://www.mom.gov.sg/pwm> (<http://www.mom.gov.sg/pwm>)
- For information on the TCC, please refer to NTUC website (https://www.ntuc.org.sg/wps/portal/up2/home/searchresultsdetails?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/Content_Library/ntuc/home/about%20ntuc/organisation%20profile/tripartism/1f311210-a280-4312-87ea-5c8efa714513)

9. **Will the training requirement apply to foreign workers and part-time cleaners?**

NEA will consider the business' cleaning workforce as a whole. Therefore the training requirement will apply to foreign workers as well as part-time cleaners.

10. **When are cleaning businesses required to pay progressive wages to their cleaners?**

By 1 September 2015, licensed cleaning businesses must pay progressive wages to all their resident cleaners (full-time and part-time inclusive). Any cleaning business found not to be in compliance could be subjected to financial penalties. Repeat offenders could have their Cleaning Business Licence revoked.

11. **What is a “contract” and a “renewal”?**

A “contract” is defined as an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are enforceable. A “renewal” is considered as a new contract and is not considered as an extension of an existing contract.

12. **What are the licence conditions once a cleaning business is licensed?**

Please refer to **Conditions of Cleaning Business Licence (Addendum A)** (/docs/default-source/Licensing-of-Cleaning-Business/addendum-a_29oct15.pdf).

13. **How do I apply for a cleaning business licence?**

- For application of a Cleaning Business Licence, please apply via the **Cleaning Industry Management System (CIMS)** (<https://e-services.nea.gov.sg/CIMS>).
- For application of a Cleaning Business Licence, together with the Enhanced Clean Mark Accreditation Scheme (EAS), please download the application form **here** (</docs/default-source/Licensing-of-Cleaning-Business/here.pdf>) and submit the completed form with the required supporting documents to **NEA_Cleaninglicence@nea.gov.sg** (mailto:NEA_Cleaninglicence@nea.gov.sg).
- To enable applicants to have a better user experience of CIMS, please refer to the **Application Kit** (http://cms.nea.gov.sg/docs/default-source/Licensing-of-Cleaning-Business/app-kit_v-1-1.pdf).

It will take approximately 30 working days to process and issue a licence, upon full compliance of licensing requirements.

14. **How much is the licence fee?**

\$130.

15. **When do I need to make payment for the licence fee?**

Cleaning businesses only need to make payment of the licence fee after they have been notified of their successful application.

16. How do I make payment for the licence fee?

Successful applicants will be required to make a payment of S\$130 via the **Cleaning Industry Management System** (<https://e-services.nea.gov.sg/CIMS>) for the Cleaning Business Licence.

17. How long will the cleaning licence be valid for?

The licence will be valid for 1 year and renewable on a yearly basis.

18. How do I ensure that I will get my licence to be renewed on time?

Cleaning businesses are strongly encouraged to complete training for their cleaners, including foreign workers, before the licence expiry date. Cleaning businesses can submit their applications with the complete supporting information three (3) months before the expiry of the licence expiry date.

19. Can I submit one application form for both licensing and accreditation?

Cleaning businesses are required to submit just one application form for a Cleaning Business Licence, together with the Enhanced Clean Mark Accreditation Scheme (EAS). Please download the application form [here](#) ([/docs/default-source/Licensing-of-Cleaning-Business/here.pdf](#)).

20. As a service buyer, how do I ensure that my licensed service provider gets his licence renewed on time?

NEA will start to send out notifications 6 months before the licence expiry date to remind licensed cleaning businesses to renew their licence on time. Service buyers can also help by reminding their service providers to renew their licence on time so that the service providers can continue to provide their cleaning service without any disruption.

21. How will I know if a cleaning business is licensed?

The list of licensed cleaning businesses will be made available on the NEA website and it will be updated periodically.

22. What is the penalty for operating a cleaning business without a licence?

Cleaning businesses found operating without a valid licence will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 or up to 12 months imprisonment or both and \$1,000 every day for continuing offences.

23. What is the penalty for licensed cleaning businesses that do not comply with licence conditions?

Licensed cleaning businesses found to be in breach of licensing conditions may face a maximum financial penalty of \$5,000 and may risk having their licence suspended or revoked.

24. What is the penalty for engaging an unlicensed cleaning business?

Service buyers who engage unlicensed cleaning businesses will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and \$1,000 every day for continuing offences.

25. Who can I contact if I wish to know more about the course fees/ duration and training subsidies under the Environmental Cleaning WSQ Framework?

Please contact WDA at the following:

Tel: 6883 5885 Fax: 6512 1111 Email: wda_enquiry@wda.gov.sg (mailto:wda_enquiry@wda.gov.sg)

26. Who can I contact if I want to get the Environmental Cleaning WSQ training records of my cleaning workforce?

Please contact WDA at the following:

Tel: 6307 7495 Fax: 6512 1334 Email: WDA_Biz_Svc@wda.gov.sg
(mailto:WDA_Biz_Svc@wda.gov.sg)

27. Who can I contact if I wish to know more about the Progressive Wage Model?

Please contact MOM's contact centre:

Tel: 6438 5122 Fax: 6534 4840