

Private Investigation and Security Agencies Act - Singapore

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Private Investigation and Security Agencies Act.

Interpretation.

2. —(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires —

"company" means —

(a) a company incorporated pursuant to the Companies Act or pursuant to any corresponding previous law; or

(b) a company or other body incorporated outside Singapore;

Cap. 50.

"licence" means a private investigator's licence or a security guard agency's licence, as the case may be, granted under this Act;

"licensee" means the holder of a licence;

"licensing officer" means the licensing officer appointed under section 4 and includes an assistant licensing officer appointed under that section;

"private investigator" means any person (whether or not he carries on any other business) who exercises or carries on or advertises or notifies or states that he exercises or carries on or that he is willing to exercise or carry on or in any way holds himself to the public as ready to undertake any of the following functions:

(a) obtaining and furnishing information as to the personal character or actions of any person or as to the character or nature of the business or occupation of any person;

(b) searching for missing persons;

(c) obtaining and furnishing information as to the causes and origin of or responsibility for fires, libels, losses, accidents or damages or injuries to real or personal property;

(d) the location or recovery of lost or stolen property or obtaining information with respect to that property;

(e) securing evidence to be used in civil or criminal proceedings, on behalf of any other person and for or in consideration of any payment or other remuneration (whether monetary or otherwise);

"private investigator's licence" means a licence granted under this Act authorising the holder to carry on the business of or to act as a private investigator;

"security guard" includes any watchman or other person engaged in work for the protection of persons or property or to prevent the theft or the unlawful taking of property;

"security guard agency's licence" means a licence granted under this Act authorising the holder to carry on the business of a security guard agency.

(2) The fact that any person carries on the business of obtaining or furnishing information as to the financial rating or standing of any person shall not of itself require the person carrying on that business or any employee or agent of that person to hold a private investigator's licence.

(3) For the purposes of this Act, a person shall be deemed to be carrying on the business of a security guard agency if he furnishes or advertises or notifies or states that he is willing to furnish or in any way holds himself out to the public as ready to furnish security guards for the protection of persons or to property or to prevent the theft or the unlawful taking of property for or in consideration of any payment or other remuneration (whether monetary or otherwise).

Act not applicable to certain persons.

3. —(1) This Act shall not be construed as requiring —

- (a) any member of the Singapore Police Force in the exercise of his functions as a police officer;
- (b) any member of the Singapore Armed Forces in the exercise of his functions as such member;
- (c) any officer or employee of the Government in the exercise of his functions as such officer or employee; and
- (d) any Auxiliary Police Force created under the provisions of the Police Force Act or any officer or employee thereof in the exercise of his functions as such officer or employee,

Cap. 235.

to hold a licence.

(2) This Act shall not be construed as requiring —

- (a) any solicitor acting in the ordinary course of his profession or any solicitor's clerk in the ordinary course of his employer's profession;
- (b) any person bona fide carrying on the business of insurance or of an insurance adjustment agency or any employee or agent of such a person in the exercise of his functions as such employee or agent;
- (c) any person employed to do any investigation work for one employer (such employer not being a private investigator) in respect of investigation work done for that employer arising out of the functions or business exercised or carried on by that employer; or
- (d) any person who is employed by the holder of a private investigator's licence to assist the latter in his business as a private investigator,

to hold a private investigator's licence.

(3) This Act shall not be construed as requiring any inspector, guard, watchman, or other person employed to do inspecting, guarding or watching work for one employer only in respect of inspecting, guarding or watching work done for that employer for the protection of persons or property or arising out of the functions or business exercised or carried on by that employer to hold a security guard agency's licence.

Appointment of licensing officer.

4. —(1) The Minister may appoint a public officer by name or office to be the licensing officer and may also appoint from public officers such number of assistant licensing officers as he may consider necessary for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The licensing officer shall be responsible generally for carrying out the provisions of this Act and for the collection of fees thereunder and shall pay all amounts collected in respect thereof into the Consolidated Fund.

No person to act as private investigator without a licence.

5. —(1) No person shall —

- (a) exercise or carry on or advertise, notify or state that he exercises or carries on or is willing to exercise or carry on the business of a private investigator;
- (b) act as a private investigator; or
- (c) in any way hold himself out to the public as ready to undertake for payment or other remuneration (whether monetary or otherwise) any of the functions of private investigator,

unless he is the holder a private investigator's licence.

(2) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (1) shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both.

No person to carry on the business of a security guard agency without a licence.

6. —(1) No person shall carry on the business of a security guard agency unless he is the holder of a security guard agency's licence.

(2) Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (1) shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both.

Application for licence.

7. —(1) Any person who desires to obtain a licence shall make an application in the prescribed form to the licensing officer for the grant of a licence.

(2) Upon receiving an application under subsection (1), the licensing officer shall consider the application and may grant a licence, with or without conditions, or refuse to grant a licence.

(3) The licensing officer shall refuse to grant a licence if —

(a) satisfactory evidence has not been produced of the good fame and character of the applicant or, if the applicant is a company, of its officers holding managerial or executive positions;

(b) satisfactory evidence has not been produced to show that the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence;

(c) the applicant has been convicted of any offence involving fraud or moral turpitude or, if the applicant is a company, any of its officers holding a managerial or an executive position has been convicted of any offence involving fraud or moral turpitude; or

(d) he considers it in the public interest to do so.

(4) The licensing officer may at any time vary or revoke any of the existing conditions of a licence or impose conditions or additional conditions thereto.

(5) The licensing officer shall, prior to taking any action under subsection (4), notify his intention to take such action to the licensee concerned and shall give the licensee an opportunity to submit reasons why the conditions of his licence should not be so varied or revoked.

(6) Where a licence is subject to conditions the licensee shall comply with those conditions.

(7) Any person who is aggrieved by a decision of the licensing officer under this section may, within one month of being notified of the decision of the licensing officer, appeal against his decision to the Minister whose decision shall be final.

Annual licence fee.

8. Every licensee shall pay such annual licence fee as may be prescribed.

Display of licence.

9. —(1) Every licensee shall exhibit his licence or a certified copy in a conspicuous place at his principal place of business and at every branch where the licensee carries on the business of a private investigator or of a security guard agency.

(2) Any person —

(a) who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (1); or

(b) who not being the holder of a licence keeps up or exhibits on or near his office, house or place of business or exhibits anywhere or allows to remain unobliterated any sign, writing, painting or other mark implying that such office, house or place of business is

that of a person licensed to carry on the business of a private investigator or of a security guard agency,
shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or to both.

Revocation of licence.

10. —(1) The licensing officer may by order revoke a licence —

(a) if he is satisfied that the licensee —

(i) has ceased to carry on the business for which he has been licensed or, if the licensee being a company, goes into liquidation or is wound up or otherwise dissolved;

(ii) improperly obtained his licence contrary to the provisions of this Act;

(iii) is no longer a fit and proper person to continue to hold a licence;

(iv) has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude or, if the licensee is a company, any of its officers holding a managerial or an executive position has been convicted of any offence involving fraud or moral turpitude;

(v) is carrying on or has carried on the business of a private investigator or security guard agency, as the case may be, in such a manner as renders him unfit to continue to hold a licence;

(vi) is contravening or has contravened any of the provisions of this Act; or

(vii) has been convicted of any offence under this Act or the regulations made thereunder or, if the licensee is a company, any of its officers holding a managerial or an executive position has been convicted of any offence under this Act or the regulations made thereunder; or

(b) if he considers it in the public interest to do so.

(2) The licensing officer shall, before revoking any licence under subsection (1), give the person concerned notice in writing of his intention to do so, specifying a date, not less than 21 days after the date of the notice, upon which the revocation shall take effect and calling upon the person concerned to show cause to the licensing officer why the licence should not be revoked.

(3) When the licensing officer has revoked a licence under subsection (1) he shall forthwith inform the person concerned by notice in writing of such revocation.

(4) The person whose licence has been revoked may, within 14 days of the receipt of the notice referred to in subsection (3), or such extended period of time as the Minister may allow, appeal in writing against the revocation to the Minister whose decision shall be final.

(5) An order of revocation shall not take effect until the expiration of a period of 14 days after the licensing officer has informed the licensee concerned of the order.

(6) If within that period the licensee concerned gives due notice of appeal to the Minister the order shall not take effect unless the order is confirmed by the Minister or the appeal is for any reason dismissed by the Minister.

Effect of revocation of licence.

11. —(1) Where an order of revocation becomes effective under section 10, the licensee concerned shall cease to carry on the business of a private investigator or a security guard agency, as the case may be.

(2) Subsection (1) shall not prejudice the enforcement by any person of any right or claim against the licensee concerned or by the licensee concerned of any right or claim against any person arising out of or concerning any matter or thing done prior to the revocation of the licence.

Employees of a private investigator.

12. —(1) A person who is the holder of a private investigator's licence may employ to assist him in his work of private investigator and in the conduct of that business as many persons as he may consider necessary and shall at all times during such employment be legally responsible for the good conduct in the business of each and every person so employed.

(2) A person who is the holder of a private investigator's licence shall not employ to assist him in his work of private investigator and in the conduct of that business any person —

(a) who has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude; or

(b) who is, in the opinion of the licensing officer, not a fit and proper person to be employed to assist in the work of a private investigator.

(3) A person whose application for a private investigator's licence has been refused shall not participate or be in any way concerned in the business of a licensed private investigator.

Employees of a security guard agency.

13. —(1) A person who is the holder of a security guard agency's licence may, in the conduct of his business, employ as many persons as he may consider necessary to be security guards and shall at all times during such employment be legally responsible for the good conduct in the business of each and every person so employed.

(2) A person who is the holder of a security guard agency's licence shall not employ as a security guard any person —

(a) who has been convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or moral turpitude; or

(b) who is, in opinion of the licensing officer, not a fit and proper person to be employed as a security guard in the business of a security guard agency.

(3) A person whose application for a security guard agency's licence has been refused shall not participate or be in any way concerned in the business of a licensed security guard agency.

Employees to submit statements.

14. —(1) No person shall be employed by a licensee to assist in the work of a private investigator or as a security guard until he has submitted to the licensing officer in the prescribed form a statement containing such personal particulars and other information as are prescribed.

(2) Any person who in the form submitted to the licensing officer pursuant to subsection (1) makes any statement which is not correct or furnishes any particular which is not correct or knowingly omits to furnish any particular which is required to be furnished shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

Identification papers.

15. —(1) Every licensee shall provide and issue to his employees, who are employed to assist in the work of a private investigator or as a security guard, identification papers in such form and containing such particulars as may be prescribed.

(2) Every person employed by a licensee to assist in the work of a private investigator or as a security guard shall at all times carry the identification paper issued by his employer and produce the identification papers for inspection when so required by the licensing officer or any police officer duly authorised by the licensing officer and shall surrender the identification papers to his employer when he ceases to be employed as such.

Unlicensed private investigator or security guard agency not to recover fees.

16. No person shall be entitled to bring any proceeding in any court to recover any commission, fee, gain or reward for any service done or performed by him as a private investigator or in the course of his business of a security guard agency unless he was the holder of a private investigator's licence or a security guard agency's licence, as the case may be, at the time of doing or performing such service.

Furnishing incorrect particulars in application.

17. Any person who in any application for a licence makes any statement which is not correct in any material particular shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$5,000.

Carrying truncheons, etc., in public places.

18. —(1) Any person who in any public place carries or has in his possession or under his control any truncheon, handcuffs, or such other weapon or equipment as may be from time to time specified by the Minister in a notification in the *Gazette*, otherwise than with lawful authority shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month or to both.

(2) A truncheon, handcuffs or such weapon or equipment as may be specified under subsection (1) shall be presumed to be carried with lawful authority if it is carried by a member of the Singapore Armed Forces or of the Singapore Police Force or of any visiting force lawfully present in Singapore under any law relating to visiting forces.

(3) The licensing officer may, in each case by an order in writing and subject to such conditions as he may impose, exempt any person or class of persons from subsection (1).

(4) Where any exemption given by the licensing officer pursuant to subsection (3) is subject to conditions imposed by the licensing officer, the exemption shall cease to be in force when any of the conditions is not complied with.

(5) For the purposes of this section, "public place" includes any premises or place to which the public has or is permitted to have access, whether on the invitation of the owners or occupiers thereof or on payment or otherwise.

Power to search premises.

19. The licensing officer, on being satisfied upon any information and after any further inquiry which he thinks necessary that there is good reason to believe that any place is used for the carrying on of the business of a private investigator or of a security guard agency by a person who is not the holder of a licence, may by warrant or writing under his hand authorise any person therein named or any police officer, with such assistance and by such force as is necessary, by day or by night, to enter or go to that place and to search the place and all persons found therein, and to seize all documents and things reasonably supposed to have been used or intended to be used in connection with the business of a private investigator or a security guard agency which are found in that place or on those persons, and also to detain all those persons until they and the place have been searched.

Power to arrest.

20. —(1) The licensing officer and any police officer duly authorised in writing in that behalf by the licensing officer may without warrant arrest any person whom he reasonably suspects to have committed an offence under this Act.

(2) The licensing officer and any police officer duly authorised in writing by the licensing officer arresting a person under subsection (1) may search such person and take

possession of all articles found upon him which there is reason to believe were used in connection with the offence:

Provided that no female shall be searched except by a female.

(3) Every person so arrested shall be taken to a police station.

Power to investigate.

21. In any case relating to the commission of an offence under this Act, the licensing officer and any police officer duly authorised in writing in that behalf by the licensing officer may exercise all or any of the special powers in relation to seizable offences given by the Criminal Procedure Code.

Cap. 68.

Powers of licensing officer.

22. The licensing officer and any police officer duly authorised in writing in that behalf by the licensing officer shall, for the purposes of the execution of this Act, have power to do all or any of the following:

(a) to enter, inspect and examine by day or by night the place of business of every licensee;

(b) to require the production of records, accounts and documents kept by a licensee and to inspect, examine and copy any of them;

(c) to make such inquiry as may be necessary to ascertain whether the provisions of this Act are complied with so far as regards any person employed by a licensee to assist in the work of a private investigator or as a security guard.

Obstruction of search, etc.

23. Any person who —

(a) refuses the licensing officer or any police officer authorised to enter or search, access to any place;

(b) assaults, obstructs, hinders or delays him in effecting any entrance which he is entitled to effect under this Act, or in the execution of any duty imposed or power conferred by this Act;

(c) fails to comply with any lawful demand of the licensing officer or a police officer in the execution of his duty under this Act; or

(d) refuses or neglects to give any information which may reasonably be required of him and which he has it in his power to give,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or to both.

Offence.

24. Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of this Act shall be guilty of an offence.

General penalty.

25. Any person who is guilty of an offence for which no penalty is expressly provided by this Act shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$2,000.

Liability of directors, partners, etc.

26. —(1) Where an offence under this Act has been committed by a company, any person, who at the time of the commission of the offence was a director, secretary, manager or other officer of the company or who was purporting to act in any such capacity, shall be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly unless he proves that the offence was committed without his consent or connivance and that he exercised such diligence to prevent the

commission of the offence as he ought to have exercised having regard to the nature of his function in that capacity and to all the circumstances.

(2) Any person who would have been guilty of an offence if anything had been done or omitted to be done by him personally shall be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to the same penalty if that thing had been done or omitted to be done by his partner, agent or servant in the course of partnership business or in the course of his employment, as the case may be, unless he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or consent and that he took all reasonable precautions to prevent the doing or omission to do such thing.

(3) Nothing in subsection (2) shall relieve any partner, agent or servant from any liability for an offence.

Power to make regulations.

27. The Minister may make regulations generally for the carrying out of the provisions of this Act and, without prejudice to such general power, may make regulations for all or any of the following purposes:

- (a) prescribing the information and documents to be furnished by an applicant for a licence;
- (b) the taking and recording of photographs and fingerprints of persons applying for a licence and of every person employed by a licensee;
- (c) prescribing the form of a licence or the identification papers issued pursuant to section 15;
- (d) prescribing the uniform, badge or emblem to be worn by the employees of a licensee;
- (e) prohibiting the use of any equipment and accoutrement by a licensee and his employees;
- (f) regulating the activities of a licensee and prescribing the manner in which the business of a licensee shall be conducted;
- (g) the exemption of any class of persons from the operation of this Act; and
- (h) providing for all matters stated or required in this Act to be prescribed.

Saving.

28. —(1) The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other written law.

(2) Nothing in this Act —

- (a) shall be construed as conferring on a licensee or his employees any of the powers which by any written law are conferred upon and exercisable by a police officer, customs officer, immigration officer, prison officer or any other public officer; and
- (b) shall authorise a licensee or his employees to do an act which is unlawful or illegal by virtue of any written law.