

# **ABSD Playbook: How Smart Buyers Legally Save Thousands on Stamp Duty**

By James Lim | Trusted by Singapore's Upgraders & Investors


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## **What Is ABSD?**

**ABSD = Additional Buyer's Stamp Duty**, a tax imposed on residential property purchases in Singapore **on top of BSD (Buyer's Stamp Duty)**.  
It's meant to **cool the market** and **discourage speculative buying**.

## **Latest ABSD Rates (2025 Edition)**

Buyer Profile	First Property	Second Property	Third Property
Singapore Citizen	0%	20%	30%
Singapore PR	5%	30%	35%
Foreigner	60%	60%	60%
Entity/Trust	65%	65%	65%

 *All ABSD is based on the **higher of purchase price or market value**.*

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## **Who Is This For?**

- Singapore Citizens upgrading from HDB or condo
  - Dual-income couples planning a second property
  - Buyers hoping to **claim ABSD remission/refund**
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## **2 Paths — Which One Are You Taking?**

Upgrade Type	Ideal Path
<b>Sell First, Then Buy</b>	Best for ABSD savings, lower risk
<b>Buy First, Then Sell</b>	Only if you qualify for ABSD remission (SC couples)

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## Timeline Checklist (Sell First, Then Buy)

- Step 1: Home Valuation + Agent Consultation**
    - Get valuation and timeline advice for current home
    - Plan for 3-month extension (if needed)
  - Step 2: Prepare Home for Sale**
    - Declutter and stage your unit
    - List on portals, activate buyer network
  - Step 3: Accept Offer & Negotiate Timeline**
    - Ensure buyer agrees to 3-month extension
    - Confirm estimated Option Exercise Date
  - Step 4: Start Viewing New Units**
    - Shortlist based on location, future appreciation
    - Get In-Principle Approval (IPA) for loan
  - Step 5: Option-to-Purchase for New Home**
    - Exercise only **after** buyer exercises their Option
    - Coordinate timelines for completion and ABSD refund buffer
  - Step 6: Completion + Keys Handover**
    - Ensure no overlap in legal possession
    - Move in, celebrate savings!
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## Timeline Checklist (Buy First, Then Sell — With ABSD Remission)

- Step 1: Check Remission Eligibility**
  - Both buyers must be **Singapore Citizens**
  - Married couple, buying **jointly**
  - Must sell previous home within **6 months** of purchase
  - Cannot own more than 1 other property
- Step 2: Prepare ABSD Buffer**
  - You must **pay ABSD first** (e.g. \$400k on \$2M property)
  - Prepare liquid funds or CPF to cover upfront
- Step 3: Buy New Property**
  - Exercise OTP and pay ABSD
  - Apply for loan and proceed with conveyancing

**Step 4: Sell Old Property Within 6 Months**

- Plan timeline and pricing carefully
- Use 3-month extension if needed

**Step 5: Apply for ABSD Refund**

- Must submit IRAS remission form + documents
- Refund typically processed within 3–4 months



## Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Exercising OTP before selling your current home** (when not eligible for remission)
- Missing the 6-month deadline** for ABSD remission refund
- Assuming you can decouple anytime** – legal timelines and SSD (Seller’s Stamp Duty) may block this
- Buying jointly with a non-SC spouse** – you lose eligibility for remission
- Inadequate financial buffer** – don’t forget you must pay ABSD upfront first
- Delaying your sale** – if the market turns or you overprice, refund eligibility could expire



## ABSD Refund Submission Checklist (If You Buy First, Then Sell)

- Property bought under **both SC spouses’ names**
- Both buyers **do not own more than 2 properties**
- Old property is **sold within 6 months** of the new purchase
- Application submitted to **IRAS within 6 months** of selling old property
- All legal and ownership documents attached
- Keep proof of **ABSD payment and refund claim**

 [Download IRAS ABSD Remission Form](#)

(Include this as a clickable link)

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## Tools You Can Use

 [Loan Calculator](#)


[Check monthly repayments before you buy.](#)

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# 5 Legal ABSD Hacks Smart Buyers Use

## 1. Married Couple ABSD Remission


- Both must be **Singapore Citizens**
- Must sell the **first residential property** within **6 months** of buying the second
- Property must be bought **under both names**

 *Pro Tip:* Always check loan eligibility and timeline **before** triggering this option.

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## 2. Decoupling: Sell Share to Spouse

Sell your share of a jointly owned property to your spouse, freeing one name to buy another.

 Good for: Couples who want to **own 2 properties legally**


 Risks: Legal fees, Seller's Stamp Duty (if within 3 years)

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## 3. Buy Under Child's Name

Use adult children's names to purchase, especially if they don't yet own property.

 Great for: Wealth transfer and long-term investment


 Requires child to qualify for loan and income checks

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## 4. Trust Purchases

Buy under a **trust for minor child** (no ABSD payable upfront — only if trust is revoked).  
But **must be 100% cash purchase**.

 Good for: Ultra high net worth families

 Complex — speak to a lawyer before executing.

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## 5. Strategic Order of Buying/Selling

- **Sell first**, negotiate a 3-month extension
- **Buy second**, trigger ABSD remission window

This avoids cash flow issues and lets you **claim back ABSD legally**.

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## **ABSD FAQs**

**Q: Can I get a refund if I sell my first property later?**

A: Yes — but only if you meet remission criteria (see above) and apply within the IRAS deadline.

**Q: How long do I have to wait between properties to avoid ABSD?**

A: You don't have to wait, but you must **sell your existing property first** or qualify for remission.

**Q: Can I hold multiple properties without paying ABSD?**

A: Only with proper planning (decoupling, trust, or one name ownership).


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## **Your Next Step: Speak to a Property Strategist**

Too many upgraders overpay in stamp duty. You don't have to.

At **SGLuxuryCondo**, we break down your buyer profile and timeline to help you:

- We'll help you structure your timeline
- Recommend whether to buy or sell first
- Guide you through loan, ABSD, legal, and timeline planning
- And show you real units that fit your upgrade goals
- Structure ownership smartly
- Upgrade with minimal stress

 Book a free 15-min consult at [www.sgluxurycondo.com](http://www.sgluxurycondo.com)

 Or DM us @sgluxurycondo on TikTok or Instagram