

Prevent Fines. Top Compliance Pitfalls in Singapore

Singapore's business landscape is structured, but compliance errors can lead to fines, especially for small businesses. Many mistakes are preventable with awareness and planning. Below are the most common compliance issues and how to avoid them.

Don't Skip Filing Deadlines

One major mistake is missing ACRA annual returns or IRAS tax return deadlines. These are mandatory, and delays bring penalties, no matter how small.

Annual returns must be filed within seven months of your financial year-end. Tax returns are due by November. Missing deadlines repeatedly can lead to serious consequences. Set reminders or use corporate secretarial services to stay on top of filings.

Mandatory Company Secretary

Singapore law requires a qualified company secretary within six months of incorporation. This role ensures compliance through filings, resolutions, and record updates.

Not appointing a secretary or assigning the role to someone unqualified can result in fines. Secretarial services can manage this if your team is stretched thin.

Update ACRA on Changes

Changes like new directors, address updates, or share issuances must be reported to ACRA, usually within 14 days. Failing to notify can lead to penalties or issues with director liability.

Inform your secretary or service provider immediately after any change to keep records accurate and compliant.

Keep Records Up to Date

Companies must maintain records, including shareholder and director registers, minutes, and resolutions. Startups often neglect this, assuming it's a low priority. Missing records can complicate audits or deals, and ACRA can issue fines for breaches.

Designate someone to handle records or outsource to secretarial services for proper management.



Understand AGM Obligations

Private companies can avoid Annual General Meetings if financial statements are sent to shareholders within five months of the financial year-end. If this doesn't happen, an AGM is required. Misunderstanding this can lead to compliance issues.

Check with your secretary each year to confirm your AGM requirements and avoid errors.

File Taxes, Even Without Profit

