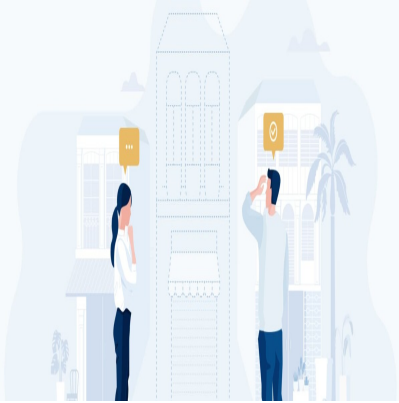




Do You Need to Register a Business in Singapore?

Description

A one-off private sale is different from repeatedly carrying on an activity for profit. ACRA says registration is generally required when you regularly carry on profit-making activity and use a business name other than your full name. Decide before invoicing, opening merchant accounts or signing recurring contracts.

need to register business Singapore: the decision table

Situation	What to do
One-off sale of personal item	Usually not a business by itself
Repeated paid service	Run the registration tests
Trade only under full legal name	Check the name exception carefully
Partners or liability exposure	Compare structures before starting

Frequency and purpose matter

Keep a simple activity log showing dates, customers, revenue and whether the work is organised for profit. Social-media presentation can reinforce that the activity is a business.

The name test is narrower than many expect

Initials, descriptive words or a brand can take the activity outside the full-name exception. Check the exact proposed public name.

Registration is not a licence

Food, employment, education, health and other regulated activities may need separate permissions. Use GoBusiness to identify them.

Structure affects personal exposure

A sole proprietorship is not a separate legal person. Compare liability, ownership continuity, filing and tax administration before choosing.

Prepare operational basics

Separate records, invoices, contracts, privacy notices and tax tracking from day one, even for a small side activity.

Worked example

A tutor teaches one neighbour once, then begins advertising weekly packages under "North Star Tuition". The repeated profit activity and branded name point towards registration. Before collecting term fees, the tutor checks the structure, home-use rules and any sector requirements.

Turn the example into a decision record

The worked example is useful only if its inputs are replaced with the reader's actual dates, amounts, documents or observations. For this task decide whether registration is required and avoid using a structure by accident keep the decision and its supporting record on the same line. That exposes a missing input before the action becomes difficult to reverse.

Trigger or question	Current action	Evidence to retain
1. One-off sale of personal item	Usually not a business by itself	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
2. Repeated paid service	Run the registration tests	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
3. Trade only under full legal name	Check the name exception carefully	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.
4. Partners or liability exposure	Compare structures before starting	Save the dated input, confirmation or advice that supports this choice.

Record where each answer came from and when it was checked. If a live service, signed document or professional opinion conflicts with a general webpage, preserve both and resolve the difference with the body responsible for the decision. Do not silently substitute a convenient number or date.

Action checklist

1. Describe the activity

2. Log frequency and profit purpose
3. Test the exact business name
4. Compare structures
5. Check sector licences
6. Prepare records and contracts
7. Register before regular trading

Two practical tools to keep

A frequency-and-name registration test. Put the controlling dates, amounts or observations in one place and attach the evidence beside each input. This makes the decision reproducible if a family member, colleague or adviser needs to check it later.

A structure and licence decision matrix. Test the ordinary case and the failure case before money, a filing or a booking becomes irreversible. Mark calculations as calculations and leave uncertain fields unresolved until an authority or qualified professional confirms them.

What the primary sources establish

Primary source	Claim used here
ACRA business registration requirements	Regular profit activity, name test and eligibility.
GoBusiness start-up guide	Planning, structure and registration sequence.

The links sit beside the claims they support. Live services, formal notices and individual facts can change the outcome, so re-open the controlling page immediately before acting.

Continue with the next useful step

For the adjacent task, read [the URA Home Office Scheme rules](#). If the decision moves into a different stage, continue with [the GST registration tests for a growing business](#).

Errors that change the outcome

- Calling repeated work a hobby
- Misreading the full-name exception
- Assuming registration grants every licence
- Choosing sole proprietorship without liability review
- Mixing all records with personal spending

Keep dated records, confirmations and advice used for the decision. This article explains public information for a general fact pattern; it does not determine an individual legal, tax, medical, investment, employment or contractual outcome.

A final challenge before acting

The intended reader is a singapore resident turning repeated paid work into a side business. Before closing the task, challenge the file against the common failure points below. A “not applicable” answer should still have a reason, especially where a deadline, eligibility rule, payment, booking or safety decision is involved.

- **Have you ruled this out?** Calling repeated work a hobby. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Misreading the full-name exception. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Assuming registration grants every licence. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Choosing sole proprietorship without liability review. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.
- **Have you ruled this out?** Mixing all records with personal spending. Write down the fact or document that answers it; an assumption is not a completed check.

Escalate any unresolved consequential point to the named authority or an appropriately qualified professional. The aim is not to collect more material; it is to identify the one missing fact that could change the result.

Questions readers ask

What is the minimum age?

ACRA states that an individual must be at least 18 to register.

Does a one-off sale require registration?

Not usually by itself; regular profit activity is the central test.

Can registration be done before licences?

Sequence depends on the activity; check GoBusiness requirements.

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