

Nominee Directors: A Key Compliance Step for Foreigners in Singapore

Singapore's straightforward business setup process is a magnet for global entrepreneurs, but one rule is firm: every company needs at least one local director. For foreign business owners not residing in Singapore, a nominee director is often the solution. This article explores the role of nominee directors, when they're required, and how exemptions work.

What Is a Nominee Director?

Singapore law mandates that every company has at least one director who is "ordinarily resident" in Singapore—a citizen, permanent resident, or holder of a valid work pass like an EntrePass or Employment Pass. If you're a foreigner without a local presence, a nominee director steps in to meet this requirement.

Nominees don't typically run your business but are legally accountable for compliance. This is why secretarial services Singapore providers offering nominee directors use strict agreements and deposits to safeguard both parties.

When Is a Nominee Director Required?

You'll need a nominee director if:

- You're launching a company from outside Singapore.
- You're not relocating or securing a local work visa.
- No one on your team qualifies as a Singapore resident director.

Corporate secretarial services can provide a nominee director and ensure your company meets all regulatory requirements.

Can a Foreigner Be the Local Director?

Yes, if you live in Singapore with a valid work pass, such as:

1. EntrePass: For entrepreneurs with innovative business plans.
2. Employment Pass (EP): For professionals, often used if you're employed by your own company.

With an approved pass, you can act as the local director, eliminating the need for a nominee. Confirm your visa's approval before assuming this role.

Are There Any Exemptions?

Exemptions are limited but include:

1. Local Co-Director: A Singapore citizen or PR on your team can serve as the local director.
2. Existing Work Pass: If you're in Singapore with a visa permitting business activities, you may qualify as the local director.
3. Foreign Subsidiaries: Subsidiaries of foreign companies still require a local individual.



