Legalisation and Apostille of Singapore Documents: SAL and Embassy Procedures

Notary General · https://help.law.com.sg/faq/what-is-legalisation/

Legalisation is the authentication of a document by the embassy or consulate, located in the country of the Notary Public, of the country in which the document is to be used, ie. the official attestation of the origins of a document. For most countries, a Singapore notarised document only needs an Apostille issued by the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL). For countries not party to the Apostille Convention, further legalisation at that country's embassy in Singapore is required. This page explains both routes.

What is legalisation?

Legalisation is the official attestation of the origins of a document by the embassy or consulate of the destination country. For example, a document executed in Singapore for use in a non-Apostille country would be legalised by that country's embassy in Singapore. The formality of legalisation is also known in the United States and some other countries as "consularisation".

For a recipient country which is not a party to the Apostille Convention, the recipient may require the notarised document with the Notarial Certificate and Apostille to be legalised. You should always check with your recipient on his requirements.

Does the Singapore Notary Public issue the Apostille?

No. The Notary Public issues the Notarial Certificate; the Apostille is issued by the Singapore Academy of Law (SAL).

An Apostille is a certificate which verifies and confirms the seal and signature of the person who authenticated the document. Only countries which have signed the Hague Convention Abolishing the Requirement of Legalisation for Foreign Public Documents ("Apostille Convention") can issue Apostilles. Singapore acceded to the Apostille Convention on 18 January 2021, and the Apostille Act

and Apostille (Certification of Singapore Public Documents) Regulations 2021 came into effect on 16 September 2021.

From 16 September 2021, SAL affixes Apostilles for all notarised documents irrespective of which country the document is to be used in. Singapore Notaries Public continue to issue a Notarial Certificate, which is then authenticated by SAL with the Apostille.

The SAL Apostille fee is $87.20 per document ($80 plus 9% GST), paid to SAL. Our office assists you up to the Notarial Certificate, with the SAL fee paid in advance; after notarisation, you or your representative collect the Apostille from SAL. See how to obtain the Apostille from SAL after notarisation and whether an Apostille is compulsory for notarised documents.

Once an Apostille has been issued, the document can be presented in any member country of the Apostille Convention and will be accepted as containing legitimate legal signatures or seals. Some Singapore government documents can be apostilled at SAL without notarisation: see our direct Apostille guide, the Apostille of the Certificate of Clearance (COC) and e-Notarisation and e-Apostille in Singapore.

If the document is to be used in a country not party to the Apostille Convention, it will require further legalisation through that country's embassy in Singapore.

What is the procedure for embassy legalisation?

Our Notary Public provides notarial services only; legalisation at a particular embassy is not our responsibility. Each embassy has its own rules and procedures, which change from time to time, and the onus is entirely on the client to find out the exact requirements from the specific embassy (eg. US Embassy or China Embassy) before approaching our office. This includes any necessary forms or documents, eg. letter of authority for submission, translation of the document, and wordings required in the Notarial Certificate.

The usual sequence is:

1. Check with the relevant embassy or consulate in Singapore on its procedures, policies and any specific format required for legalisation.
2. Have your document notarised by our Notary Public in accordance with those requirements.
3. Collect the Apostille from SAL (the fee having been paid in advance).

4. Present the notarised document, with the Notarial Certificate and Apostille, to the consular section of the relevant foreign mission in Singapore for legalisation.

When our office assists in notarising your documents based on your requirements, we do not represent or warrant whatsoever that the specific embassy will accept your documents. Where work has been done pursuant to your requirements or instructions but the documents are subsequently rejected by the embassy for whatever reason (eg. your translation not accepted by the embassy), our charges paid cannot be refunded.

Where can I find foreign embassies in Singapore?

For a listing of foreign missions in Singapore, please visit the MFA's Foreign Representatives to Singapore directory on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

What should I do if the embassy rejects my documents?

Different embassies, high commissions and consulate offices have different policies and procedures, and these change from time to time. Regrettably, we are unable to advise you on a specific embassy's procedures and policies, as there are hundreds of embassies and consulate offices in Singapore.

If your notarised document has been rejected by the foreign mission, the costs and expenses (eg. notarial and Apostille fees) will be wasted, as you may not be able to reuse the notarised document again. To avoid this, always confirm the embassy's exact requirements, including format, translation and any supporting forms, before your notarial appointment, and check with your recipient on his requirements.

Book a notarial appointment

If your embassy requirements are confirmed and your document is ready for notarisation, book an appointment with our Notary Public at book.law.com.sg.