



# **THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

## **CENSUS ACT**

### **(CHAPTER 35)**

**(Original Enactment: Act 47 of 1973)**

**REVISED EDITION 2013**

**(31st October 2013)**

*Prepared and Published by*

THE LAW REVISION COMMISSION  
UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF  
THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LAWS ACT (CHAPTER 275)

PRINTED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTER, SINGAPORE

2013

# Census Act

## ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

### Section

1. Short title
  2. Interpretation
  3. Power to direct census to be taken
  4. Appointment of Superintendent of Census
  5. Appointment of Deputy Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents of Census
  6. Appointment of supervisors and enumerators
  7. Census officers
  8. Occupier to allow access and permit affixing of numbers
  9. Questions by census officers
  10. Delivery and filling in of schedule
  11. Enumeration of persons in public institutions, hotels, etc.
  12. Enumeration of naval, military and air forces, travellers, etc.
  13. Request for information from competent authorities
  14. Certain employers may be required to be enumerators
  15. Government employees to assist in taking census
  16. Schedules and returns to be delivered by enumerator to supervisor and forwarded to Superintendent
  17. Release of census information
  18. Disclosure of census information
  19. Offences by census officers
  20. General offences
  21. Impersonation of census officer
  22. Consent of Public Prosecutor
  23. Census records not admissible in evidence
  24. Rules
  25. Amendment of Schedules
  26. Transitional provision
- First Schedule — Competent authorities  
Second Schedule
-

An Act relating to the taking of a census in Singapore from time to time.

[7th September 1973]

### **Short title**

1. This Act may be cited as the Census Act.

### **Interpretation**

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

“census officer” means any person appointed under section 4, 5 or 6;

“competent authority” means any public officer or any statutory body established by or under any written law or any officer thereof, being under any obligation imposed by any written law to observe secrecy in respect of any particulars or information obtained by the public officer or the statutory body or officer thereof in the administration of that written law;

“dwelling-house” means a building, erection or tenement, whether permanent or temporary, which is wholly or partly used for the purpose of human habitation and includes any ship or vessel in Singapore;

“schedule” means a schedule in the prescribed form in which are, or are to be, entered the prescribed particulars required for the purposes of a census;

“Superintendent” means the Superintendent of Census appointed under section 4.

[20/86; 8/90]

### **Power to direct census to be taken**

3. The Minister may by notification in the *Gazette* direct that a census be taken throughout Singapore or of any specified area of Singapore of the population, housing, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, trade, labour, industry, building and construction, commerce, education, health and family planning, transportation or

such other matters as he may consider necessary or desirable and may by the same or a different notification prescribe —

- (a) the date on which the census is to be taken; and
- (b) the particulars to be obtained for the purposes of the census.

### **Appointment of Superintendent of Census**

4.—(1) The Minister may appoint an officer, to be called the Superintendent of Census, to supervise the taking of any census directed to be taken under the provisions of this Act.

(2) The Superintendent, in the exercise of his powers and in the performance of his duties under this Act or any rules made thereunder, shall be subject to the control of, and shall comply with any directions given by, the Minister.

### **Appointment of Deputy Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents of Census**

5. The Minister may appoint for specified areas such Deputy Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents of Census, and assign such functions to them as he considers necessary for the purpose of any census directed to be taken under the provisions of this Act.

### **Appointment of supervisors and enumerators**

6. The Superintendent may, by writing under his hand, appoint such supervisors, enumerators and other census officers as he considers necessary to supervise or take or aid in the taking of a census within any specified area, and may at any time revoke those appointments.

### **Census officers**

7.—(1) Every census officer shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of the Penal Code (Cap. 224).

(2) Every census officer appointed under section 6 shall carry with him at all times when on duty the letter of appointment furnished to him under that section and shall produce the letter for inspection by any person who may in good faith question his authority as a census officer.

**Occupier to allow access and permit affixing of numbers**

8. Every person occupying any dwelling-house or other premises shall allow any census officer such access thereto as may be necessary for the purposes of a census, and shall allow him to paint, mark or affix on or to the dwelling-house or other premises such letters, marks or numbers as the Superintendent considers necessary for the purposes of the census and to make any alterations to those letters, marks or numbers.

**Questions by census officers**

9. Every census officer may ask all persons within the limits of the area for which he is appointed such questions as may be necessary to obtain the information required for the purposes of the census.

**Delivery and filling in of schedule**

10.—(1) A census officer may leave at any dwelling-house or other premises within the area for which he is appointed a schedule to be filled in by the occupier of the dwelling-house or other premises or of any specified part thereof.

(2) The occupier shall, within the time mentioned therein, fill in the schedule, or cause it to be filled in, in the manner prescribed and shall thereafter deliver the schedule to an enumerator or a supervisor appointed for the area in which the dwelling-house or other premises is situated or to any other person as the Superintendent may direct.

(3) If the occupier is unable either to fill in the schedule or cause it to be filled in, in the manner prescribed, he shall preserve it in the condition in which he received it and shall deliver it to the enumerator, supervisor or other person, as the case may be, who shall, after exercising the powers conferred upon him by section 9, fill in the schedule in the manner prescribed.

(4) At any time before or within one year (or such longer period as may be prescribed) after the date prescribed for the taking of a census, if directed by the Superintendent to do so, any census officer may visit any dwelling-house or other premises within the area for which he is appointed, for the purpose of checking any information obtained or of obtaining further information for the purposes of the census, and may,

if satisfied that a schedule is incorrect in any material particular, make any necessary correction thereon.

**Enumeration of persons in public institutions, hotels, etc.**

**11.—**(1) The Superintendent may deliver or cause to be delivered to —

- (a) every person in charge of a hospital, workhouse, prison, police station, reformatory or lock-up, or of any public, charitable, religious or educational institution; and
- (b) every keeper, secretary or manager of a hotel, boarding-house, lodging-house or club,

a schedule to be filled in in respect of the persons who at the time of the taking of a census are in or upon such premises.

(2) The person to whom the schedule is delivered shall fill in the schedule or cause it to be filled in, to the best of his knowledge and belief, so far as regards the inmates of the hospital, workhouse, prison, police station, reformatory, lock-up, or public, charitable, religious or educational institution or the hotel, boarding-house, lodging-house or club within the time mentioned therein, and shall sign his name thereto, and when so required shall deliver the schedule so filled in and signed to an enumerator or a supervisor appointed for the area within which the building is situated or to such other person as the Superintendent may direct.

**Enumeration of naval, military and air forces, travellers, etc.**

**12.** The Superintendent shall obtain by such ways and means as appear to him best adapted for the purposes the information required by this Act or the rules made thereunder with respect to —

- (a) any naval, military or air forces; and
- (b) all persons who during the time appointed for the taking of the census were not living in any house, of which account is to be taken by the census officers as aforesaid,

and shall include that information in the abstracts to be made by him as provided in this Act.

**Request for information from competent authorities**

**13.**—(1) The Superintendent may, for the purposes of a census, in writing direct any competent authority specified in the first column of the First Schedule to furnish or supply to him any particulars or information obtained by the competent authority under the written law specified in the second column of the First Schedule and, notwithstanding the provisions of any written law, the competent authority shall furnish and supply those particulars and information within such time as may be agreed to by the Superintendent and the competent authority.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act or any other written law, no person shall be guilty of an offence under this Act or that other written law or of any breach of confidence by virtue merely of his disclosing any particulars or information to the Superintendent pursuant to any direction under subsection (1).

(3) Subsection (1) shall not apply to any particulars or information obtained under any written law relating to taxation or administered by the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

[8/90]

**Certain employers may be required to be enumerators**

**14.**—(1) Upon receipt of a written requisition in the prescribed form signed by the Superintendent, every employer of —

- (a) employees who reside in any factory or workshop; or
- (b) such other class or description of employees as the Minister may by notification in the *Gazette* specify,

shall be bound to act as an enumerator in respect of all those employees.

(2) Every such employer shall cause to be filled in in respect of his employees any schedule delivered to him for the purpose, and shall deliver the schedule filled in to the best of his knowledge and belief to the supervisor appointed for the area within which the premises are situated or to such other person as the Superintendent may direct.

**Government employees to assist in taking census**

**15.** All Government employees shall be bound to assist the work of taking the census when so required by the Superintendent.

**Schedules and returns to be delivered by enumerator to supervisor and forwarded to Superintendent**

**16.** Every enumerator shall deliver to the supervisor of the area for which he is appointed all schedules and all such returns as may be required by the Superintendent on the day or days to be appointed for that purpose by the Deputy or Assistant Superintendent for the district or area, and it shall be the duty of the supervisor to verify them and to transmit them forthwith to the Deputy or Assistant Superintendent who shall, upon receipt of the schedules and returns, immediately forward them to the Superintendent.

**Release of census information**

**17.—(1)** The Superintendent shall, upon receipt of the schedules and returns forwarded pursuant to this Act, cause reports to be made of them, and those reports shall be printed and published for general information. Prior to and after the publication of those reports, abstracts and special tabulations may be released for general information.

(2) In any report or abstract prepared under subsection (1), the information compiled in the report or abstract shall be so arranged as to prevent any particulars contained therein from being identified as being particulars relating to any individual person except with the previous consent in writing of that person.

(3) No particulars or information or any part thereof relating to any individual person obtained under the provisions of this Act shall, without the previous consent in writing of that person, be disclosed except —

- (a) compiled statistics on the operation of an industry may be published irrespective of the number of persons engaged in that industry unless the industry is exempted by the Minister responsible for the Government department or ministry in possession of such particulars from having its data published;



- (b) where the disclosure can be made without identifying the individual person and an appropriate time, in the opinion of the Minister responsible for the Government department or ministry in possession of such particulars, has elapsed;
- (c) for the purposes of any proceedings for an offence under this Act or any report of those proceedings; or
- (d) information of a general nature which could be obtained from other sources.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Minister responsible for the Government department or ministry in possession of such particulars to have due regard to the circumstances of various trades and industries and, in particular, to the importance of avoiding the disclosure in any return of any trade secret or of trading profit, or of any other information the disclosure of which would be likely to tend to the prejudice of the person furnishing the return.

### **Disclosure of census information**

**18.**—(1) Notwithstanding section 17, the Superintendent or any census officer authorised by him in writing may, on the written request of a responsible officer of any public authority specified in the Second Schedule, disclose on a confidential basis any particulars or information relating to any individual person obtained under the provisions of this Act to the public authority if —

- (a) those particulars or information could also have been obtained by the public authority under any other written law; and
- (b) in any case where the particulars or information have been obtained from a competent authority under section 13, that competent authority consents in writing to such disclosure.

(2) The Superintendent or any census officer authorised by him in writing shall not be guilty of any offence under any written law or of any breach of confidence by virtue merely of the Superintendent or the census officer (as the case may be) disclosing any particulars or information in accordance with this section.

(3) No person employed in or by a public authority to which any particulars or information have been disclosed under subsection (1) shall use any such particulars or information for the purpose of enforcing any obligation or liability applicable under any written law.

(4) Any person employed in or by a public authority to which any particulars or information have been disclosed under subsection (1) who without the written approval of the Superintendent, or in breach of any condition of such approval, discloses any such particulars or information 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.

(5) In this section —

“public authority” includes a Government department or ministry;

“responsible officer”, in relation to a public authority, means an officer designated by the Minister by notification in the *Gazette* as a responsible officer thereof for the purposes of this section.

[8/90]

### **Offences by census officers**

**19.** Any census officer or any person employed by the Superintendent in the preparation of reports and abstracts who —

- (a) without sufficient cause, refuses or neglects to comply with any instructions or requisitions addressed to him by the Superintendent, or fails to use reasonable diligence in performing any duty imposed on him;
- (b) wilfully asks an offensive or improper question;
- (c) knowingly makes any false return;
- (d) asks, receives or takes from any person other than an authorised officer of Government any payment or reward; or
- (e) without lawful authority publishes or communicates to any person any information acquired by him in the course of his duty or employment,

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.

[8/90]

### **General offences**

**20.** Any person who —

- (a) refuses to answer, to the best of his knowledge and belief, any question asked of him by a census officer which is necessary to obtain any information required for the purposes of a census;
- (b) knowingly makes or causes to be made, in any form or document to be filled in for the purpose of this Act or in answer to any question asked under the authority of this Act, any statement which is untrue in any material particular;
- (c) hinders or obstructs a census officer in the performance of his duties;
- (d) removes, obliterates, alters or destroys before the expiry of 6 months from the time of taking the census, any letters, marks or numbers which have been painted, marked or affixed for the purposes of the census;
- (e) refuses or neglects to comply with any of the provisions of this Act or any rules made thereunder; or
- (f) having possession of any information which to his knowledge has been disclosed in contravention of the provisions of this Act, publishes or communicates that information to any other person,

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.

[8/90]

**Impersonation of census officer**

**21.** Any person who impersonates a census officer shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months.

**Consent of Public Prosecutor**

**22.** No prosecution shall be instituted under this Act without the consent of the Public Prosecutor.

[15/2010]

**Census records not admissible in evidence**

**23.** No entry in any book, register or record made by a census officer or by any other person in the discharge of his duty under this Act shall be admissible as evidence in any civil or criminal proceedings, except in a prosecution instituted under this Act in respect of any entry against the person who made it or caused it to be made.

**Rules**

**24.** The Minister may make rules —

- (a) to prescribe the duties of census officers;
- (b) to prescribe the persons from whom, and the mode in which, information shall be obtained for the purposes of a census;
- (c) to prescribe the forms of schedules and other documents to be used for the purposes of this Act and any matter or thing which by this Act may or is required to be prescribed; and
- (d) generally to give effect to the provisions and purposes of this Act.

**Amendment of Schedules**

**25.—**(1) Subject to subsection (2), the Minister may by notification in the *Gazette* amend the First or Second Schedule.

(2) The Minister shall not insert or delete and substitute any written law in the First Schedule without the approval of the Minister responsible for the competent authority administering that written law.

[8/90]

**Transitional provision**

**26.** All information collected pursuant to the repealed Census Act (Cap. 297, 1970 Ed.) shall be subject to the same safeguards relating to disclosure as are provided by this Act as if that information was collected under this Act.

**FIRST SCHEDULE**

Section 13

**COMPETENT AUTHORITIES***First column**Second column*

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Central Provident Fund Board | Central Provident Fund Act (Cap. 36). |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

*[8/90]***SECOND SCHEDULE**

Section 18

1. Central Provident Fund Board.

*[8/90]*

## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

### CENSUS ACT (CHAPTER 35)

This Legislative History is provided for the convenience of users of the Census Act. It is not part of the Act.

#### **1. Act 47 of 1973 — Census Act 1973**

Date of First Reading	: 11 July 1973 (Bill No. 40/73 published on 14 July 1973)
Date of Second and Third Readings	: 26 July 1973
Date of commencement	: 7 September 1973

#### **2. Act 20 of 1986 — Census (Amendment) Act 1986**

Date of First Reading	: 5 May 1986 (Bill No. 11/86 published on 6 May 1986)
Date of Second and Third Readings	: 29 July 1986
Date of commencement	: 29 August 1986

#### **3. Act 8 of 1990 — Census (Amendment) Act 1990**

Date of First Reading	: 2 March 1990 (Bill No. 10/90 published on 3 March 1990)
Date of Second and Third Readings	: 28 March 1990
Date of commencement	: 6 April 1990

#### **4. 1991 Revised Edition — Census Act (Chapter 35)**

Date of operation	: 1 March 1991
-------------------	----------------

#### **5. Act 15 of 2010 — Criminal Procedure Code 2010**

(Consequential amendments made to Act by)

Date of First Reading	: 26 April 2010 (Bill No. 11/2010 published on 26 April 2010)
Date of Second and Third Readings	: 19 May 2010
Date of commencement	: 2 January 2011