

THE STATUTES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

DESTITUTE PERSONS ACT

(CHAPTER 78)

**1970 Ed. Cap. 98
Act
30 of 1965**

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Destitute Persons Act

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title.
 2. Interpretation.
 3. Power to require a destitute person to reside in a welfare home.
 4. Voluntary admission into a welfare home.
 5. Minister may establish welfare homes.
 6. Board of Visitors.
 7. Rules for management of welfare homes.
 8. Discharge from welfare homes.
 9. Superintendent to endeavour to find employment.
 10. Persons in a welfare home may be required to work.
 11. Persons in a welfare home may be sent to hospital.
 12. Director may transfer persons in welfare homes.
 13. Penalty for escape from lawful custody or welfare home.
 14. Arrest of escaped destitute person.
 15. Agreement to leave Singapore.
 16. Breach of agreement.
 17. Repatriation of non-Singapore citizens.
 18. Discharge.
- The Schedule — Form of agreement.

An Act to provide for the care and rehabilitation of destitute persons.

[9th May 1966]

1. This Act may be cited as the Destitute Persons Act. Short title.
- 2.—(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires — Interpretation.

“destitute person” means —

- (a) any person found begging in a public place in such a way as to cause or to be likely to cause annoyance to persons frequenting the place or otherwise to create a nuisance; and

(b) any idle person found in a public place, whether or not he is begging, who has no visible means of subsistence or place of residence or is unable to give a satisfactory account of himself;

“welfare home” means any institution, or part thereof, for the reception, care and rehabilitation of destitute persons established under the provisions of, and for the purposes of, this Act;

“superintendent” means a person having the management or control of any welfare home established under the provisions of, and for the purposes of, this Act;

“Director” means the Director of Social Welfare, and includes an Assistant Director of Social Welfare.

(2) For the purposes of this Act, “public place” includes any place to which the public is admitted without payment or on payment; and a person begs if his conduct is calculated to induce the giving of alms, whether or not there is any pretence of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale or otherwise.

Power to require a destitute person to reside in a welfare home.

3.—(1) Any public officer acting under the direction of the Director or any police officer may take in charge any destitute person and deliver him to the custody of the Director.

(2) If the Director has reasonable cause to believe that any person so delivered into his custody has no visible means of subsistence, he may arrange for that person to be temporarily admitted into a welfare home until an inquiry has been held by him.

(3) Every such inquiry shall be completed within a period of one month from the date of that person’s admission into a welfare home.

(4) If after holding such inquiry the Director is satisfied that that person is a destitute person within the meaning of this Act, he may by warrant under his hand require that person to reside in a welfare home.

Voluntary admission into a welfare home.

4. Any destitute person who voluntarily seeks admission into a welfare home shall be required to undertake that, if admitted, he will abide by the conditions of admission imposed under this Act or by any rules made thereunder.

5.—(1) The Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, establish welfare homes at such places as he thinks proper within Singapore for the care and rehabilitation of destitute persons in accordance with the provisions of this Act. Minister may establish welfare homes.

(2) The Minister may appoint superintendents and other officers for the management of such welfare homes.

(3) Every such superintendent or officer shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of the Penal Code. Cap. 224.

6.—(1) The Minister may, by notification in the *Gazette*, appoint a Board of Visitors to advise and make recommendations to the Director on such matters as he may refer to it. Board of Visitors.

(2) A Board of Visitors may be appointed for one or more welfare homes as the Minister thinks fit.

7. The Minister may make rules —

- (a) for prescribing the constitution and functions of the Board of Visitors;
- (b) for regulating the management of welfare homes and the admission of persons thereto; and
- (c) for the care, control and rehabilitation of persons residing in welfare homes.

Rules for management of welfare homes.

8.—(1) Any person admitted to a welfare home, either on his own application or otherwise, may be discharged by the superintendent to the care of a relative who satisfies the superintendent of his ability to support or care for the person to be discharged: Discharge from welfare homes.

Provided that the relative undertakes in writing to inform the superintendent within 24 hours of the cessation of such support and care.

(2) Any person, having undertaken the support or care of a person discharged from a welfare home, who fails to inform the superintendent of that home in writing within 24 hours of his ceasing to support or care for such discharged person shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 months.

Superintendent to endeavour to find employment.

9. The superintendent shall use his best endeavours to obtain suitable employment outside the welfare home for persons admitted thereto.

Persons in a welfare home may be required to work.

10. Any person residing in a welfare home may be required to engage in any suitable work, for which the medical officer of the home certifies him to be capable, either with a view to fitting him for an employment outside the welfare home or with a view to contributing to his maintenance in the welfare home.

Persons in a welfare home may be sent to hospital.

11. Any person residing in a welfare home may, if so directed by the medical officer of the home, be sent to a hospital or other medical institution for treatment, and shall be deemed while receiving such treatment to be a resident of the welfare home.

Director may transfer persons in welfare homes.

12. Any person residing in a welfare home may, if so directed by the Director, be removed from the welfare home and admitted to another welfare home.

Penalty for escape from lawful custody or welfare home.

13. Any person who —

- (a) escapes from the police while committed to their charge under this Act;
- (b) without permission of the superintendent leaves a welfare home in which he is required to reside in accordance with section 3 or to which he has been admitted on his own application under section 4; or
- (c) having with such permission left a welfare home for a limited time or for a specified purpose, fails to return at the expiration of such time or when such purpose has been accomplished or found to be impracticable,

shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months.

Arrest of escaped destitute person.

14. Any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed an offence under section 13 and who refuses or fails to accompany a police officer or to appear before a Magistrate's Court when required to do so for the purposes of this Act may be arrested without a warrant.

15.—(1) Any person residing in a welfare home may enter into an agreement with the Director binding himself to leave Singapore at such time and in such manner as the superintendent directs for the purpose of being removed from Singapore at the expense of the Government and not to return to Singapore within 5 years. Agreement to leave Singapore.

(2) Every such agreement shall be exempt from stamp duty and shall be in the form set out in the Schedule or to a like effect.

(3) When a person has entered into such agreement, the superintendent shall enforce the agreement and shall cause the person to be removed from Singapore; and if he considers it desirable may call in the assistance of the police for this purpose and the person shall be deemed to be in lawful custody until he has left Singapore.

16. Every person who enters into an agreement under section 15 and violates that agreement in any respect shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months. Breach of agreement.

17.—(1) Any destitute person, not being a citizen of Singapore, who has been admitted to a welfare home and who has not entered into an agreement to leave Singapore as provided in section 15, may be repatriated. Repatriation of non-Singapore citizens.

(2) Any person who returns to Singapore after having been repatriated under this Act shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(3) Any person who has been admitted to a welfare home and whose home is in the States of Malaya may be returned to his home at the expense of the Government.

18. The Minister may at any time order any person admitted to a welfare home to be discharged. Discharge.

Section 15.

THE SCHEDULE

FORM OF AGREEMENT

The Destitute Persons Act
(Chapter 78)

AGREEMENT TO LEAVE SINGAPORE

AN AGREEMENT made the day of 19
between the Director of Social Welfare for and on behalf of the Government of
Singapore (referred to in this Agreement as the Government) of the one part and
A.B. of of the other part:

Whereas the said A.B. is required to reside in a welfare home under the
provisions of the Destitute Persons Act:

And Whereas the said A.B. has requested the Government to permit him to
be discharged from the welfare home and to pay for his journey to

And Whereas the Government has agreed to pay for his journey to
on the terms and conditions hereinafter mentioned:

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED between the parties hereto as follows:

1. The Government shall make such arrangements as it may consider
necessary and shall pay for the journey on board any ship/train/bus it may select to
enable the said A.B. to proceed to
2. The said A.B. shall board such ship/train/bus at such time as the
superintendent of the welfare home shall direct.
3. The said A.B. shall remain on board such ship/train/bus until such
ship/train/bus shall have arrived at
4. The said A.B. shall not return to Singapore until 5 years shall have elapsed
from the date of his discharge from the welfare home unless he shall be specially
permitted to return by the Government.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands
the day and year first above written.

Signed by the Director of Social Welfare
for and on behalf of the Government
in the presence of: }

Signed by the abovenamed A.B.
.....
in the presence of: }