

# SINGAPORE

*A Guide  
for Canadian Exporters*

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# SINGAPORE

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STORAGE

## A Guide for Canadian Exporters

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# I. THE COUNTRY

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The Republic of Singapore is a city-state situated at the tip of the Malay Peninsula. Consisting of the island of Singapore and approximately 54 smaller islands, the total area of Singapore is about 622 km<sup>2</sup> (240 square miles), slightly less than metropolitan Toronto. Linked with the Malay Peninsula to the north by a causeway across the Johore Straits, Singapore is close to the islands of Indonesia to the south and east, and is a hub of international air and sea traffic in Asia.

Singapore's central position in Southeast Asia is augmented by its natural harbour, making it the world's second busiest port. In addition, Singapore has become the world's third largest oil refining centre. As an important centre of banking, insurance, and commerce, it is a base for many international corporations.

## History and Government

Singapore was founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles of the British East India Company to control the Far East shipping route and to serve as a way station for ships involved in British-China trade. In 1946, Singapore became a British Crown Colony. Achieving internal self government in 1959, it became a state of the newly independent Malay Federation in 1963. However, on August 9, 1965, Singapore seceded to become an independent republic within the Commonwealth.

Singapore is a parliamentary republic headed by a president and governed by a prime minister and Cabinet drawn from the 79-member unicameral legislature in which the People's Action Party (PAP) currently holds 77 seats. The PAP won power in 1959 and its leader, Lee Kuan Yew, has been prime minister since that time. The country follows a foreign policy of nonalignment and free trade. Singapore is also a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

## The People

Singapore's population is estimated at 2.6 million (1986). The country is a multiracial secular state with tolerance of all religions. The population is predominantly Chinese (77 per cent), with the other major

groups being Malay (15 per cent), Indian (6.5 per cent), and European (1.5 per cent). There are four official languages: Malay, Chinese (Mandarin), English, and Tamil. The national language of Singapore is Malay, but English prevails as the language of government and business. The population of Singapore is young, with approximately 34.4 per cent under the age of 20. Of the total population, approximately 76 per cent over 10 years of age is literate.

## Local Customs

Smoking is discouraged and prohibited in public places such as cinemas, public transport, elevators, and government hospitals. There is a \$500 (S) fine for littering, and it is an offence to jaywalk.

## General Information

**Climate.** Singapore's climate is tropical with little seasonal variation. The average temperatures range from a maximum of 30.6°C (87°F) during the day to a minimum of 24° C (75°F) at night. There is no distinct wet or dry season in Singapore: rain falls throughout the year. The highest average monthly rainfall is from November to January while the month of July has the lowest average rainfall.

**Holidays.** The periods immediately before and after the Chinese New Year are usually very busy weeks in Singapore and are not a good time to visit. The following is a list of official public holidays in Singapore:

**New Year's Day** — *January 1*

**Chinese New Year** — *Between late January and mid-February\*. Officially two days but some companies give up to five days.*

**Good Friday** — *March-April\**

**Labour Day (Singapore)** — *May 1*

**Vesak Day (Buddhist)** — *Usually in May\**

**National Day** — *August 9*

**Hari Raya Puasa (Muslim)** — *August-October*

**Deepavaili (Hindu)** — *October-November\**

**Hari Raya Haji (Muslim)** — *October-December\**

**Christmas Day** — *December 25*

\* Date set by lunar calendar.

The Canadian High Commission in Singapore observes 11 statutory holidays annually selected from Canadian and local holidays, varying from year to year.

**Electricity.** The supply of electricity for domestic use is 230 V, single phase, 50 cycles AC. For industrial purposes the supply is 415 V, three phases, 50 cycles AC. There is no uniformity of plug design.

**Measures.** In Singapore the metric system is now officially in use. As the change is relatively recent, the imperial system is still widely used.

**Post, Telex, Telephone.** Air mail from Canada may take from 10 to 20 days to reach Singapore. International telex, telegraph, and telephone facilities are available 24 hours a day.

## Business Practices

Singapore time is 13 hours ahead of Canadian Eastern Standard Time.

**Business Hours.** Business hours in Singapore are generally from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for commercial enterprises and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for industrial enterprises, with most places normally closing for lunch between 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. On Saturday most businesses are open from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. It is advisable to telephone the government department or the company you intend to visit and check their business hours. The Canadian High Commission is open from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

**Dress.** For men, a shirt and tie will usually suffice for daytime office calls. Some of the better hotels and restaurants require that a jacket be worn at dinner. There is a need for frequent changes of clothing because of the tropical climate. For ladies, summer clothes (containing at least 65 per cent cotton) are advisable.

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## II. ECONOMIC INFORMATION

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Singapore's development over the past two decades has been based on economic diversification with government intervention. Long-term policies are aimed at maintaining a high growth rate through export-oriented industrialization and, concurrently, striving to be a centre for finance, insurance, tourism and technological capability. Economic policies, built around the 1965-1970 five-year development plan, and the 1971-1980 ten-year economic strategy have responded to changing domestic economic conditions and guarded the economy from fluctuations in external demand, protectionist pressures and increasing competition from labour-intensive industries of neighbouring countries.

In 1979, Singapore's "Second Industrial Revolution" was formalized as an economic policy centered on restructuring Singapore's production and increasing labour productivity in all sectors. Based on the premise that capital-intensive, technologically sophisticated products are likely to encounter a lesser degree of protectionist pressure than labour-intensive products, Singapore's manufacturing and export sectors were geared towards high-technology products. Concurrently, the government's new policy for workers emphasized higher wages, upgrading and training the work force, and increasing labour productivity.

Singapore's budgets for the period 1981-1984 continued previous economic restructuring trends involving increased government spending on education, worker training, defence, and developing the industrial and commercial infrastructure. Although in previous budgets, recurrent expenditures exceeded development expenditures, the opposite was true in the budgets for 1981-1984. Historically, Singapore's economy has been service-oriented, with the manufacturing sector recording the highest growth rate in the Eighties. The transport and communications sector as well as financial and business services also demonstrated rapid rates of growth in the Eighties.

In 1985, GDP in real terms fell by 1.8 per cent, after growing at an average annual rate of 10 per cent since 1964. This downturn was the result of the confluence of

a number of trends affecting both external and domestic demand, and no matter how explicable in hindsight, it was a shock to Singapore's system — particularly since Singapore was the only "Asian minidragon" to register a GDP decline. Key industries, such as oil and marine-related industries, were adversely affected by a structural change in global supply and demand. The international competitiveness and profitability of Singapore companies was eroded by rapidly rising operating costs, particularly labour costs. Fiscal policies were partially responsible for a decrease in domestic demand, which was aggravated by a spectacular drop in construction activities following the completion of major private sector projects and the scaling down of the public housing program.

The only bright spot in the otherwise gloomy 1985 picture was in the international services sector. This sector, which includes transport, communications, banking, and financial and business services, was largely responsible for propelling GDP growth in the first half of the Eighties. Taken as a whole, these services grew by about 14 per cent annually from 1979-1984, and by 1984 accounted for 33 per cent of GDP. Growth for 1985 was 3 per cent.

Faced with such a dismal picture, the government set up an Economic Committee to review the economy and recommend corrective action. The Committee's report, *The Singapore Economy: New Directions*, was issued in February, 1986.

### *The Economy — 1986*

To restore vitality to the ailing economy, the Economic Committee recommended some substantial changes, such as the following, which are now in effect:

1. Reducing tax revenues in 1986 by more than \$750 million (Cdn), through, among other things, a reduction in the corporate tax rate from 40 per cent to 33 per cent and a reduction in the top marginal rate for personal tax to 30 per cent.
2. Granting an accelerated initial capital depreciation allowance of 100 per cent in certain cases, or an annual allowance of 33.3 per cent for three years in other cases.
3. Exempting the foreign income of operational headquarters and regional holding companies located in

Singapore from taxation, and allowing a tax-exempt flow-through to shareholders.

4. Exempting from taxation up to 90 per cent of the income earned through the export of qualifying services, such as consultancy, management, construction, technical and engineering services.
5. Allowing 20 per cent of corporate taxable income to be held as a research and development reserve which will be tax-exempt if spent within three years.
6. Reducing by 12 per cent the wage costs of all employers through a reduction in mandatory pension scheme contributions.
7. Encouraging unions and employers to negotiate for no increase in overall wage levels in 1986 and 1987, with the public sector taking the lead.
8. Reducing the costs of doing business in Singapore through statutory board charges (e.g., postal services, telecommunication charges, industrial land and facilities rentals).

As a result of these decisive measures and an increase in external demand caused by improving economic conditions in the U.S. (Singapore's most important trading partner) and other western countries, Singapore's economic recovery in 1986 was more rapid and stronger than expected. After four consecutive quarters of contraction, real GDP growth turned positive in the second quarter of 1986 and strengthened thereafter. For 1986 as a whole, the economy expanded by 1.9 per cent, in contrast with earlier expectations of negative or "no" growth. The Development Bank of Singapore predicts that 1987 prospects are good with a moderate but sustained improvement in overall economic performance expected.

In the longer term, Singapore's economy will have to adjust to the increasingly restrictive policies of its regional neighbours, and to the prospect of a more protectionist international trade regime. Domestically, there are long-term adjustments required in the maritime and petroleum industries to counter a worldwide glut in both sectors. The massive oversupply of new buildings will take years to work off, continuing to depress the construction industry. Although Singapore's high wage policy has ended, average wage costs are still higher than those in the other "minidragons" — Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong.

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# III. BUSINESS INFORMATION

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## Sources of Financing

To further Canadian export development objectives, two federal trade promotional programs are available:

- 1) the **Promotional Projects Program (PPP)**, through which the Department of External Affairs plans and implements promotional projects abroad; and
- 2) the **Program for Export Market Development (PEMD)**, through which repayable loans are made to individual companies to cover costs in developing export business that otherwise might not be undertaken.

Through the PPP, Canadian trade fairs abroad, trade missions, and trade visits are initiated, organized, and implemented by the department. These activities range from participating in international trade fairs and solo shows to staging in-store promotions abroad, as well as sponsoring foreign visits to Canada to stimulate the sale of Canadian products in various export markets.

In contrast to PPP efforts, proposals under PEMD are made by Canadian industry rather than government. PEMD is made up of several sections, each of which is designed to support a particular phase of market development, including preparing project proposals, identifying markets, participating in trade fairs and sponsoring incoming buyers. In all sections of the program, companies are encouraged to develop sustained export markets for their products. For details see the PEMD brochure.

For further information regarding both the PPP and the PEMD programs, please contact the Asia Pacific South Trade Development Division, of the Department of External Affairs.

The **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**, under its Industrial Co-operation Program, provides direct support for Canadian companies to investigate industrial co-operation opportunities in developing countries. The program funds proposals by Canadian investors for joint ventures, licensing agreements,

management contracts, or other commercial undertakings. For more information contact:

Director General  
Industrial Co-operation Division  
Canadian International Development Agency  
200 promenade du Portage  
Hull, Quebec  
K1A 0G4

Tel: (819) 997-0560

The **Export Development Corporation (EDC)**, whose purpose is to encourage, facilitate, and develop Canadian export trade, provides credit assistance to exporters to allow them to compete in international markets. For further information on EDC services contact:

Export Development Corporation  
Head Office  
151 O'Connor Street  
P.O. Box 655  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1P 5T9

Tel: (613) 598-2500

## **Marketing Information**

### **Representation**

Singapore, as well as being an expanding market in its own right, is a springboard for trade with other southeast Asian countries, and in particular, the other five members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Singapore's central location in the region, its excellent regional and international transportation and communications links, and finally, increased opportunities arising from closer economic co-operation among ASEAN countries has enhanced the nation's attractiveness as an offshore export base or regional headquarters site. Canadian firms considering the regional market as a long-term possibility for their product or service should carefully choose the trading method implemented for domestic as well as regional marketing. Canadian companies are therefore urged to investigate, or have the High Commission investigate, a potential agent's effectiveness in the neighbouring countries.

Canadian exporters to Singapore may employ a number of trading methods. Exports may be handled through an established trading firm with branches in Singapore and throughout Singapore's marketing area or, if a substantial volume is involved, they may establish a branch office. The majority of Canadian firms, however, engage a Singapore agent.

The strength of the Canadian company and its products will depend much on the competence, credibility, and image of the local representative. The key to securing sustained business in local and regional markets is ensuring that the chosen representative is both knowledgeable about your product and familiar with the business practices in the particular market or sector. It is often necessary to rely on the agent to arrange appointments with appropriate local business representatives as well as to process necessary documents through official channels.

Experienced Canadian exporters have found that business development requires positive initial contacts, the establishment of legitimacy, and patience. Frequent visits to Singapore will enable you to maintain contacts and legitimacy while concurrently supporting the efforts of your representative. In addition, technical support through regular training sessions in the latest developments and innovations as they relate to your product is of paramount importance to your agent as well as your product's credibility in the market.

The selection of an agent should be approached with some caution. There is no agency law in Singapore: agreements between agents and their principals are governed by the normal law of contract. It may be best to appoint a representative for a one-year trial period, the appointment to be confirmed if performance is satisfactory. Detailed current credit reports of the kind available in Canada are not yet available in Singapore. The Canadian High Commission in Singapore can, however, provide a status report on the suitability of a local firm as an agent, from which its credit-worthiness may be judged. Such reports are frequently based on first-hand information obtained by a credit agency and take several weeks to compile. Costs incurred by such a search when undertaken by a referral company are billed to the Canadian company.

Bear in mind that your chosen agent's first language may not be English, however well he or she speaks it.

Taking into account differences in culture and traditions, the use of English in Singapore varies from its use in Canada. Products and services should, therefore, be described in as concrete terms as possible. Abstractions, particularly descriptive terms such as "good", should be avoided as they often mean something different to a Singaporean than to a Canadian.

## Singapore's Import Regulations

Most goods are permitted into Singapore under an open general licence without a specific validated licence or prior permission. Certain commodities including rice, sugar, certain air-conditioning machines, chlorine, some medicinal products, and motor vehicles, as well as goods originating in Albania, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Laos, Vietnam, South Africa, and the People's Republic of Mongolia, are subject to specific import licensing. Special permits from the relevant Singapore government department must be obtained for goods such as animals and plants, certain chemicals, tobacco and cigarettes, liquor and petroleum. Pharmaceuticals and chemicals, food products, arms and explosives, and a number of other goods require additional endorsement from the appropriate safety, health, or environmental authority. Finally, the import of fire-crackers, cigarette lighters in the shape of a gun, and play currency notes and coins is prohibited.

Singapore historically has been an entrepôt with duties levied on only a few goods for revenue purposes. Out of 2 200 items listed in the trade classification, approximately 8 per cent are subject to import duty. These items are alcoholic beverages, tobacco and petroleum products, clothing, certain food products, cosmetics, tires, cars, air conditioners, television sets, and a few other goods.

The Singapore system of tariffs is based on the Customs Co-operation Council Nomenclature. Approximately two fifths of the duties are levied on a percentage basis and two fifths on an *ad valorem* basis, depending on which is higher. *Ad valorem*, based on the Singapore customs open-market value, is the c.i.f. value of goods plus cost (1 per cent of c.i.f. value to cover handling and most other incidental expenses) for imports directly from manufacturers or suppliers, or c.i.f. value plus cost and agent commission for imports made through an agent.

**Samples.** Samples of no commercial value are admitted duty free. In the event of samples of value, exporters should inquire as to the customs regulations with the Controller and Registrar of Imports and Exports in Singapore.

Usually, dutiable samples may be imported by commercial travellers under bond or under deposit of duty. These deposits are subsequently refunded when the goods are re-exported. Catalogues, price lists, and trade notices are admitted duty-free, provided that they meet certain government provisions. Films and video tapes are subject to censorship and will be seized by Customs. The High Commission can expedite the censoring procedure.

**Labelling.** Labels, specifying the country of origin, are required on shipments to Singapore of food, drugs, liquor, paints, and solvents. Labelling regulations concerning constituents, weights, measures, description of contents, lettering, pictorial representation, and defined standards vary according to the particular product. Remember that the external packing of all shipments must be able to withstand Singapore's hot and humid climate.

## Documentation Required When Shipping Goods to Singapore

**Bill of Lading.** It should show name of shipper, consignee, and vessel; exporter's mark and packages; and description of the goods. In addition to weight in pounds and measurements in cubic feet, weight and measurements must be given in metric units. Also include port of destination, listing of freight and other cargoes, number of bills of lading in a full set, and the date and signature of the carrier's official acknowledgment of receipt of goods on board. The information should correspond with that shown on invoices and packages.

**Packing List.** A packing list is required.

**Certificate of Origin.** Two copies of a separate certificate of origin are required in the following instances: goods for which Commonwealth status is claimed; goods which customs officials have reason to believe may be imported to evade anti-dumping duties; goods

which might be considered of South African origin; and, for banking purposes only, when dollar exchange is supplied by local control authorities. Consular legalization is not required. The Control of Imports and Exports Act is administered by the Department of Trade, Ministry of Trade and Industry. Under the Act, there is no requirement that products be marked with the country of origin.

**Commercial Invoice.** Four copies should be sent under separate cover to the consignee in Singapore; the original must be submitted to customs authorities. No special form is required, but the invoice must be signed by an authority of the firm and must show a proper description of the goods, quantity and weight in metric units, f.o.b. and c.i.f. value, country of origin, name and number of the carrier vessel or aircraft, indent/contract note reference, invoice number, any commission or discount.

## Exchange Controls

There have been no exchange controls in Singapore since June 1, 1978. All payments, remittances, or capital transfers in any currency and to any country may be transacted without exchange control approval from the Monetary Authority of Singapore. However, a few controls do apply to banks operating in Singapore.

## Shipping Services from Canada to Singapore

### *From Western Canadian Ports*

**American President Lines** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 26 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, refrigerated cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented in Canada by American President Lines Canada Limited in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

**EAC Lines** schedules two sailings per month from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 25 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, ventilated cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented in Canada by Johnson, Walton Steamship Limited in Vancouver and Robert Reford Incorporated in Toronto and Montreal.

**Hapag Lloyd** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 28 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, refrigerated cargo, ventilated cargo, bulk liquids and container cargo is available. The line is represented in British Columbia by Balfour Guthrie Marine in Vancouver.

**Korea Shipping Corporation** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 30 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, ventilated cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Nootka's Shipping International Limited in Vancouver.

**Neptune Orient Lines Limited** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 31 days. Space accommodation for general cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Universal Cargo Services Incorporated in Montreal.

**Orient Overseas Container Line** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 30 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, ventilated cargo and FCL refrigerated cargo is available. The line is represented by Manchester Liner Services (Canada) Incorporated.

**Sealand** schedules weekly sailings from Vancouver to Singapore. The transit time is about 29 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, ventilated cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented by International Sealand Shipping Limited in Vancouver.

### *From Eastern Canadian Ports*

**Barber Blue Sea Line** schedules monthly sailings from Toronto (via New York) to Singapore. The transit time is about 35 days. Space accommodation for general cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Barber Steamship Lines (Canada) Incorporated and ACL Canada Incorporated in Montreal and Toronto.

**Hapag Lloyd** schedules weekly sailings from Toronto and Montreal to Singapore. The transit time is about 30 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, refrigerated cargo, ventilated cargo, bulk liquids and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Montreal Shipping Incorporated in Montreal.

**The National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia** schedules two sailings per month from Halifax to Singapore. The transit time is about 28 days. Space accommodation for general cargo, ventilated cargo, bulk liquids and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Saguenay Shipping Limited in Halifax.

**Neptune Orient Lines Limited** schedules weekly sailings from Saint John to Singapore. The transit time is about 26 days. Space accommodation for general cargo and container cargo is available. The line is represented by Universal Cargo Services Incorporated in Montreal.

## Air Cargo Services from Canada to Singapore

**Air Canada** now offers 4 flights a week via the transatlantic route from Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver to Singapore.

Daily flights are also available with Air Canada and Canadian Airline International through a combination of other connecting carriers from Canada to Singapore.

## Transportation, Communications and Infrastructure in Singapore

Singapore has a highly developed transportation network which continues to be expanded and improved. The country is connected by both rail and road with Malaysia and Thailand via the Johore causeway, and the island itself has a system of well-paved roads. The international airport is served by 44 international airlines including Singapore Airlines.

The port of Singapore is the second busiest one in the world, with extensive facilities for passenger and cargo ships, including containerized cargo. Port management is efficient and facilities are continually being upgraded.

Singapore, because of its geographic and commercial position, is a major regional and international telecommunications centre. It has cable, satellite, and microwave links with nearly 200 countries as well as fast, good quality telephone and telex service. Computer data transmission is available to and from Europe, Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States. The Telecommunications Authority of Singapore has invested

heavily in improved service and is continuing to maintain and improve the telecommunications sector.

Air mail and surface mail services are available on a worldwide basis. Locally, mail is delivered within two days. Air mail deliveries between Singapore and Canada take from 10 to 20 days.

Electricity is generated by the Public Utilities Board's six power stations, whose total installed capacity is 2 691 MW. A seventh power station is now under construction. Electricity is available to every part of the country, with tariff schedules giving preferential rates to large industrial power consumers.

## Tendering on Projects

Almost all government purchasing is done through tenders. Invitations to bid on tenders may be restricted to contractors registered with the department initiating the request or they may be open to general bidding. Invitations to tender are published in the *Singapore Government Gazette* as well as local daily newspapers.

Singapore's economic status has precluded it from program or project financing by the World Bank. However, Singapore may borrow from the Asian Development Bank on a project-specific basis.

You may be interested to know that the information office of the Asian Development Bank publishes the status of projects. Project information can also be obtained from the Asia Pacific South Trade Development Division of the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa or the Commercial Division of the Canadian High Commission in Singapore.

## Labour

Singapore's total labour force is 1.2 million (as of 1985). It is estimated that some 18 per cent of the labour force belongs to a union. Government legislation requires that all trade unions be registered with the Registrar of Trade Unions. In addition, unions must comply with the requirements of the Trade Unions Act, which includes the registration and control of unions, their rights and liabilities, and the proper use of union funds. Legislation dealing with labour matters, such as principal terms and conditions of employment, is contained in the Employment Act of 1968.

Previous and current industrial training programs initiated by the government have allowed the development of a large pool of skilled labour in Singapore. Worker training, through both government and private training programs, is viewed as one of the keys to increased labour productivity, capital investment, and technological innovations.

Expatriate personnel in Singapore require a work permit from the Controller of Immigration, which can be issued for periods not exceeding five years. Professional visit passes are issued to those persons such as consultants and installation personnel intending to work in Singapore on a short-term basis.

## Advertising and Research

The range of advertising media used in Canada is also available in Singapore. Newspapers are published in the three major languages — English, Chinese and Malay. For domestic and regional coverage, there are trade publications, both general and specific in nature, which accept advertisements.

Singapore's state-owned radio and television stations offer commercial spots in all of the official languages. In some cases, however, the advertising format may be different from that in Canada. For example, television advertising usually takes the form of short spots similar to those on British television.

Singapore's humid climate often causes posters to deteriorate, necessitating the use of metal signs for those goods requiring long-term advertising.

Other methods of advertising include short films and slides shown in cinemas to promote items such as consumer goods. In addition, arrangements can be made for technical and educational authorities to view industrial films at the High Commission or privately.

There are several advertising and public relations firms in Singapore which can assist Canadian exporters in media presentation. To ensure that your marketing campaign conforms to local customs and preferences, consult an advertising firm before embarking on an extensive promotional campaign.

Market research is increasingly being used in Singapore with very good results. While the local agents research is often satisfactory, in recent years, several firms have

been established and have developed an acceptable competence in professional market research.

Finally, specialized trade shows are held frequently on a small but growing scale providing regional coverage. The Commercial Division of the Canadian High Commission can advise a company of any fairs useful to the promotion of the firm's product.

## Methods of Payment

Prices should usually be quoted c.i.f. in Singapore, U.S., or Canadian dollars. During the early discussion stage, when the Singapore buyer just wants an idea of the cost, f.o.b. prices are acceptable, provided an estimate of insurance and freight costs is given as well. A Canadian forwarder can help with this estimate.

Established Singapore importers usually have an excellent payment performance record, but initially it is best to ask for payment by irrevocable letter of credit which is acceptable and normal practice in Singapore. Once the business relationship is well established, a variety of credit terms can be used, but should almost always be preceded by a current credit check.

## Business Dispute Procedures

Legal procedures related to debt collection and non-payment tend to be time-consuming, expensive, and often inconclusive. The best protection from problems of this nature is to investigate the financial status of a client thoroughly before concluding any credit transactions.

## Banking and Local Finance

Singapore's financial activities have made the city-state one of Asia's leading financial centres and have become an important adjunct to its export-oriented industries and its development as a manufacturing centre. By building on its infrastructural strengths, Singapore has developed into the largest Eurocurrency market in Asia, with 110 financial institutions possessing Asian Currency Unit (ACU) licences. The continued increase in the number of international banks and institutions in Singapore testifies to Singapore's development as a financial hub. At the end of December 1986 there were 134 commercial banks, 58 merchant banks, 8 international money brokers and 4 discount houses

in Singapore. Out of the 134 commercial banks, 13 are local banks. The rest are foreign-owned. Of the 134, 37 have full banking licences, 14 have restricted banking licences and 83 have offshore banking licences. The foreign banks, with the exception of restricted and offshore banks already established, are allowed to continue to engage in domestic banking. The real attraction, however, is being able to deal in foreign exchange.

Although in the past Singapore's financial ties have received support from multilateral financial institutions, the nation's more advanced economic status has made it ineligible for program or project funds from the World Bank since 1975. The Asian Development Bank, however, may provide project loans at prevailing rates of interest.

The development of Singapore as an international financial centre is a major policy objective of the government. The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) is mainly responsible for the strategy to achieve this objective. In future, the strategy will be to build on the existing infrastructure, enhance the capital market and improve related activities such as portfolio management. The aim is to develop Singapore as an international funds management centre.

Many of the functions usually associated with a central bank are undertaken by MAS. Except for issuing currency, which is the responsibility of the Board of Commissioners of Currency, MAS acts as an administrator of the banking system and foreign exchange regulation, as well as a banker and the government's financial agent.

The principal source of short-term credit is through overdrafts supplied by local and foreign-owned commercial banks. The Development Bank of Singapore, established by the government, is a major source of medium- and long-term loans. The commercial banks have, however, increasingly provided medium- and long-term credit.



Source: The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation

The following Canadian banks have branch offices in Singapore:

**The Bank of Montreal**

5 Shenton Way #28-01  
UIC Building  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 220-1688

**The Bank of Nova Scotia**

10 Collyer Quay #27-01/03  
Ocean Building  
Singapore 0104  
Tel: 535-8688

**The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce**

105 Cecil Street #09-02/04  
The Octagon  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 220-8228

**The Royal Bank of Canada**

140 Cecil Street #01-100  
PIL Building  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 224-7311

**The Toronto-Dominion Bank**

65 Chulia Street #24-01  
OCBC Centre  
Singapore 0104  
Tel: 532-7233

## Property Protection

Patent protection in Singapore is obtained by first acquiring a British patent and then registering it within three years with the Registrar of Patents and Trade-marks in Singapore. The protection lasts as long as the patent is valid in Britain, and renewal patent protection is also valid in Singapore. A British patent that is not registered in Singapore has no protection.

Trademark protection is obtained from the same office as patent protection, but the search and examination are carried out by the Registrar in Singapore before the trademark may be advertised in the *Government Gazette*. The initial registration of the trademark protects it for 7 years and it may be renewed thereafter for periods of 14 years.

By an act of the Singapore Parliament, product designs and literature copyrights registered in Britain under the applicable British laws are protected in Singapore as though they had been registered in Singapore.

## **Investment**

### **Singapore's Legislation Respecting Foreign Investment**

Singapore encourages foreign private investment, particularly for high-technology and export-oriented projects. All areas except public utilities and telecommunications are open to foreign investment. Approval by the relevant government department or statutory board — normally the Economic Development Board, the Monetary Authority of Singapore, or the Trade Development Board — is required.

The Singapore government offers a number of tax incentives for investment in some manufacturing and pioneer industries. Incentives are administered by the Economic Development Board which also helps prospective investors negotiate with relevant government bodies. Current details of these incentives are available from the High Commission.

There are no restrictions on foreign ownership of companies in Singapore. The government, however, tends to encourage joint-venture enterprises emphasizing foreign knowledge and the joint participation of foreign and local capital. Despite the absence of any legislation requiring local participation, Canadian investors should plan to employ some Singapore personnel.

### **Forms of Business Organization**

A business enterprise in Singapore may be a sole proprietorship, a partnership or an incorporated company. A Canadian firm may also establish a branch office, a representative office or a wholly-owned subsidiary. The form of company preferred by most foreign companies is the private limited company.

A lawyer can best advise a Canadian firm on the type of operation that would suit the company's needs, especially with regard to the effects on a company's tax liability, and on the specific legal requirements for beginning an operation in Singapore.

## Taxation

In Singapore, company tax is at the flat rate of 33 per cent on income after deductible expenses, depreciation allowances, trading losses and donations to approved charities. Where profits are distributed to shareholders as dividends, the tax is passed on as a credit to some of the shareholders (principally Singapore residents) who are entitled to recover to the extent that the company rate of 33 per cent exceeds the top rate at which they are liable to tax personally. A number of tax incentives which confer tax exemption or reduced taxation are available to companies engaged in qualifying manufacturing, research and development service and export trade activities.

Personal income tax is levied at graduated rates on income accruing in, or derived from, Singapore and income received in Singapore from outside. Assessable income includes accommodation and other benefits in kind provided by the employer. Paid passages are assessable up to 20 per cent of the cost if certain conditions are satisfied.

Canada has a double taxation agreement with Singapore with respect to both personal and corporate income tax.

## Singapore's Export Regulations

All exports from Singapore are subject to government control and must be declared. However, only a few export categories are subject to any restrictions. Among them are exports of certain textiles to the United Kingdom, the United States, Norway, Sweden and Canada, which are subject to restrictive licencing.

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## *IV. YOUR BUSINESS VISIT TO SINGAPORE*

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### Services of the Canadian High Commission

The Commercial Division of the Canadian High Commission in Singapore acts as a liaison between Canadian firms and local business and industry. Offering a comprehensive range of services, the trade commissioner seeks business opportunities for interested and capable Canadian firms. Market surveys of reasonable proportions are conducted on behalf of Canadian exporters. The trade commissioner may also provide recommendations and advice on matters relating to the selection of agents, advertising methods and preferences, as well as translation facilities. With advance notice, appointments with appropriate contacts and the receipt of mail may be arranged through the Commercial Division. Finally, the trade commissioner may assist Canadians established in the market by offering advice on matters such as trade disputes and legal problems.

The trade commissioner should be advised of your intention to visit Singapore well in advance of arrival. The extent of assistance will depend upon the information provided about your company, the purpose of the visit, and contacts previously established in Singapore's business community. If the product or service is specialized or highly technical, information on its use, the type of representation it would require and its competition in the market helps to avoid unnecessary research as well as unsuitable appointments and the waste of your time. Finally, Canadian firms should keep the trade commissioner informed on subsequent activities and future plans.

### Business Calls

The best introduction to Singapore and its business opportunities is a personal visit. Local business people usually prefer to meet and deal with prospective clients personally. Upon arrival, you face a double challenge — convincing local contacts of your firm's competitiveness in the market and overcoming any misconceptions that may exist regarding Canadian capabilities in general. The establishment of legitimacy and a long-term

commitment is of primary importance to a successful business strategy.

The pursuit of contacts within Singapore's business community and a generally slower pace in the approach to business play an important role in business strategy. Appointments should be kept punctually, bearing in mind that traffic is often congested. Entertainment can also be central to the process of business development. It is not uncommon for Canadian business representatives to be entertained by local contacts, and it should be noted that reciprocal invitations are much appreciated. Government or public officials, however, will usually not accept invitations and rarely gifts of any value.

## Presentation Important

Canadian firms should make a complete presentation to the prospective client in the initial stages of contact. This may include literature, specifications, samples, and all the price, delivery, and quality control information the contact will require to evaluate the firm and its product or service. You should also keep an adequate supply of business cards on hand at all times. Finally, in the event of an equipment demonstration, it should be ensured that the system functions properly in the given environment; any shortcoming will result in a loss of confidence in the product as well as the firm. Equipment demonstrations can be held at the High Commission.

## What to Bring

Seasoned business travellers bring a number of useful business supplies. Among those recommended are:

- sales literature and, where applicable, samples;
- company stationery (for correspondence and thank-you notes);
- business cards; and
- extra passport photos (for visas, etc.).

Should you not want to carry business cards and promotional material with you in your luggage, you can arrange to have it forwarded to the Canadian High Commission in Singapore by air freight. Arrangements should be made approximately three weeks prior to arrival in Singapore.

## Follow-up

Appropriate follow-up can be crucial to the success of a business visit. Thank-you notes as well as samples, brochures, and requested information should be quickly dispatched after your return to Canada. Regular correspondence with contacts and representatives established while in Singapore, as well as with the Commercial Division of the Canadian High Commission, will serve to promote legitimacy and business development. A follow-up visit should be planned in the event that there is business potential.

## Travelling to Singapore

Canadians in possession of a valid passport receive a two-week visit pass on entry into Singapore and have little difficulty in getting another. Business visitors do not require a visa, but professional visit visas are required for those wishing to conduct business in Singapore (e.g., consultants). Holders of Canadian Certificates of Identity should obtain a visa before arriving. Care should be taken to investigate visa requirements for onward travel, for example, to Australia and Indonesia. In Singapore it can take from one day to several weeks to obtain visas to enter other countries.

A valid International Certificate of Vaccination against yellow fever and cholera is required if the traveller has passed through an infected area. Immunization against cholera, tetanus, and polio is recommended and, although Singapore has little if any malaria, travellers planning to travel in the area, particularly in the countryside, should take anti-malaria pills before arriving. Visitors are advised to contact the Department of Health and Welfare in Ottawa for up-to-date information.

There are no restrictions on the amount of Singapore or foreign currency brought into or out of the republic. The Singapore dollar in April 1987 stood at \$1.60 (S) to \$1.00 (Cdn). The Singapore dollar is in approximate parity with the Brunei dollar but enjoys a 10 per cent premium over the Malaysian ringgit (dollar).

Customs regulations allow the duty-free import of 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars, or 250 grams of tobacco; one bottle of wine and one of spirits; and a reasonable amount of perfume. The import of arms and dangerous drugs requires a special permit. The import of pornographic material is prohibited in Singapore and there

are very severe penalties for anyone found in possession of drugs.

There are many international-class hotels in Singapore. All hotel rates are subject to a 10 per cent service charge and 3 per cent government tax. Hotel rates are falling dramatically in Singapore due to oversupply, and rates are now amongst the lowest in the world. The High Commission can advise on prevailing room rates. Confirmation should be sought at the time of booking.

**Century Park Sheraton Hotel**

10 Nassim Hill  
Singapore 1025  
Tel: 732-1222  
Telex: CPHSIN RS 21817

**Crown Prince**

270 Orchard Road  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 732-1111  
Telex: RS 22819 HCROWN

**Dynasty Hotel**

Orchard/Scotts Roads  
Singapore 0922  
Tel: 734-9900  
Telex: RS 24515/RS 36633

**Goodwood Park Hotel**

22 Scotts Road  
Singapore 0922  
Tel: 737-7411  
Telex: RS 24377

**Hilton International Singapore**

581 Orchard Road  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 737-2233  
Telex: RS 21491

**Royal Holiday Inn**

25 Scotts Road  
Singapore 0922  
Tel: 737-7966  
Telex: RS 21818

**Hyatt Regency Singapore**

10 Scotts Road  
Singapore 0922  
Tel: 733-1188  
Telex: RS 24415

**Marco Polo**

Tanglin Road  
Singapore 1025  
Tel: 474-7141  
Telex: RS 21476

**Marina Mandarin**

Marina Square  
6 Raffles Boulevard #01-100  
Singapore 0103

**Meridien Changi Hotel**

100 Neverathon Road  
Upper Changi  
Singapore 1750  
Tel: 542-7700  
Telex: RS 36024

**Meridien Hotel**

100 Orchard Road  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 733-8855  
Telex: RS 50163 HOMERI

**Pan Pacific Singapore**

6 Raffles Boulevard #01-300  
Singapore 0103

**Pavilion Intercontinental**

1 Cuscaden Road  
Singapore 1024  
Tel: 733-8888  
Telex: RS 37248

**Raffles Hotel**

1/3 Beach Road  
Singapore 0718  
Tel: 337-8041  
Telex: RS 21586

**Shangri-la Hotel**

22 Orange Grove Road  
Singapore 1024  
Tel: 737-3644  
Telex: RS 21505 SHANGLA

**The Oriental Singapore**

6 Raffles Boulevard #01-200  
Singapore 0103

## **The Westin Stamford & Westin Plaza**

2 Stamford Road

Singapore 0718

In addition to restaurants in the international standard hotels, there are a number of restaurants specializing in European cuisine. There are also many fine restaurants serving Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Indonesian food. Major Canadian credit cards such as Visa, MasterCard and American Express are generally accepted in tourist areas.

Most restaurants add a service charge of 10 per cent plus 3 per cent government tax. Elsewhere a 10 per cent tip is advised. For portorage \$0.50 per bag is adequate, except in hotels. Tipping taxi drivers is not customary, but visitors wishing to do so should tip 10 per cent of the bill.

In Singapore all authorized taxis are metered and most are air-conditioned. Taxi fares as of April 1, 1985 are as follows:

Taxi fares begin at \$1.60 (S) for the first 1.5 km. For every 300 m travelled up to 10 km, the charge is \$0.10 and for every subsequent 250 m travelled the charge is \$0.10. A waiting charge for \$0.10 per 45 seconds is also applicable. Between midnight and 6:00 a.m. there is a 50 per cent surcharge. A luggage charge of \$1 (S) will be levied for all luggage in the trunk. There is also a \$3 (S) surcharge on all trips **from** the airport. Taxis may be hired for \$15-20 (S) per hour (negotiable with the taxi driver), which is advisable when companies visited are outside the downtown district. Both rented and chauffeured vehicles are available from car rental companies. An international driving licence is required to rent a car. Driving is on the left hand side of the road.

## **Flight Information at Changi Airport:**

**545-8888**

An airport tax of \$5 (S) is levied on passengers embarking for Malaysia. A tax of \$12 (S) is levied for other international travel.

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# V. LIST OF KEY SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS

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## **Board of Commissioners of Currency, Singapore**

79 Robinson Road #01-01  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 222-2211

Responsible for issuing  
and controlling currency.

## **Customs and Excise Department**

Customs House  
Maxwell Road  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 222-3511

Responsible for all reve-  
nue matters relating to  
customs and Free Trade  
Zone matters.

## **Development Bank of Singapore Ltd.**

6 Shenton Way  
DBS Building  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 220-1111

The major government-  
owned bank; is responsi-  
ble for financing major  
projects as well as acts  
as a retail bank in  
Singapore.

## **Economic Development Board**

250 North Bridge Road  
#24-00  
Raffles City Tower  
Singapore 0617  
Tel: 336-2288

Responsible for granting  
investment and taxation  
incentives to attract  
foreign industry to  
Singapore.

## **Film Censorship Board**

Customs House,  
3rd Storey  
Maxwell Road  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 222-5194

Responsible for censor-  
ing imported films and  
videotapes.

## **Immigration Department**

Empress Place  
Singapore 0617  
Tel: 337-4031

Responsible for issuing  
and controlling visas,  
visit permits, work permits/  
employment passes, and  
permanent resident  
status permits.

## **Ministry of Communications**

PSA Towers, 11th Floor  
Telok Blangah Road  
Singapore 0409  
Tel: 270-7988

Responsible for adminis-  
tration and policy control  
of marine department,  
civil aviation, meteorolog-  
ical services, postal ser-  
vices and registry of  
vehicles.

**Ministry of Finance**

79 Robinson Road  
30th-41st Floors  
CPF Building  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: 222-9666

Responsible for administration and policies of all branches dealing with taxation and revenue, international and bilateral aid, government investment in companies and contact for the Asian Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, securities industries and company registration.

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

City Hall, 1st Floor  
St. Andrew's Road  
Singapore 0617  
Tel: 361-1177

Responsible for the same functions as Canada's Department of External Affairs.

**Ministry of Health**

55 Cuppage Road #09-00  
Cuppage Centre  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 734-7744

Responsible for all government hospitals; medical, dental, and pharmaceutical services and registration of all medical staff.

**Monetary Authority of Singapore**

10 Shenton Way  
Singapore 0207  
Tel: 225-5577

Responsible for the Bank Act as well as national economy and government audits.

**Port of Singapore Authority**

PSA Towers  
Telok Blangah Road  
Singapore 0409  
Tel: 271-2211

Responsible for providing and running all port facilities in Singapore.

**Public Utilities Board**

111 Somerset Road  
PUB Building  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 235-8888

Responsible for providing, distributing, controlling, maintaining and administering all gas, electricity and water utilities.

**Registry of Companies**

1 Colombo Court  
#06-06/16  
Singapore 0617  
Tel: 336-1203

Responsible for legislation control, registering and administering companies.

**Singapore Institute of Standards and Industrial Research**

179 River Valley Road  
Singapore 0617  
Tel: 336-0933

Responsible for establishing, approving and evaluating safety standards for consumer products.

**Singapore Changi  
International Airport**  
Singapore 1781  
Tel: 542-1122

**Telecommunications  
Authority of Singapore**

Comcentre  
31 Exeter Road  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: 734-3344

Responsible for provid-  
ing, distributing, control-  
ling, maintaining and  
administering all domes-  
tic and overseas voice,  
digital, and telex traffic.

**Trade Development Board**

1 Maritime Square #03-01  
World Trade Centre  
Telok Blangah Road  
Singapore 0409  
Tel: 271-9388

Responsible for all  
aspects of trade includ-  
ing issuing export and  
import permits and certif-  
icates of origin, as well  
as compiling statistics.

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## *VI. OTHER USEFUL ADDRESSES*

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### **Canadian High Commission**

8th, 9th & 10th Floors, Faber House  
230 Orchard Road  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: (011-65) 737-1322  
Cable: Canadian Singapore  
Telex: DOMCAN RS 21277

### **Air Canada**

100 Orchard Road #02-43/46  
Meridien Shopping Centre  
Singapore 0923  
Tel: (011-65) 732-8555

### **Canadian Airline International**

150 Cecil Street #10-05  
Wing On Life Building  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: (011-65) 221-2750

### **Singapore International Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

6 Raffles Quay #05-00  
Denmark House  
Singapore 0106  
Tel: (011-65) 224-1255

### **Singapore High Commission for Canada**

c/o Permanent Mission of Singapore to the United Nations  
1 UN Plaza, 26th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
USA  
Tel: (212) 826-0840

The permanent representative is also accredited to Canada as high commissioner.

### **Singapore Economic Development Board — New York**

745 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 1509  
New York, NY 10151  
USA  
Tel: (212) 421-2203

**Singapore Economic Development Board —  
Los Angeles**

911 Wiltshire Boulevard  
Suite 950  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
USA  
Tel: (212) 421-2203

**Singapore Economic Development Board — Chicago**

Illinois Centre Two  
233 North Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
USA  
Tel: (312) 644-3730

**Singapore Economic Development Board — Houston**

Three Greenway Plaza East  
Suite 204  
Houston, Texas 77046  
USA  
Tel: (713) 627-8200

**Asia Pacific South Trade Development Division**

Department of External Affairs  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0G2  
Tel: (613) 996-0917

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## VII. REGIONAL CONTACTS

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If you have not previously marketed abroad, contact any regional trade office of the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) at the addresses listed below.

### **Newfoundland/Labrador**

P.O. Box 8950  
Parsons Building  
90 O'Leary Avenue  
St. John's, Newfoundland  
A1B 3R9  
Tel: (709) 772-4884  
Telex: 016-4749

### **Nova Scotia**

1496 Lower Water Street  
P.O. Box 940, Station "M"  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 2V9  
Tel: (902) 426-2018  
Telex: 019-22525

### **New Brunswick**

Assumption Place  
770 Main Street  
P.O. Box 1210  
Moncton, New Brunswick  
E1C 8L9  
Tel: (506) 388-6400  
Telex: 014-2200

### **Prince Edward Island**

Confederation Court Mall  
400-134 Kent Street  
P.O. Box 1115  
Charlottetown,  
Prince Edward Island  
C1A 7M8  
Tel: (902) 566-7400  
Telex: 014-44129

### **Alberta/**

#### **Northwest Territories**

Cornerpoint Building  
Suite 505  
10179-105th Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 3S3  
Tel: (403) 420-2944  
Telex: 037-2762

#### **Québec**

C.P. 247  
800, place Victoria  
Pièce 3800  
Montréal (Québec)  
H4Z 1E8  
Tel: (514) 283-8185  
Telex: 055-60768

2, place Québec  
Pièce 620  
Québec (Québec)  
G1R 2B5  
Tel: (418) 648-4826  
Telex: 051-3312

#### **Ontario**

P.O. Box 98  
1 First Canadian Place  
Suite 4840  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5X 1B1  
Tel: (416) 365-3821  
Telex: 065-24378

**Manitoba**

3 Lakeview Square  
185 Carlton Street  
P.O. Box 981  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 2V2  
Tel: (204) 949-4090  
Telex: 07-57624

**Saskatchewan**

105-21st Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S7K 0B3  
Tel: (306) 975-4343  
Telex: 074-2742

**British Columbia/Yukon**

P.O. Box 49178  
Bentall Centre  
Tower IV, Suite 1101  
1055 Dunsmuir Street  
Vancouver,  
British Columbia  
V7X 1K8  
Tel: (604) 666-0434  
Telex: 04-51191

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# APPENDIX — SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Notes

LIBRARY E A/BIBLIOTHEQUE A E



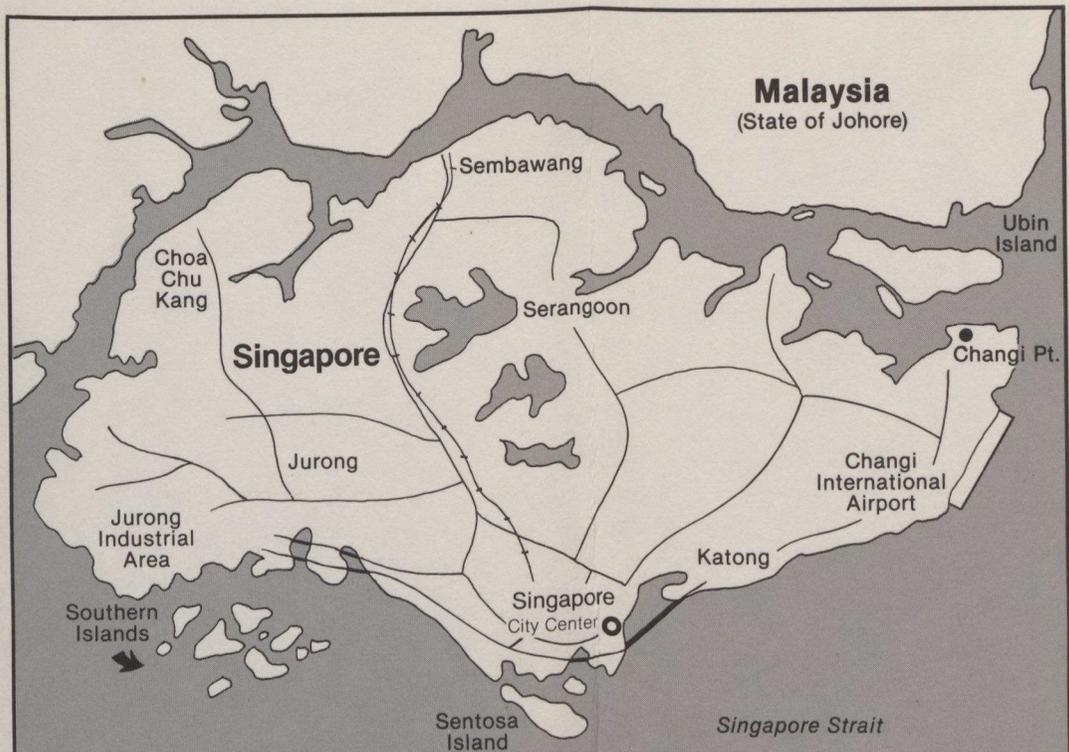
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Storage

HF 1010 .G85S55 1987 STORAGE

Singapore, a guide for Canadian  
exporters. --

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**Singapore**

SCALE  5.5 km

LEGEND

 Major Roads     Major City

 Railway     City





External Affairs  
Canada

Affaires extérieures  
Canada

Canada