

singapore real estate guide

Comprehensive overview of market challenges, industry trends, government regulations, and commission structures



navigating the property market landscape

Since 2024, the Singapore real estate market has grown more complex due to the tightening of regulatory policies, increasing fraud risks, and evolving industry standards. Key market challenges over the past two years include:



money laundering risks

Over 60 agents implicated in recent investigations^[1]



license non-renewals

Increased scrutiny and revocations^[2]



rental scams

Rise in impersonation and fraud cases



regulatory changes

Mandatory 16 hours of annual agent training^[3]

To ensure compliance, agents, tenants, and landlords alike, must remain vigilant and conduct strict verification processes and exercise caution for rental transactions. Diligence, adherence to regulations, and implementing proactive measures are essential to successfully navigating the current market landscape.

real estate agents: why expertise matters

In Singapore's regulated real estate environment, engaging a qualified agent is a practical measure to reduce exposure to common transactional and compliance risks. Both tenants and landlords can reduce risk exposure by engaging a qualified agent.

potential risks

- **Tenants** may face legal or financial exposure due to misleading lease terms or incomplete documentation.
- **Landlords** may encounter disputes or compliance issues if tenant vetting and documentation are not properly managed.
- **Organizations** supporting employee relocations may be exposed to operational and compliance risks if agents do not meet regulatory standards.

scenario	potential risks
No Agent Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of knowledge in managing Singapore-specific leases • Incorrect documentation • Unfavorable lease terms • Deposit disputes
Unqualified Agent Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete property records • Lack of compliance oversight • Contract errors and penalties

Given these risks and a complex market, engaging a qualified agent is increasingly necessary in Singapore. From managing lease terms and verifying documentation, to ensuring compliance with evolving regulations, having professional representation will reduce a tenant's exposure to legal, financial, and operational issues.

singapore commission rules

On November 14, 2023, the Singapore Estate Agents Association (SEAA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 16 leading property agencies to adopt a Best Practice Guide for Co-Broking Commission, stating that from July 1, 2024^{[4][5]}, both landlords and tenants are expected to compensate their respective agents, aligning incentives, and reducing conflicts of interest.

As of July 2025, 79 agencies representing approximately 90% of registered agents have signed the MOU and follow these commission guidelines.^[6] These guidelines are now widely accepted as the industry standard and are intended to protect both clients and agents by formalizing expectations upfront.

assuring compliance and service

Cartus maintains procedures that align with regulatory expectations, supporting compliance and ethical standards in real estate transactions. These include internal controls, risk assessments, and documentation protocols designed to identify irregularities, promote transparency, and support responsible practices.

market knowledge

- ✓ Stays well-versed in market conditions to guide tenant decisions
- ✓ Offers tailored recommendations based on client needs

negotiation expertise

- ✓ Ensures lease terms are reasonable and aligned with market practices
- ✓ Performs comparable rental evidence analysis

service quality assurance

- ✓ Ensures business continuity through agent coverage
- ✓ Cartus' global supply chain management team conducts quarterly performance reviews

data security

- ✓ Implements layered data protection
- ✓ Ensures robust privacy by design in software development
- ✓ Cartus' global supply chain management team conducts regular data security reviews

efficiency & support

- ✓ Streamlines lease signing process
- ✓ Manages communication, negotiation, documentation, and stamping process

regulatory compliance

- ✓ Conduct anti-money laundering (AML) and sanctions screening
- ✓ Complies to preventing money laundering, proliferation financing, and terrorism financing (PMLPFTF)^{[7][8]} regulations, customer due diligence (CDD) protocols, and identity verification procedures

ongoing compliance management

Cartus is committed to upholding the highest standards of compliance and ethics. Internal controls, risk assessments, and documentation protocols are designed to detect and deter financial crimes, ensure transparency, and protect all parties involved.

Tenants and landlords alike are required to submit complete and accurate documentation prior to any transaction, in accordance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations. A structured guidance is provided to help meet these requirements efficiently and consistently.

references

- [1] [Property agents caught up in billion-dollar money laundering case may see commissions 'clawed back': Lawyers | The Straits Times](#)
- [2] [License of property agent who brokered S\\$26 million penthouse deal not renewed, Property - THE BUSINESS TIMES](#)
- [3] [Training requirement for property agents to renew licence to be raised from October 2025 | The Straits Times](#)
- [4] [Property agents ink new pact to prevent being 'blocked' from co-broking and conflict of interest | The Straits Times](#)
- [5] [Property agencies ink MOU to adopt co-broking best practices, resolve disputes , Property - THE BUSINESS TIMES](#)
- [6] [Best Practice Guide for Co-broking Commission - Singapore Estate Agents Association](#)
- [7] [Guide on Estate Agents \(PMLPFTF\)](#)
- [8] [Anti-money laundering regulation deadline extension](#)

To find out more about Cartus' real estate and destination services or current trends in the Singapore property market, please email cartussolutions@cartus.com.