Surviving Seletar: Singapore’s Second Airport

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OPSGROUP members can access an updated version of this guide, effective Oct 2025, on the members Dashboard here.

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If you’re planning to operate a business jet into Singapore, there’s a good chance you won’t be bound for WSSS/Changi Airport at all. Instead you may be headed for the lesser known WSSL/Seletar – Singapore’s secondary commercial airport, and it can be *a lot* more challenging.

Here’s a basic rundown of just what to expect to keep you ahead of the game next time you are flying into Seletar.

The Basics

Seletar is a stone's throw (8nm) northeast of WSSS/Changi. It has a single 6020ft/1840m long runway and serves predominantly turbo prop and corporate jet traffic. It has fuel and good facilities for business ops.

Just getting in there at all can be a pain – the airport is surrounded with prohibited and restricted airspace, noise abatement areas, training areas, military airports; as well as a bunch of buildings, cranes, boats, and other obstacles to the north of the airport on the Malaysian side – just across the Strait of Johor.

And since Malaysia effectively killed the plans for ILS at Seletar back at the start of 2019, there are **no available instrument approaches at all**, requiring **visual approaches** to be flown onto both runways.

The Airspace Picture

Operations at Seletar are difficult because of the complicated airspace that surrounds it, and it is the reason why there are no instrument approaches. *There just isn't enough room.*

Seletar is literally boxed in by a variety of restricted airspace. To the west lies the Sembawang airbase, and to the east the Payar Lebar airbase. Both are strictly military.

Then just a smidge to the north is the boundary with Malaysian airspace, the WMFC/Kuala Lumpur FIR. South of the airport is highly noise sensitive, with three noise abatement areas where hefty fines await.

Throw these things together and you have the Seletar 'Fish Bowl' – a small bubble of airspace where there is precious little room to manoeuvre. Here's a picture of what this all looks like.

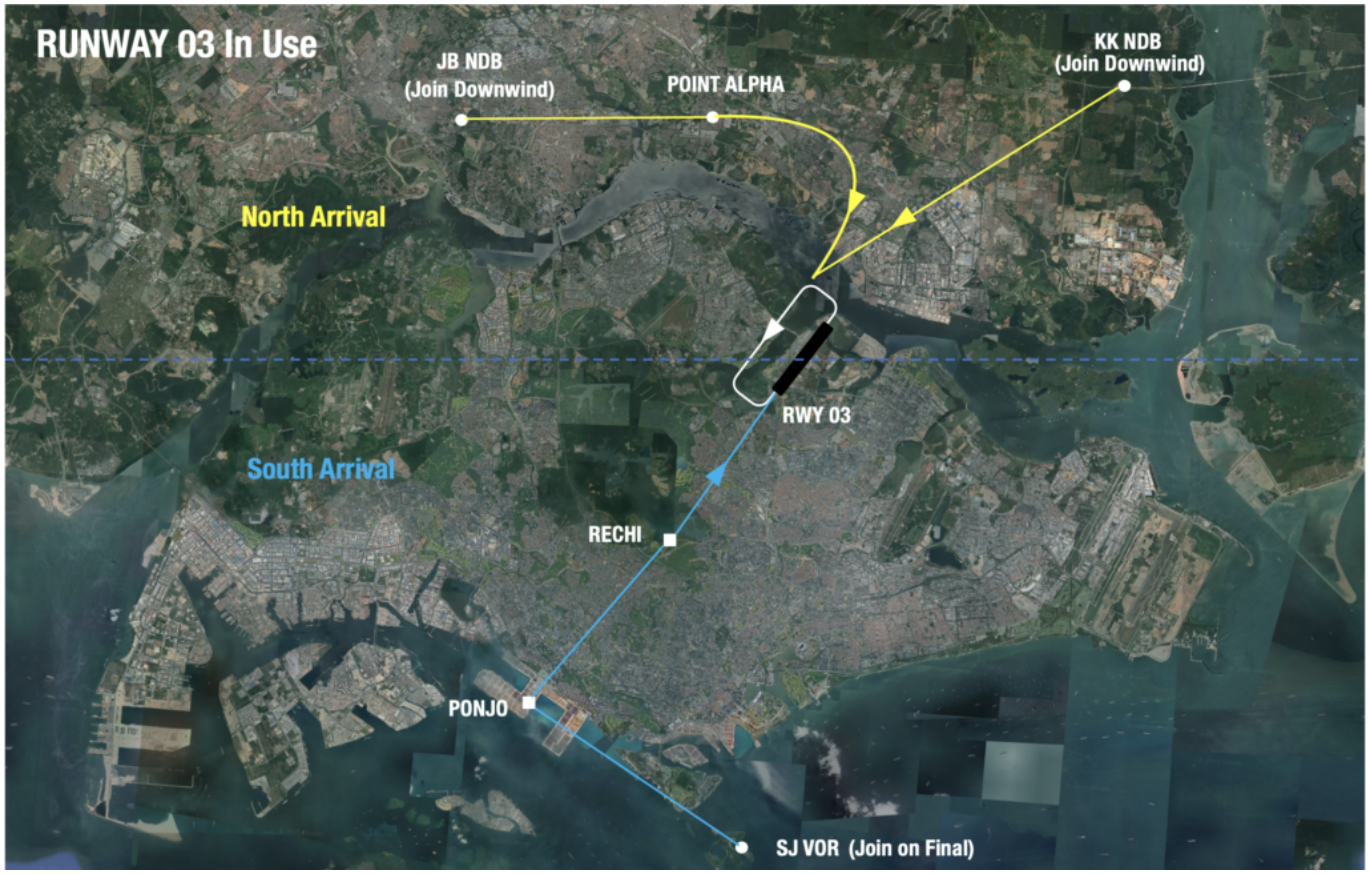
The Seletar 'Fish Bowl'

Arrival Procedures

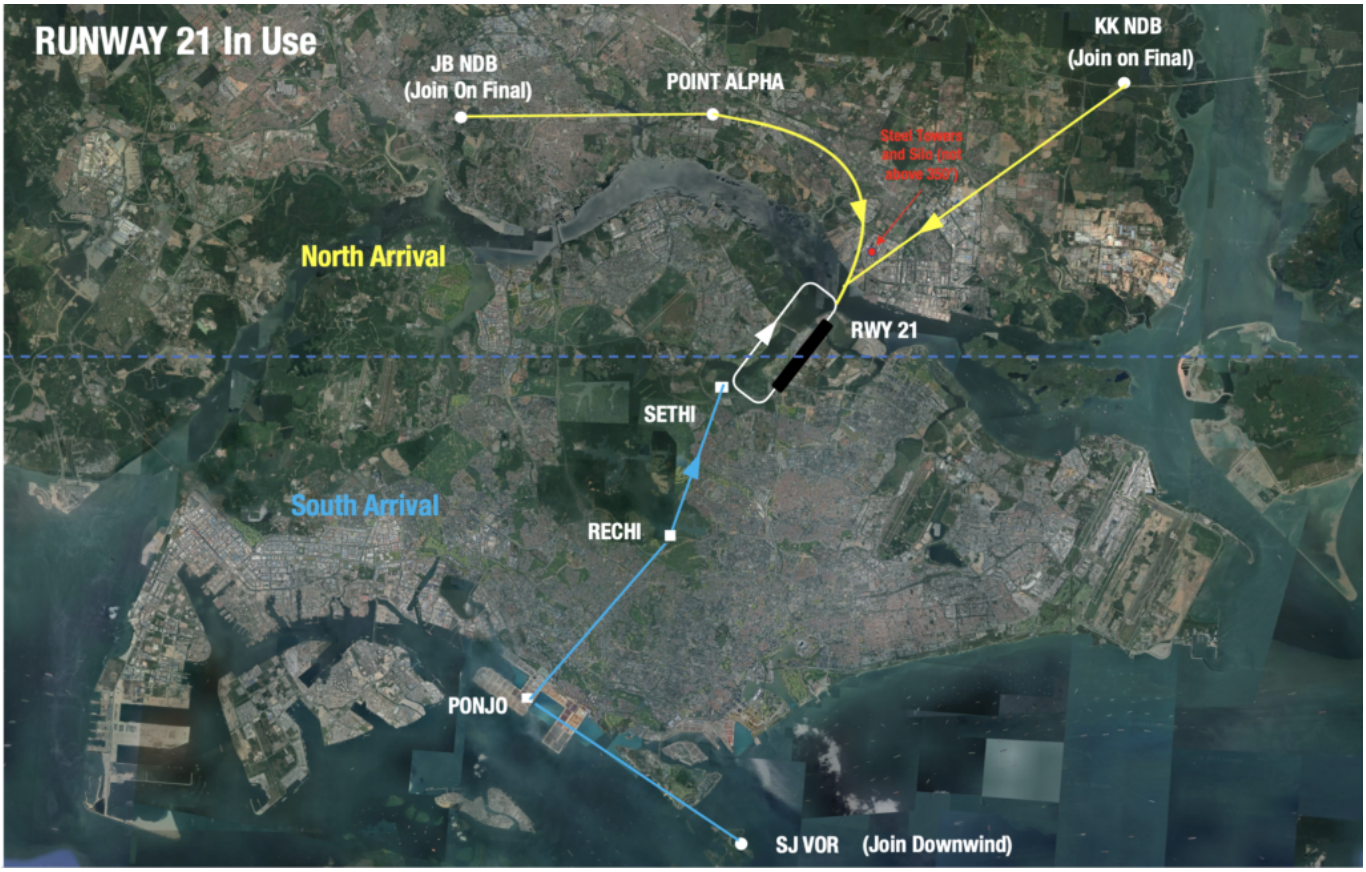
To keep things simple, the end game is to join the circuit and fly a visual approach, **without busting any airspace.** To help you with this there are a number of visual arrivals that require you to be in VMC conditions. If you can't get visual, you'll need to hold or divert to nearby Changi.

There are essentially two arrival procedures – **North** and **South**. And all arriving aircraft will join them through one of three feeder points – Jaybee NDB (JB), Sinjon VOR (SJ) or Kong Kong NDB (KK). From there you will either join downwind, straight in or even overhead if you need the extra track miles.

You can view the current plates for those procedures in the Singapore AIP online. But to make it easy, here's a couple of pictures.



Arrivals onto Runway 03



Arrivals onto Runway 21 – make sure you have the ‘steel towers and silo’ in sight for an earlier approach clearance.

Things to look out for

Day and night closures: The airport is closed every night between 22-07 local time except for medevac and SAR. And then during the daytime, there are several infuriating closures to accommodate training flights. So essentially, GA/BA flights can only operate to Seletar at these times : 0700-0930, 1030-1200, 1300-1500, 1600-1700, 1800-2200 local time.

The circuit is tight. It is always on the western side of the airport and you cannot fly your circuit wider than 1.5nm due to Sembawang's airspace. Which means the turn onto final is also going to be tight.

The profile is steeper than normal. 3.2 degrees on Runway 03, and 3.5 degrees on Runway 21. Which means you will need higher rates of descent than a standard visual circuit 'outta the book'.

You need to be visual. If you're not VMC, you can't land at Seletar. Thunderstorms are common in Singapore with heavy rain, and they tend to be slow moving. The worst times are afternoons and evenings.

'Steel Structures and Silos' – You'll hear it on the ATIS, and you need to report you have them in sight if arriving on Runway 21. They're on the Malaysian coastline north of Seletar. Spot them early and you'll get an earlier approach clearance from ATC which will make your job easier.

Mistaken Identity: Both nearby Sembawang and Paya Lebar airports have similar runway orientations to Seletar and it is easy to line up with the wrong one. Tune up Seletar's NDB (220) – the needle doesn't lie!

Missed Approaches. Expect to re-enter the circuit for both runways – which means a prompt turn downwind and not above 1500ft.

Ops on the Ground

You'll be pleased to know, pretty straight forward. Parking can become limited, and so it always pays to book a spot with your handling agent well in advance.

Departures

Both runways have noise abatement. Just the standard stuff here – NADP 1 or 2. Your call.

There are published visual departure procedures for both runways. Essentially they involve a climb straight ahead to 1000ft, followed by a turn onto a radar heading.

For departures downwind, the challenge is to stay within the 'Fish Bowl.' Which means keeping your turn tight, and your speed down. Ironically the noise abatement procedures help here.

Your Layover

Assuming Covid isn't still ruining the party, Singapore is famous for food. Three words: Chilli Mud Crab. Jumbo Seafood Restaurant in Clarke Quay is the place to go. And if you're beer inclined, Tiger is the perfect accompanying drop. For the time being, you may need to rely on Uber Eats. Don't worry though, Jumbo also delivers.

Handling

There's a few good options to choose from. Here are some contacts:

- Wings Over Asia: Ph +65 9455 5615 Email: fltops@wingsoverasia.com
- Jet Aviation: Ph +65 6335 7420 Email: sinfbo@jetaviation.com

- Universal Aviation: +65 6484 4848 Email: singapore@universalaviation.aero

Facilities and handling at Seletar are generally excellent.

Other options?

Technically, bizav operators are still allowed to go to **WSSS/Changi**, but will normally only be allowed quick turnarounds subject to runway/bay availability, and then you'll have to go elsewhere for parking.

Another option is **WMKJ/Johor Bahru**, on the Malaysian side, around 25nm north of Singapore. It's open from 06-00 local time, with extensions possible with prior notice. It has a separate FBO with its own VIP lounge and hangars with maintenance support, and has no slots or parking restrictions for bizav ops. Check out the brochure!

The only downside in WMKJ is that it can sometimes take a bit of time for immigration when you cross the road border heading south into Singapore – sometimes 2-3 hours during busy travel periods.

Opsgroup members can **read reports on all these airports** in Airport Spy.

Permits and stuff

If you're operating as a **private flight** to either Changi or Seletar, things don't get too complicated, as permits are not required for private flights. Just make sure you have parking arranged, and file your inbound ATC flight plan 12 hours in advance, being sure to copy in the Singapore ATC AFTN address WSJCZQZX.

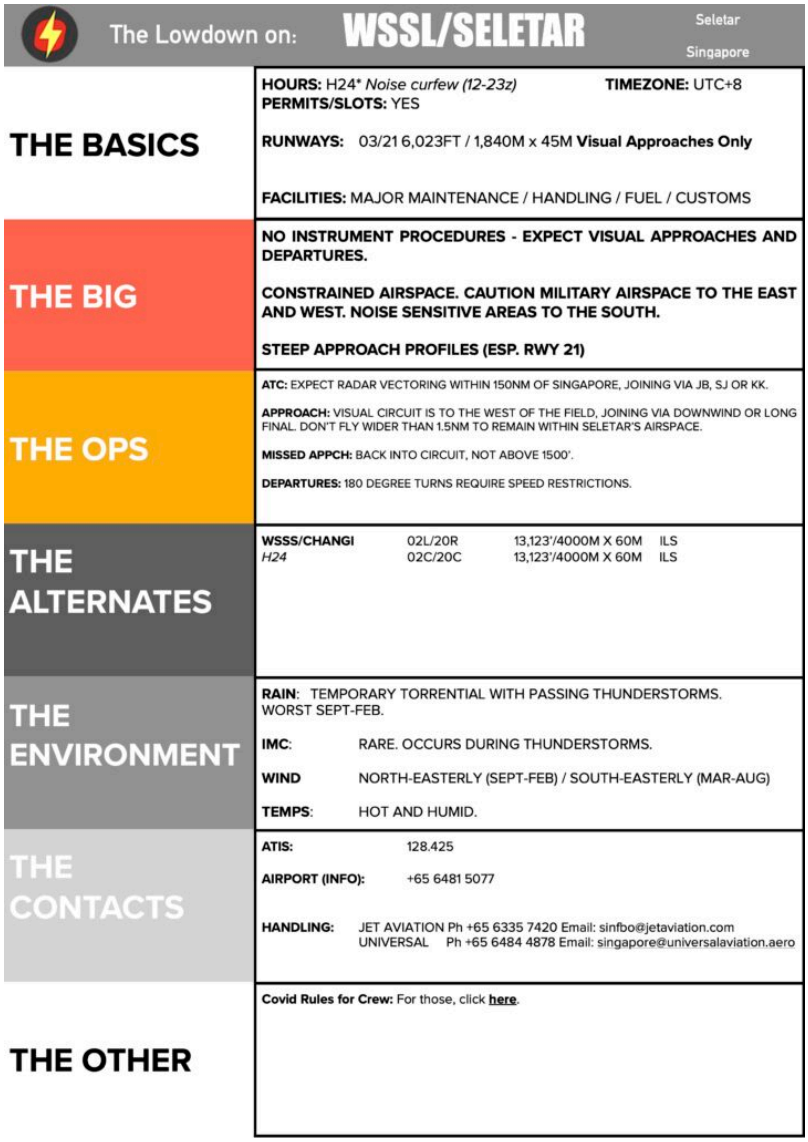
If you're doing a **charter flight** on the other hand, you're going to need a landing permit, which means you're going to have to jump through a few hoops.

For this, you'll need to get an **Operations Permit** from Singapore CAA, which is basically a blanket approval to conduct revenue flights to Singapore, valid for up to one year. You'll then need to get an **Air Transport Permit**, which is required for every individual charter schedule into Singapore (Changi or Seletar). Save yourself some hassle and get a local handler to help arrange these for you.

Airport Lowdowns

Have you heard of them? We make a bunch, especially if you ask for one! They're what you need to know from crew *who have been there.* And they're on one small, simple piece of paper. You can read more about them here.

We've got you covered. Check out Seletar's here.



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