Can a foreigner make a Singapore will for their Singapore assets?

Wills General · https://help.law.com.sg/faq/singapore-will-for-foreigners/

Short answer: Yes. If you live overseas and have assets in Singapore (a bank account, shares, or property), you can make a Singapore will that deals only with those Singapore assets. This sits alongside any will you already have for assets in your home country.

Why have a separate Singapore will?

Many of our clients are foreigners or Singapore Permanent Residents who keep one or two accounts in Singapore but live abroad. A common scenario: a British citizen retired in Australia, with a Australian will for Australia assets and a Singapore bank account holding cash deposits.

You could in theory rely on a single foreign will to cover everything you own worldwide. In practice, that route is slow and expensive when the time comes. Your executor would have to deal with the Singapore assets through one of two routes. If the foreign grant was issued in a Commonwealth country or Hong Kong, the executor reseals it in Singapore under the Probate and Administration Act 1934.

For grants from other jurisdictions, including the United States, Thailand, Indonesia, and most of the EU, the executor applies for a fresh Singapore grant under Part 6, rule 22 of the Family Justice (Probate and Other Matters) Rules 2024, supported by an affidavit of foreign law. Either route adds months and cost to what would otherwise be a straightforward Singapore probate.

A separate Singapore will, limited to your Singapore assets, sidesteps the problem. The Singapore court can grant probate directly to your named executor without waiting for any foreign process.

Will the two wills clash?

Not if they are drafted properly. The standard approach is for each will to be expressly limited to assets in its own jurisdiction, and for each will to state that it does not revoke the other. We draft the

Singapore will on that basis. Your existing foreign will stays intact and continues to govern your foreign assets.

If you only have a draft foreign will or are still planning it, tell us. We will time the Singapore will so the two documents sit cleanly together.

Who can make a Singapore will?

Anyone aged 21 or above, of sound mind, can make a Singapore will under the Wills Act 1838. Your nationality, residence, and domicile do not matter. What matters is that the will is properly executed.

The execution requirement: signing must be in Singapore

This is the part that often surprises overseas clients. Our firm only assists with wills where the testator signs in Singapore in our presence. There are two reasons:

1. We explain the will to you face to face before you sign. This protects against later challenges that the testator did not understand the document.
2. We witness the signing ourselves, with two of our staff (usually at least a practising lawyer) as attesting witnesses, exactly as section 6 of the Wills Act 1838 requires.

If you cannot come to Singapore, we will not be able to act. You may wish to instruct a lawyer in your country of residence, although you should check that they are familiar with Singapore execution requirements.

What we need from you

To prepare a Singapore will limited to your Singapore assets, we will need:

1. Your full name as it appears on your passport, your nationality, and your country of residence
2. A list of the Singapore assets to be covered (bank, account type, approximate value)
3. Details of your beneficiaries (full names, identity numbers, residential address, relationship to you, dates of birth if minors)
4. The name and identity number of your intended executor(s)
5. A copy of your existing foreign will, if any, so we can ensure the two wills do not conflict

Fees

We charge a flat fee for a single Singapore will limited to overseas-based testators with Singapore assets. You can get an indicative quote here:

> Singapore Wills Quote

Embedded media: https://law.com.sg/singapore-wills-quote/embed/#?secret=Lwa0AgYtEw#?secret=iJC0PUrhxj

How to start

Complete our online wills submission form:

> Singapore Wills Online

Embedded media: https://law.com.sg/singapore-wills-online/embed/#?secret=pz0cA4YC7U#?secret=YKCGl0UtPG

Once we receive your submission, we will revert with a draft will and our fee proposal. When you are ready to sign, we will arrange a signing appointment at our office, or you may book an appointment at our booking site.

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