حكومة دبي
GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI

DUBAI
دبي للاقتصاد والسياحة
Economy and Tourism

SHARED OFFICE LOCATION

INVESTOR GUIDE

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WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is intended for investors and businesses seeking to operate multiple commercial licences, branch licences, or permits from a single office location while maintaining separate legal entities.

This guide may be relevant if you are:

- Establishing a Family Holding Company
- Managing a Family Office structure
- Creating Special Purpose Entities (SPEs)
- Establishing Investment Holding Companies
- Managing multiple companies under common ownership
- Expanding a corporate group structure
- Operating several businesses as an entrepreneur or investor
- Operating a Free Zone company seeking to conduct business activities in mainland Dubai

WHAT IS SHARED OFFICE LOCATION?

Dubai allows eligible businesses with common ownership to operate multiple licences (all applicable business licences), branch licences and permits from the same office location, subject to applicable requirements. This enables investors to consolidate operations, reduce costs and simplify administration while preserving legal separation between entities.

WHAT THIS MEANS

- Each company remains a separate legal entity
- Each company maintains its own licence, permit or branch licence
- Multiple licences, permits and branch licences may operate from the same office location
- Investors may reduce office rental and operating costs (market fee is charged only on main licence) (not applicable for FZ permits and branch licences)
- Administration and management functions may be centralised
- Family and investment structures can be managed more efficiently
- Eligible Free Zone companies may use their existing Free Zone office location when obtaining a mainland permit or mainland branch licence

HOWEVER

Shared office locations do not change certain things:

- Companies are not merged
- Shareholding structures do not automatically change
- Assets and liabilities remain separate
- Regulatory obligations continue to apply
- Licences, permits and branch licences remain independent

WHY INVESTORS USE SHARED OFFICE LOCATIONS

1. Lower operating costs: Reduce office rental and facility costs by accommodating multiple entities within a single location.
2. Centralised management: Manage multiple companies through one operational and administrative hub.
3. Family wealth structuring: Support family holdings, succession planning and investment structures.
4. Easier expansion: Add future entities without leasing separate offices, subject to eligibility requirements.
5. Improved governance: Create stronger oversight across group companies and investment vehicles.
6. Efficient capital allocation: Redirect resources from real estate costs towards business growth and investment opportunities.
7. Mainland expansion for free zone businesses: Expand into mainland Dubai without necessarily requiring a separate mainland office location.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To utilise a shared office location arrangement, all the following requirements must be satisfied.

- **Requirement 1:** Common ownership: At least one owner or partner must be listed on every participating licence operating from the shared location.
- **Requirement 2:** Minimum office space: Each participating licence must be allocated a minimum of 100 square feet (9.3 square metres)
- **Requirement 3:** Tenancy compliance: The premises must comply with all applicable tenancy requirements.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF LICENCES

Calculation Formula: Total Leasable Area ÷ 100 sq. ft. = Maximum Number of Licences

Total Leasable Area	Maximum Number of Licences
500 sq. ft.	5
1,000 sq. ft.	10
2,000 sq. ft.	20
3,000 sq. ft.	30
5,000 sq. ft.	50

COMMON INVESTOR SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1: FAMILY HOLDING COMPANY

Typical situation A family establishes multiple entities to manage:
Family investments
Real estate assets
International investments
Intellectual property
Succession planning

Shared office solution
The Family Holding Company and related entities operate from a single office location.

Benefits

- ✓ Lower office rental costs
- ✓ Centralised governance
- ✓ Simplified administration
- ✓ Easier succession planning
- ✓ Efficient management of family assets

SCENARIO 2: INVESTMENT AND ASSET HOLDING STRUCTURE

Typical situation An investor establishes separate entities to own:
Real estate assets
Investment portfolios
Strategic shareholdings
Intellectual property assets

Shared office solution
All investment entities operate from one shared office location while maintaining separate ownership records and legal identities.

Benefits

- ✓ Cost efficiency
- ✓ Asset segregation
- ✓ Simplified management
- ✓ Reduced operational overhead

COMMON INVESTOR SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 3: CORPORATE GROUP EXPANSION

Typical situation A business owner expands operations through multiple companies performing different activities.
Trading Company
Services Company
Investment Holding Company
Regional Expansion Company

Shared office solution
All eligible companies operate from one office location.

Benefits

- ✓ Reduced rental costs
- ✓ Easier management
- ✓ Centralised support functions
- ✓ Scalable operating model

SCENARIO 4: ENTREPRENEUR WITH MULTIPLE BUSINESSES

Typical situation
An entrepreneur owns several independent businesses under common ownership.

Shared office solution
The businesses operate from one compliant office location.

Benefits

- ✓ Lower operating costs
- ✓ Simplified administration
- ✓ Easier growth
- ✓ More efficient use of office space

COMMON INVESTOR SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 5: FREE ZONE COMPANY OBTAINING A MAINLAND PERMIT

Typical situation
A Free Zone company wishes to conduct business activities in mainland Dubai vthrough a mainland permit while retaining its Free Zone establishment.

Shared office solution
The company may use its existing Free Zone office location for both:

- The Free Zone licence
- The mainland permit

Provided applicable requirements are satisfied.

Benefits

- ✓ Avoids duplicate office costs
- ✓ Faster market expansion
- ✓ Maintains existing Free Zone operations
- ✓ Reduces operational complexity
- ✓ Supports efficient entry into mainland Dubai

SCENARIO 6: FREE ZONE COMPANY ESTABLISHING A MAINLAND BRANCH LICENCE

Typical situation
A Free Zone company wishes to establish a branch in mainland Dubai while retaining its Free Zone headquarters.

Shared office solution
The mainland branch licence and the Free Zone parent company may use the same Free Zone office location, subject to applicable requirements.

Benefits

- ✓ No need for a second office location
- ✓ Reduced operating costs
- ✓ Simplified administration
- ✓ Easier expansion into mainland Dubai
- ✓ Centralised management of Free Zone and mainland operations

WHAT NULLIFIES A SHARED OFFICE LOCATION ARRANGEMENT?

A shared office location arrangement remains valid only while all eligibility requirements continue to be satisfied.

BREACH 1: COMMON OWNERSHIP CEASES

What happens?
The common owner or partner is no longer present across all participating licences.

Share transfer
Partner withdrawal
Corporate restructuring
Ownership changes

Result
The shared office eligibility requirement is no longer satisfied.

Corrective actions

- Restore common ownership; or
- Relocate affected licences to another compliant location.

BREACH 2: MINIMUM OFFICE SPACE REQUIREMENT IS NO LONGER MET

What happens?
The office can no longer accommodate all participating licences based on the minimum 100 sq. ft. allocation requirement.

Office downsizing
Additional licences exceeding office capacity
Reduced leasable area

Result
The office no longer satisfies the minimum space requirement.

Corrective actions

- Increase office space; or
- Reduce participating licences; or
- Relocate excess licences.

WHAT NULLIFIES A SHARED OFFICE LOCATION ARRANGEMENT?

BREACH 3: TENANCY COMPLIANCE IS NO LONGER SATISFIED

What happens?
The premises no longer comply with applicable tenancy requirements.

Expired tenancy contract
Cancelled tenancy agreement
Invalid tenancy documentation

Result
The office location may no longer remain compliant.

Corrective actions

- Renew tenancy arrangements; or
- Regularise tenancy compliance; or
- Relocate affected licences.

BREACH 4: FREE ZONE OFFICE LOCATION IS NO LONGER MAINTAINED

Applies to
- Mainland Permit issued to a Free Zone company
- Mainland Branch Licence issued to a Free Zone Company

What happens?
The shared location arrangement relies on the continued existence of the Free Zone office location supporting both the Free Zone licence and the mainland permit or branch licence.

Free Zone tenancy expires
Free Zone office is cancelled
Free Zone office is relocated to a non-compliant location
Physical office eligibility is no longer maintained

Result
The mainland permit or mainland branch licence may no longer qualify to use the Free Zone office location.

Corrective actions

- Renew or regularise the Free Zone office arrangement; or
- Establish another eligible location; or
- Relocate the mainland permit or branch licence.

WHAT NULLIFIES A SHARED OFFICE LOCATION ARRANGEMENT?

BREACH 5: FREE ZONE PARENT RELATIONSHIP CEASES

Applies to

- Mainland Permit issued to a Free Zone company
- Mainland Branch Licence issued to a Free Zone company

What happens?

The shared location arrangement depends on the continued existence of the Free Zone company and its relationship to the mainland permit or branch licence.

Free Zone licence is cancelled
Free Zone company is liquidated
Mainland branch relationship is terminated
Regulatory approvals are withdrawn

Result

The mainland permit or mainland branch licence may no longer qualify to use the Free Zone office location.

Corrective actions

- Reinstate the qualifying relationship; or
- Establish a compliant office location; or
- Restructure the business arrangement to satisfy applicable requirements.

RESTORING COMPLIANCE

If a shared office arrangement becomes non-compliant, investors should take corrective action as soon as practicable.

Corrective actions may include:

- **Restoring common ownership**
- **Increasing office space**
- **Reducing participating licences**
- **Relocating licences**
- **Renewing tenancy arrangements**
- **Re-establishing Free Zone office eligibility**
- **Maintaining the Free Zone parent-company relationship**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

1. **Can multiple companies share the same office?**
   Yes. Eligible businesses may share the same office location subject to applicable requirements.
2. **Must all shareholders be identical?**
   No. However, at least one owner or partner must be common across all participating licences.
3. **Can Family Holding Companies utilise this arrangement?**
   Yes.
4. **Can Special Purpose Entities utilise this arrangement?**
   Yes.
5. **Can related companies within a corporate group utilise this arrangement?**
   Yes, provided eligibility requirements continue to be satisfied.
6. **Can a Free Zone company use its Free Zone office location when obtaining a mainland permit?**
   Yes. Eligible Free Zone companies may use their existing Free Zone office location when obtaining mainland permits.
7. **Can a Free Zone company use its Free Zone office location when establishing a mainland branch licence?**
   Yes. Eligible Free Zone companies may use their existing Free Zone office location when establishing mainland branch licences.
8. **What happens if the common owner exits one of the participating companies?**
   The shared office arrangement may no longer satisfy the common ownership requirement, and corrective action may be required.
9. **What happens if the office becomes too small for all participating licences?**
   The arrangement may no longer satisfy the minimum office space requirement. Additional space may be secured, excess licences may be relocated, or the number of participating licences may be reduced.
10. **What happens if tenancy requirements are no longer met?**
    The tenancy arrangement should be renewed or regularised, or the affected licences should be relocated to a compliant location.
11. **What happens if the Free Zone office is cancelled or no longer valid?**
    The mainland permit or mainland branch licence may no longer qualify to utilise the Free Zone office location. Appropriate corrective action should be taken to restore compliance.
12. **What happens if the Free Zone company is cancelled or liquidated?**
    Where the shared location arrangement depends on the Free Zone company and its office location, the arrangement may no longer qualify once the Free Zone company ceases to exist.
13. **Can a mainland permit continue using the Free Zone office if the Free Zone licence has expired?**
    No. The Free Zone licence and its office arrangement should remain valid and compliant for the shared location arrangement to continue.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

14. Can a mainland branch continue using the Free Zone office if the parent Free Zone company is liquidated?

No. The branch arrangement depends on the continued existence of the parent Free Zone company.

15. Does a breach automatically cancel my licence, permit or branch licence?

No. A change in ownership, office size, tenancy status or Free Zone status does not automatically cancel a licence, permit or branch licence. However, corrective action may be required to restore compliance.

16. How can compliance be restored after a breach?

Compliance may generally be restored by:

- Re-establishing common ownership
- Increasing office capacity
- Reducing participating licences
- Relocating licences
- Regularising tenancy arrangements
- Re-establishing Free Zone office eligibility
- Maintaining the qualifying parent-company relationship

INVESTOR CHECKLIST

Before proceeding, confirm the following:

- **Office size has been determined**
- **Number of participating licences has been identified**
- **Common ownership requirement is satisfied**
- **Tenancy requirements are met**
- **Shared office capacity has been validated**
- **Future growth requirements have been considered**
- **Long-term ownership structure has been assessed**
- **Free Zone and mainland expansion requirements have been assessed (where applicable)**

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Investors increasingly establish multiple entities to support:

- **Family wealth management**
- **Succession planning**
- **Asset protection**
- **Investment diversification**
- **Real estate ownership**
- **Corporate structuring**
- **International expansion**
- **Mainland expansion from Free Zones**

Dubai's shared office location framework helps investors reduce costs, centralise operations and scale efficiently while maintaining separate legal identities and separate licences.

This enables businesses to expand, invest and grow more efficiently while supporting Dubai's position as one of the world's most investor-friendly business destinations.


ONE LOCATION.
MULTIPLE LICENCES.
GREATER EFFICIENCY.