



Check a Premises's Approved Use Before Signing a Lease

Description

Check both the allowable use and the last approved use before committing to a premises. A lease describing a unit as "commercial" does not itself authorise a restaurant, school, clinic or other specific activity, and separate agency licences may still be required after planning clearance.

This guide is for a business owner or investor considering a shophouse, commercial or industrial unit. Its job is specific: confirm whether the intended activity can lawfully operate before signing or renovating. Use the table first, then the worked example and checklist; keep any calculation as a labelled estimate until the controlling body or live service confirms it.

check approved use of premises Singapore: the decision table

Situation	Practical next step
Intended use matches current approval	Verify other licences and physical requirements
Use may qualify under an authorisation condition	Document every condition before relying on the exemption
Change-of-use application is required	Do not commit to tenancy or renovation before URA decides
Approved-use record is unavailable online	Use URA's premises enquiry or obtain planning records

The table separates the common branches that lead to different outcomes. It is not a substitute for reading the current source: re-open the cited authority on the day the decision is made, especially where a deadline, rate, eligibility rule, opening condition or safety instruction is involved.

Start with the controlling rule

URA SPACE provides allowable and last approved uses for shophouses and selected commercial and industrial properties. Record the enquiry date because the result reflects the planning records at that

time. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

A change of use is assessed against zoning, guidelines, compatibility and possible disamenity. Planning permission is not guaranteed merely because similar businesses operate nearby. [URA approved-use enquiry](#).

These two checks define the reader's starting position. Record the date and the facts used, because a later application, booking or dispute is easier to resolve when the original basis is visible.

Apply the rule to the real decision

URA states a S\$500 processing fee and a general 10-working-day assessment period for a standard change-of-use application; incomplete submissions or inter-agency consultation can take longer. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

A typical submission needs a location plan, proposed floor plan and owner's consent, with agency clearances where relevant. Build the consent and evidence file before the lease clock starts. [URA approved-use enquiry](#).

Do not compress separate conditions into a single yes-or-no answer. Work through the eligibility, timing, amount and evidence questions in that order, and stop if a live record does not match the assumption.

Build the evidence trail

Planning approval is only one layer. Food, childcare, fire-safety and other activities can require separate approvals through the competent agencies. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

Put a condition precedent or termination route in the lease where approval is material, and obtain legal advice on the drafting. An agent's assurance cannot substitute for an approval outcome. [URA approved-use enquiry](#).

Save the relevant confirmation, receipt, official result or case reference. This is not administrative decoration: it is the record that allows the authority, provider or household to reconstruct what happened.

Know the limit of the answer

Check conservation controls for historic shophouses and whether temporary permission has an expiry date. The physical charm of a premises says nothing about its permitted activity. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

Price delay risk explicitly: rent-free period, renovation start, licence lead time and the non-refundable application fee belong in one opening calendar. [URA approved-use enquiry](#).

This guide resolves the general task for a Singapore reader. It does not replace an individual notice, contract, clinical assessment, legal advice or an officer's direction at the point of service.

Worked Singapore example

A tenant wants to turn a shop unit into a commercial school. URA's live record shows 'shop' as the last approved use. The tenant budgets the S\$500 application fee, obtains owner consent and a floor plan, and makes the lease conditional on the required approvals rather than starting renovation on a verbal assurance.

The example shows the method, not a promised outcome. Replace its dates, balances, prices, route conditions or personal facts with the reader's own information. Where the example performs arithmetic, it is an editorial calculation and should be reconciled against the live statement, bill or official calculator.

Action checklist

1. Search URA SPACE by the exact premises
2. Record allowable and last approved use
3. Test authorisation conditions
4. Identify planning and sector licences
5. Obtain owner consent and floor plan
6. Protect the lease against approval failure
7. Wait for written outcomes before renovation

Work through the list in sequence. If one item cannot be verified, record the gap and use the official contact route rather than guessing. Keep screenshots only as supporting evidence; the live authority page and issued document remain controlling.

Two original tools in this guide

A permission-and-licence dependency map. This converts the source material into a reusable decision aid. Copy it into a note or spreadsheet and enter only verified personal inputs.

A lease risk calendar using the S\$500 fee and 10-working-day baseline. This is the final control before an irreversible payment, submission, booking, journey or household decision. It is an editorial framework derived from the sources, not an official form.

Primary-source ledger

Official or primary source	Material claims checked
URA change-of-use guide	Allowable and approved-use checks, application fee, processing time and supporting documents.

Official or primary source

[URA approved-use enquiry](#)

Material claims checked

Official enquiry route where URA SPACE does not provide the required premises result.

Each inline link sits beside the claim it is intended to support. Both source pages were opened during the evidence pass. If a page is revised after publication, use the latest controlling text and treat this article's worked examples as historical calculations rather than fresh official advice.

Errors that change the outcome

- Equating broad zoning with a specific approved use
- Copying a neighbouring tenant's permission
- Starting works while an application is pending
- Forgetting temporary-permission expiry
- Assuming planning approval includes every operating licence

The recurring failure is to act on a familiar label without checking its definition. Preserve the original notice, policy wording, booking terms, eligibility record or authority response so that a later review starts from evidence rather than memory.

Continue with the next useful step

For the adjacent task, read [checking approved plans before purchase](#). If the decision moves into another stage, continue with [identifying Singapore shophouse form without confusing it with permission](#). These links were selected for reader progression, not as mechanical category links.

Questions readers ask

How much is a change-of-use application?

URA currently states S\$500, non-refundable. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

How long does assessment take?

URA says generally 10 working days, with longer time possible for incomplete or consulted cases. [URA approved-use enquiry](#).

Can a landlord promise that a use is allowed?

Treat the live authority record and written approvals as the controlling evidence. [URA change-of-use guide](#).

Accuracy note: This article was checked against the linked primary sources on 2026-07-21. Individual facts and live services can change. No interview, first-hand use, first-hand meal, price check or field

observation is claimed unless expressly stated.

Date Created

22/07/2026

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