

MINISTRY OF LAW SETS UP NEW WILLS REGISTRY

PRESS STATEMENT

DATED 19TH FEBRUARY 2001

The Ministry of Law has set up a confidential Wills Registry on 1 January 2001 to act as a central information centre for all wills that are drawn up, of which notice has been given to the Public Trustee. For the first time in Singapore, solicitors can deposit information pertaining to a will in a government depository and approved persons may conduct searches for such information. The Registry is managed by the Public Trustee's Office.

In the administration of a deceased's estate, the administrator or executor has to first ascertain whether the deceased has left behind a will. In many cases, the next-of-kin or beneficiary believes that the deceased has drawn up a will but does not have a copy of it or lacks information as to which solicitor drew up the will. The present practice is that solicitors resort to advertising in legal journals seeking knowledge of the whereabouts of wills made by individuals.

The setting up of a Wills Registry as a central depository will make the administration of estate matters smoother and more efficient. It will be beneficial to solicitors in obtaining information on a will previously drawn up or any subsequent will to be drawn up. Solicitors are strongly encouraged to make the depositing of information on wills a routine practice when carrying out legal work in estate matters such as the drafting of wills.

The Registry ensures strict confidentiality over all deposited information pertaining to wills. Information is released only to (i) the testator (the person who made the will), (ii) solicitors acting for the testator or the estate of the deceased testator, and (iii) the next-of-kin or beneficiary of the deceased testator. The Registry does not accept deposits of a copy of the will itself or its contents. Only the following information needs to be deposited: (a) particulars of the testator, (b) date of the will, (c) particulars of the solicitor who drew up the will, (d) particulars of the custodian of the will, and (e) particulars of the informant.

"The Ministry of Law is committed to constantly reviewing and improving the legal infrastructure in Singapore. The setting up of the Wills Registry underlines the proactive role taken by the Ministry in providing new services which are affordable, accessible and beneficial to the community." said Dr S Chandra Mohan, Director (Legal Policy), Ministry of Law.

Solicitors can deposit or conduct searches for information pertaining to a will by obtaining the relevant forms from the website:

<http://www.ipto.gov.sg/>

or the Forms-On-Demand service hotline at Tel: 6325-1420 or the Public Trustee's Office. Depositing of information is free. There is a \$10 fee for each application for a search.