SINGAPORE PROPERTY · BRIEFING

Buy first, or sell first?

The sequencing decision that only exists because the 15-month wait-out was removed

Prepared for you after you messaged **"15ORDER"**

Policy announced 28 July 2026 · Data as at 31 July 2026

Sources: HDB, MND, URA, IRAS and published market commentary

01 A decision that didn't exist last week

Under the wait-out there was no choice: you sold, you waited fifteen months, you bought. The sequence was forced. Now you can buy first — and that freedom carries a deadline.

	SELL FIRST	BUY FIRST
Disposal deadline	None — the sale is already done	6 months from completing the flat purchase
Risk of ABSD clawback	Very low	Real, if your unit doesn't move
Budget certainty	Exact proceeds known before you commit	Estimated until the sale completes
Housing gap	Possible interim rental	None
Choice of flat	Whatever is available when you're ready	Secure the specific unit you want
Negotiating position when selling	Relaxed	Weakens as the deadline approaches

The asymmetry that should decide it. Sell-first costs you an interim rental in the worst case. Buy-first costs you the ABSD clawback in the worst case. Those are not comparable numbers, and that asymmetry is why sell-first suits most people.

02 When buy-first is defensible

It is a legitimate choice for some. Be honest about whether you're one of them.

BUY-FIRST SUITS YOU IF MOST OF THESE ARE TRUE

- [ ] **Your unit is genuinely fast-moving** — Few comparable listings, recent sales in your project completing quickly
- [ ] **You could fund the ABSD clawback if it happened** — Not comfortably — but without it damaging you
- [ ] **You've found something genuinely scarce** — A specific layout, stack or block that rarely comes up
- [ ] **You have flexibility on price when selling** — You can meet the market rather than hold out
- [ ] **Your conveyancing lawyer has confirmed the exact deadline** — When your six months begins, in writing

Fewer than four of these, and sell-first is very likely the better call — even if it means renting for a few months.

03 Testing how fast your unit would move

CHECK THESE BEFORE YOU DECIDE

- [ ] **Comparable units currently listed in your project** — More listings means longer to sell
- [ ] **How long recent sales took from listing to option** — Ask for the actual figures, not an impression
- [ ] **Whether your layout is common or scarce** — Common layouts compete directly with your neighbours
- [ ] **Whether Seller's Stamp Duty applies** — Bought on or after 4 Jul 2025 means a 4-year holding period
- [ ] **How the downgrader wave affects your segment** — Older, larger suburban units face the most additional competition
- [ ] **What a realistic price is, not a hopeful one** — Overpricing is what turns six months into eight

> **One buffer worth building in.** If you go buy-first, plan to sell within four months, not six. The two-month buffer is what protects you, and a single soft quarter can consume it faster than most people expect.

Want your sequence decided properly?

Send me your project and unit type. I'll give you an honest read on how fast it would actually sell, and tell you which order I'd use in your position.

[YOUR NAME] · [AGENCY]

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Prepared 31 July 2026. Figures are drawn from HDB, MND, URA, IRAS and published market commentary as at that date and may since have changed — verify current data before acting. Views expressed are the author's opinion, not a forecast or guarantee of outcome, and do not constitute financial, tax or legal advice. Every situation differs; please seek advice specific to your circumstances.