

REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON IMPORT LICENSING PROCEDURES

Notification under Article 7.3 of the
Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures

SINGAPORE

The following notification, dated 21 October 1996, has been received from the Permanent Mission of Singapore.

Outline of System

1. Singapore's trade policy objective is to keep import licensing to a minimum. Import licensing procedures are maintained for the purpose of discharging Singapore's obligations under international agreements or for public health, public safety, environmental or security reasons. Singapore does not impose any restrictions by value or volume on products that are subject to import licensing.

Purposes and Coverage of Licensing

2. The following table shows the product coverage of Singapore's import licensing procedures, classified as automatic and non automatic:

Product Coverage of Singapore's Import Licensing Procedures:

Non-Automatic Licensing

Artificial sweetening agents
Irradiated food
Plants, flowers, seeds, fruits and
vegetables from selected Latin American
countries
Fruit or jackpot machine
Hazardous substances (poisons)

Radioactive materials and irradiating
apparatus
Medicines, poisons and drugs
Controlled telecommunication equipment
Full colour copying machines
Rice

Automatic Licensing

Fresh fruits and vegetables	Gramophone records
Plants and plants produce	Paintings and prints
Meat and meat products	Films, video tapes and video discs
Animals/birds/eggs/biologies	Cellulose Nitrates
Medicaments, veterinary	Matches
Endangered species	Axes
Ornamental and other fish	SOS Shrill Alarms
Milk powder - skimmed (coloured for animal feed)	Handcuffs
Amusement machines, coins or disc-operated, including pin-tables, shooting galleries & cinematography machines	Christmas crackers
Scrambler or encryption hardware or software capable of re-arranging the signs, signals, writing, sounds or intelligence for the purpose of secrecy	Pocket lighters, pistol or revolver shaped, gas fuelled, non-refillable
Articles of asbestos	Table lighters, pistol or revolver shaped
Publications	Pocket lighters, pistol or revolver shaped other than gas
	Articles of clothing intended as protection against attack, including bullet-proof vests
	Helmets, Steel
	Toy guns including pistols and revolvers

3. The system applies to goods listed in the above table originating in and coming from all countries, except as specified in the table.

4. Singapore's import licensing procedures are not intended to restrict the quantity or value of imports. They are maintained for the purpose of discharging Singapore's obligations under international agreements or for public health, public safety, environmental or security reasons. Depending on the product, a product licence or a dealer or importer licence or both may be required prior to importation.

5. All import licensing procedures are statutorily required and published in government gazettes. Specifically these are¹:

- Films Act and its Regulations
 - for films, videos tapes and video discs
- Undesirable Publications Act
 - for publications, gramophone records, painting and prints
- Regulation of Imports and Exports Regulations 1995
 - for rice, encryption software and hardware
- Radiation Protection Act (Chapter 262) and its Regulations
 - for radioactive materials and apparatus
- Food Regulations
 - for artificial sweetening agents and irradiated foods
- Private Lotteries Act
 - for fruit or jackpot machines
- Telecommunication Authority Singapore Act 1992 and the Telecommunication (Dealers) Regulations 1994
 - for controlled telecommunication equipment

¹Available for consultation in the Secretariat (Market Access Division) (English only).

- Control of Currency (Full Colour Copying Machines) 1996 and Currency (Full Colour Copying Machines) Regulations 1996
 - for full-colour photocopying machines
- Arms and Explosives Act Cap 13 and related Rules
 - for arms and explosives
- Medicines Act
 - for medicines
- Poisons Act
 - for poisons and other hazardous substances
- Misuse of Drugs Act
 - for drugs
- Controlled Plants Act and related rules
 - for plants, plant produce, fresh fruit and vegetables
- Animals and Birds Act and related rules
 - for live animals, meat and meat products
- Fisheries Act of 1966 and related rules
 - for ornamental and other fish
- Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (Chapter 92A) and related Rules
 - for CITES flora and fauna

While the administration of the licensing system is undertaken by the various licensing authorities for different products, the designation of products to be subjected to licensing is not left to administrative discretion. The latter requires legislative approval. Similarly, legislative approval must be obtained before the government abolishes the licensing system. The licensing requirements applicable to stipulated goods cover both imports and local products. Licensing requirements pertaining to importers also apply to domestic manufacturers.

Procedures

6. This question is not applicable to any products listed in the table at question 2, except for rice. To meet emergency requirements, Singapore maintains a stockpile scheme of rice, a staple food, of which there is no domestic production. A special import licensing system is applied to rice imported from all countries. There are two categories of import licences, the stockpile licence and the ordinary licence. The stockpile licence seeks to ensure that the importers stockpile the stipulated types and minimum quantities of rice in proportion to their total imports to ensure a consistent and adequate supply for domestic consumption. Licences for non-stockpile grades of rice are issued automatically.

- I. Information is published by means of notices issued by the Trade Development Board (TDB) of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Copies of the notices are available at TDB's office premises and on the Internet.
- II. Not applicable.
- III. Please see response cited at paragraph 6 above.
- IV. Not Applicable.
- V. The processing time for licences is within the period stipulated in Article 3.5(f) of the Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures.
- VI. Not applicable.

VII. Rice licence applications are processed by a single administrative organ, the TDB.

VIII. Please see response cited at paragraph 6 above.

IX. Not applicable.

X. Not applicable.

XI. Please see response cited at paragraph 6 above.

7. (a) The range of processing time taken for the various licence applications fall within the stipulated periods provided in Article 2a(iii) for automatic licensing and Article 3.5(f) for non-automatic licensing. Depending on the products, applications for import licences may be submitted as far in advance as 1 working day prior to importation. It is also possible for certain products to arrive at a port without a licence.

In the case of artificial sweetening agents and irradiated foods, it is preferable that import licence applications are submitted 1 or 2 months in advance to allow ample time for amendments/ adjustments should the products not meet the stipulated labelling requirements. An importer of poisons without a licence will have to temporarily store the hazardous substances in the port area pending the approval of the import licence.

(b) Generally import licences can be granted immediately upon request when applications are submitted in appropriate and complete forms. For cases such as arms and explosives, radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus, import licences can be immediately granted if the importer already has a dealer's licence. Licence applications for imports of full colour photocopying machines may be granted immediately only in exceptional cases.

(c) In all cases, there are no limitations as to the period of the year during which application of licence and/or importation may be made.

(d) In all cases, consideration of a licence application is effected by a single administrative organ as specified in the respective legislation cited in response to Question 5. The importer does not have to approach more than one administrative body.

8. An application for an import licence is usually granted if it meets the stipulated criteria. Licensing authorities will provide the reason(s) in the event of refusal. Avenues for appeal exist in all cases.

Eligibility of Importers to Apply for Licence

9.(a) Not applicable.

(b) Generally, all persons, registered firms and institutions are eligible to apply for licences. Applicants for the product categories below must meet additional criteria:

- (i) for a licence to import, make, distribute or exhibit films and videos, an applicant must be a private limited company of at least S\$100,000 paid-up capital;
- (ii) for licence to deal in or import arms and explosives, applicants must not have criminal records or adverse security attention;

- (iii) for licence to import large and wild animals, the applicant must convince the licensing authority, ie the Primary Production Department of the Ministry of National Development that he or she is suitably equipped to house and care for the animals;
- (iv) for a licence to import hazardous substances, applicants should preferably be a professional or a senior management staff who have the necessary knowledge on how to handle the hazardous substances safely and have passed an oral test conducted by the licensing authority, ie the Pollution Control Department of the Ministry of the Environment, covering technical knowledge on the safe handling of the hazardous substances and on the Poisons Act and its Rules;
- (v) for a licence to deal in telecommunication equipment, the applicant must be in the business of selling electrical/ electronic/ computer or specialist telecommunication, or supplying and installing telecommunication equipment for aircraft, vessels and vehicles. Dealers must also have technical staff who know TAS-type approval requirements and knowledge of their products in order to advise and guide consumers;
- (vi) applicants for licence to import product containing Part I poisons or controlled drugs must be qualified persons such as registered pharmacists;
- (vii) applicants for licence to deal in fish or fish products must be a fisherman, fish farmer, fish dealer or connected to fishing or the fishing industry.

Documentational and Other Requirements for Application for Licence

10. The application for a dealer's licence requires such information as: particulars of importer, company registration certificate issued by the Singapore Registry of Companies, product description, product quantity, mode of shipment, port of shipment/transport, product brand/ serial number/ model/ make and country of origin. Additional requirements in the application for certain dealers' licence include:

- (i) applications for licence to import hazardous substances require documents to show that the applicant has an approved storage and handling facilities to handle hazardous substances safely; a layout plan to show areas for storing hazardous substances; and an emergency action plan to indicate how a chemical release from the storage area will be contained, detoxified and cleaned up;
- (ii) applications to import artificial sweetening agents and irradiated food must be substantiated with documents to support the use of the products, and sample labels;
- (iii) applications to deal in ornamental fish must have government approved premises with facilities for holding, quarantining, and packing of ornamental fish;
- (iv) applications to deal in fruit machines must ensure that they are for use in licensed clubs;
- (v) applications to deal in rice, telecommunication equipment, arms and explosives require documents on technical specifications of the products. In addition, applicants for licence to deal in arms and explosives must ensure the following:
 - commercial and Industrial Security Cooperation (CISCO) Constable(s) to be engaged to escort the transportation of goods;

- all pyrotechnics are to be stored at wharves designated by the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA).
- (vi) applications to deal in full colour copying machines are subject to the following conditions:
- importer must ensure that the machine is not used to reproduce currency notes, financial negotiable documents, passports, postage stamps, lottery tickets;
 - importer must inform the licensing authority, ie the Board of Commissioners of Currency (BCCS) of the Ministry of Finance if the colour copying machine is sold or leased out;
 - if the importer or the subsequent user decides to give up the use of the machine either by scrapping it or by having it re-exported, he must notify the BCCS in writing and surrender the permit to the BCCS;
 - the importer or user shall at all reasonable times permit authorised officers from the BCCS to inspect the machine and to allow specimen copies of reproductions and copies of the register to be made and shall on request furnish whatever additional information that may be required.
- (vii) applications to deal in radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus are subject to the following conditions:
- the company must possess a licence to handle and transport radioactive materials if it undertakes its own transportation. In addition, the importer must ensure that the vehicle transporting radioactive materials displays a proper placard showing the radiation sign and that it is not left unattended;
 - the importer, if he is an end-user, must possess a licence that specifies the type and quantity of radioactive materials that can be possessed and another licence for use, handling and transport of radioactive materials;
 - if the importer is the end-user of irradiating apparatus, the company must have a licence for each machine it possesses.

11. Upon actual importation, importers are required to make an Inward Declaration showing the correct description and quantities of each consignment made electronically through the TradeNet system. Shipping documents such as Bill of Lading/Airway Bill and invoice are also required.

Additional requirements for the importation of certain products include:

- (i) for publications, their language have to be specified;
- (ii) for arms and explosives, imports must be produced for inspection at the Arms and Explosives Branch immediately after customs clearance;
- (iii) for medicines, poisons and drugs, clinical data, manufacturing quality control procedures and Free Sale Certificates must be furnished to ascertain the safety, efficacy and quality of the products;

- (iv) for plant and plant produce, phytosanitary certificates or similar official statement issued not more than 14 days prior to date of shipment of consignment by a competent government agency or agricultural authority are required. Imports of plant and plant produce are subject to plant quarantine inspection requirements;
- (v) for meat and meat products, imports should be shipped direct and must be derived from sources approved by the licensing authority ie Primary Production Department of the Ministry of National Development. They must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate issued by the approved sources in the exporting country and inspected upon importation;
- (vi) for live animals, importers are required to show the dealers' licence issued by the PPD together with the veterinary health certificate from sources in the exporting country approved by the PPD. The declaration from master/captain of ship/aircraft may also be required depending on the type of animal and country of origin;
- (vii) for fresh fruit and vegetables, each consignment must:
 - be subject to inspection and sampling upon importation;
 - be accompanied by a document relating to the importation of any fresh fruit and vegetables for sale or supply in Singapore;
 - not contain levels of pesticide residues exceeding levels prescribed under Rule 13 of the Control of Plants (Import of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables) Rules 1994; and
 - be in containers which, at the time of importation, must bear the name and address of their producer.
- (viii) for selected fish or fish products, additional product quality and quarantine requirements apply. All ornamental fish imported must be healthy and free from any clinical sign of disease at the time of import;
- (ix) in addition to requirements set out in (iv) to (viii) above, the date and time of arrival of consignment must be indicated for imports of these goods;
- (x) for imports of CITES products, importers are required to submit a CITES export or re-export permit issued by the CITES Management Authority of the exporting or re-exporting country.

12. Fees are required for the following:

(i) Product Licences

- a licence fee of S\$6 per consignment of plant and plants produce. Other fees for and incidental to any inspection or examination activities are also specified under the Control of Plants (Importation) Rules;
- a licence fee of S\$3 per 100 kilogrammes applies for fresh and frozen meat, and S\$35 per consignment of meat packed in cans;
- a licence fee of S\$20 per head applies to live animals for meat production, subject to a maximum of S\$160 per consignment; S\$45 per head applies to pet animals; S\$15 per species applies for non-domestic birds and eggs, subject to a maximum of S\$77

per consignment. S\$20 to S\$50 per consignment applies to other animals, depending on the type of animal imported. Charges apply for quarantine and rabies vaccination for cats and dogs;

- a licence fee of S\$12 per scheduled species of CITES Endangered Species, subject to a minimum amount of S\$25 or S\$50 per consignment, depending on the species. For elephant tusks, the fees are S\$1 per kg or part thereof subject to a minimum of S\$50 per consignment. Charges also apply for such provisions as certification, inspection and transport as listed in the Schedule of the Endangered Species (Import and Export) (Fees) Rules 1991;
- a licence fee of S\$30 per consignment applies to radioactive materials and irradiating apparatus.
- a licence fee of S\$13 per consignment applies to arms and explosives.

(ii) Fees for dealers' licence

- an annual licensing fee of S\$360 for fresh fruit and vegetables;
- an annual licence fee of S\$350 for ornamental fish and S\$70 for other fish;
- an annual licence fee at S\$250 or a biennial licence at S\$500 for hazardous substances;
- an annual licence fee of S\$15 for rice;
- an annual licence fee of S\$120 for operations of fruit machines, renewable at S\$25 per annum;
- an annual licence fee of S\$60 for dealing in TAS type approved equipment and an annual licence fee of S\$400 for dealing in other types of telecommunication equipment;
- a biennial licence fee of S\$1,500 and a banker's guarantee of S\$20,000 per licence to import, make, distribute or exhibit films and videos;
- fees for a 5-year ordinary and 3-year provisional licences issued under the Medicines Act are S\$240 and S\$360 respectively;
- an annual licence fee of S\$100 for artificial sweetening agents and irradiated food;
- an annual licence fee of S\$180 to manufacture, possess for sale or deal in irradiating apparatus or radioactive materials; an annual fee of S\$130 to keep or possess radioactive materials or irradiating apparatus other than for sale; an annual fee of S\$120 to use, handle and transport radioactive materials or irradiating apparatus.

The validity of licences can be extended upon expiry through renewal of licences.

13. In all cases, no deposit or advance payment is required.

Conditions for Licensing

14. The period of the validity of dealers' licences are as specified in response to question 12 above. The validity of approved product licences lapses when the importation of the concerned products is effected.

15. In all cases, no penalty exists for non-utilisation of licence or a portion of it.

16. Licences are not transferable between importers.

17.(a) Not applicable.

(b) Not applicable.

Other Procedural Requirements

18. No.

19. Not applicable.