

Massage shop licence needed for every outlet from 1 December 2026, with police posters and fines up to S$10,000

Description

default watermark

From 1 December 2026, every massage shop in Singapore needs a massage shop licence from the police, including the open-concept foot reflexology and tuina outlets that were exempt until now. Licensed shops will also have to put up a police-issued poster at the shopfront. Operating without a licence can cost up to S$10,000 in fines, two years in jail, or both.

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) confirmed the changes on 5 November, and they are back in the conversation after a weekend of reports on islandwide anti-vice raids. Here is what changes, what the poster tells you, and what to do if a shop looks off.

Why the massage shop licence rules are tightening

Open-concept massage establishments, the kind with massage chairs or beds in one shared space, have not needed a licence so far. Police say some were being used as cover for vice. In a June 2026 Police Life account of a Jurong raid, officers found an outlet in a Boon Lay mall with an open-concept exemption notice, yet the space was split by curtains and had three rooms with massage beds.

Over the weekend of 7 and 8 November, police were also reported to have arrested 195 people in islandwide raids on vice-related activities. At the time of writing, that release had not yet appeared on the SPF website, so treat the figure as reported rather than final.



Source: Singapore Police Force

What changes on 1 December 2026

According to the SPF news release, these are the key changes:

- Open-concept outlets lose their exemption and need a new Category 3 licence, which comes with a fit and proper assessment and planning approval from HDB or URA
- Category 3 outlets must give customers and the public an unobstructed view of the massage, with no rooms, partitions, cubicles or curtains
- All licensed shops in Categories 1, 2 and 3 must display the police-issued poster at the shopfront
- Licences will run for three or five years depending on compliance records, with Category 1 and 2 shops starting on a one-year provisional licence
- Staff uniforms no longer need prior police approval, but must meet the standards in the Massage Establishment Rules 2018

Grace periods for existing shops

Open-concept operators already in business can keep running from 1 December 2026 to 30 November 2027, but must get a Category 3 licence and employee approvals by then. Existing Category 1 and 2 shops have until 31 January 2027 to put up the poster. Applications are open on GoBusiness, and police say assessment takes about four weeks.

default watermark

Fees

- Category 3 licence: S$340 for three years or S$510 for five years
- Existing open-concept operators who apply before 1 June 2027 pay half: S$170 or S$255
- Category 1 and 2 new licences: S$290 for the one-year provisional, S$630 for three years, S$980 for five years

Category	Fee
Licence	
Cat 1 & 2 ME Licences	$290 (1 year) * $630 (3 years) $980 (5 years)
Cat 3 ME Licence	$340 (3 years) $510 (5 years)
Approval	
Application for Employee Approval	$50 per employee*
Application for Change of Layout of ME Premises	$40*
Approval for Change of ME	$35*

default watermark

Source: Singapore Police Force

What the massage shop licence poster shows

The sample poster on the SPF website carries the shopâ??s licence number, name, address, operating hours and expiry date. It also lists the key conditions for that category. For Category 3, that means the massage must be visible from outside, and the entrance and windows cannot be blocked by tinted glass, curtains or blinds.

default watermark

SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY

Type of Massage Establishment
Category 3

Licence No:	**L/ME/2026/000001**
Establishment Name:	**ABC Massage**
Address:	**123 Drive, #01-00, XYZ Building, Singapore 123456**
Operating Hours:	**7.00am to 10.30pm**
Expiry Date:	**31 December 2026**

default watermark
SAMPLE

Key Features of Category 3 Massage Establishment:

- The massage services must be provided in full view from outside the shop premises.
- There should not be any rooms, partitions, cubicles, or furniture in the premises that allow massage services to be administered in private.
- The entrance and windows should not be obscured by tinted glass panels, curtains or blinds.

To report infringements, please visit:
https://go.gov.sg/submit-feedback-massage

Source: Singapore Police Force

At the bottom is a link for reporting breaches, go.gov.sg/submit-feedback-massage. Failing to display the poster will itself be an offence.

What it means for you

If you are a regular at the neighbourhood reflexology place for your aching feet, the visible change is mostly cosmetic: fewer curtains, more glass, and a poster at the door. With licence fees this modest, I would not expect big price jumps. But some small operators may decide the licence is not worth it, so your usual spot could close by end-2027.

- Look for the poster at the shopfront from 1 December, and expect older licensed shops to have it by 31 January 2027
- Check a shop on the SPF Verify a Licensed Massage Establishment page if something feels wrong
- Walk out if an open-concept outlet has curtained cubicles or back rooms, because that breaks the Category 3 conditions
- Report breaches through the poster link, or call the police on 999 if you see a crime in progress

default watermark

For job seekers, the same rules mean massage shop employees need police approval, so an employer who says you can â??start tomorrow, no paperworkâ?• is a red flag. Separately, if police call you about a report, the number on your screen will now be the single caller ID we explained in police calls now showing 6000 0999. And if a deal for cheap spa packages arrives by SMS, the AntiScam Pango app is worth a look before you pay anything.

The full list of conditions for each category is on the SPF massage establishment licence page.

Date Created
09/11/2026
Author
claratan