



NEWS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

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SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE FIRE AND AMBULANCE STATISTICS

TOPIC 3

FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS (JAN – DEC 2009)

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICE (FHAN)

In 2009, SCDF conducted 13,252 enforcement checks and issued 3288 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHAN). Under the Fire Safety Act, the FHAN is a notice to warn building owners and management to remove the hazard. The number of FHAN increased by 1188 (57%) from 2100 in 2008 to 3288 in 2009. This increase can be attributed to heightened checks by SCDF as well as the increased number of public feedback. The most common fire hazards resulting in FHANs were poor maintenance of hose reels and fire extinguishers (733 FHANs) which can affect early mitigation of fires by occupants and obstructed exits (679 FHANs) which can impede evacuation in case of fires.

Description of fire hazard	Jan – Dec 2008	Jan – Dec 2009	Absolute Change
Non-maintenance of fire-fighting equipment (Hose reel/Fire Extinguisher)	456	733	277
Obstruction to exits	437	679	242

Table 1: Fire Hazard Abatement Notice (Breakdown by Type of Hazard)

UNAUTHORISED CHANGE OF USE MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR FOR NOTICE OF FIRE SAFETY OFFENCE (NFSO)

2. A Notice of Fire Safety Offence (NFSO) is issued when there is direct contravention of the Act, for example, unauthorised fire safety works carried out. It carries with it a composition fine of between \$300 and \$500. Stepped-up enforcement checks conducted at industrial premises and residential premises, contributed towards the rise in the issuance of NFSO in 2009. A total of 1661 NFSOs were issued in 2009, an increase of 65% from the 1005 NFSOs issued in 2008.

3. The main contributing offence for the increase in NFSO was for unauthorised change of use, which rose by 515 in 2009. A large proportion of

this was due to the conversion of carpark areas for storage and processing of goods, detected during our inspections.

Type of Offence	Jan -Dec 2008	Jan- Dec 2009	Absolute Change
Unauthorised change of use	619	1134	515

Table 2 : Notice of Fire Safety Offence (Breakdown by Type of Offence)

4. SCDF takes violations of fire safety requirements seriously and will not hesitate to take firm actions against building management who do not promptly take action to rectify fire safety violations despite warnings and fines. Court action will be taken for serious cases. In 2009, there were 56 charges with 40 defendants, involving 42 premises/cases. For general fire safety violations, the maximum penalty can be up to \$10,000 and/or jail term not exceeding 6 months.

5. For carrying out unauthorised fire safety works, the building management can be fined up to \$50,000 and/or jailed for a term not exceeding 12 months. On 25 Aug 2009, M/S Choon Hin Gas Supply was fined \$16,000 for carrying out unauthorised fire safety works to install Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) manifold system. The piping system used at the premises revealed unapproved connecting joints and poor hoses management.

6. SCDF conducts enforcement checks on a regular basis to ensure that fire hazards and violations are detected and rectified. Enforcement actions are also taken when feedback is received from the public through e-mails, letters and hotline calls. Such public feedback shows the fire safety consciousness of our community and more importantly helps to keep offenders on their toes, enhancing our fire safety environment. Anyone who notices fire hazards may report them to SCDF on 1800-280-0000.

SCDF TO STEP-UP ON ENFORCEMENT CHECKS DURING CHINESE NEW YEAR

7. With the Chinese New Year approaching, shopping centers and public entertainment outlets can see an increase in patronage. The SCDF would like to urge all members of public to continue to be vigilant against fire occurrences. We would also like to remind owners and management of public buildings and places of recreation/entertainment including hotels and shopping centres to ensure compliance to all fire safety requirements. Escape passageways should be free of obstruction and fire exit doors should be kept unlocked for use during emergencies. Overcrowding in building premises especially public entertainment

outlets such as discotheques and pubs should be avoided so as to prevent a stampede situation if evacuation is required. The SCDF, on its part will be stepping up inspections at commercial buildings to check on fire safety violations.

Annex

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY TIPS DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON

FIRE SAFETY TIPS – HOMES

Cooking

1. Never leave cooking unattended as it can result in kitchen fires. Do not be distracted when cooking. Turn off the gas supply and cooking appliances whenever they are not in use.
2. Petrol or kerosene should not be used to start a BBQ fire – they can flare up unexpectedly. Use fire-starters instead.
3. Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case of emergencies. Never leave the barbeque unattended.
4. Charcoal should be doused with water when cooking is done. Smouldering charcoal and embers should not be thrown into rubbish chutes/bins which may lead to rubbish fires.


Electrical Appliances

1. Never overload electrical outlets with electrical appliances. Always unplug the appliances when they are not in use.
2. Do not run wires under carpets or mats – run them behind furniture instead. Keep wires away from hot surfaces.
3. Check the condition of wires regularly. Frayed or cracked cords should be replaced or repaired by licensed electricians.

Housekeeping

1. Keep cooking appliances including the stove-top, cooker hoods and ovens clean and free of grease. Never store combustibles near heat sources.
2. After parties or gatherings, check for smouldering cigarette butts around and under the sofa, chair cushions and carpets.
3. Ensure that cigarettes and cigars are fully put out in ashtrays before they are discarded.
4. Ensure that all unwanted furniture and items which are combustible in nature, are discarded properly. Contact your local Town Councils if you require assistance in the disposal of unwanted bulky items.

Decorations and Lightings

1. Check decorative lighting fixtures before use and regularly afterwards. If there are wear and tear problems, such as blown bulbs and frayed wires, replace them with new ones immediately, using the service of licensed electricians for repairs if necessary.
2. Do not leave decorative lighting fixtures, including the lit Christmas tree, switched-on when leaving home or when going to bed. Indoor lighting fixtures should only be used indoors to avoid electric shocks and short circuits.
3. Use decorative lighting fixtures which carry the SAFETY Mark. Like other electrical appliances and accessories such as fans and adaptors, decorative lighting fixture is also a Controlled Goods under the Consumer Protection (Safety Requirements) Registration Scheme, which is administered by SPRING Singapore.

4. Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily. Do not attach them to lights or other heat source, and always keep them away from candles.
5. Lit candles should be placed in stable holders on heat-resistant surface, so that they will not fall over. Lit candles should also be kept away from Christmas trees, paper or cardboard decorations, foliage, curtains and furnishings. It is also not advisable to leave candles burning in a room unattended.

Preventing Children from Starting Fires

1. Keep matches, lighters and candles out of children's reach.
2. Educate children on the dangers and hazards of fires.
3. Children playing with sparklers must be supervised by parents/adults.

Handling Sparklers

1. Sparklers should be kept in a closed box and away from flames.
2. When being used, it should be lit at arms length and only one at a time.
3. Lighted sparklers should never be thrown at combustible materials.
4. When a sparkler goes out, do not immediately touch the hot end for it could still burn. Ideally, put the hot end in a bucket of water to fully cool it down before disposing it safely.
5. Follow the safety instructions as stated by the manufacturer.

FIRE SAFETY TIPS – COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

1. Escape passageways should be free of obstruction and fire exit doors should be kept unlocked for use during emergencies.
2. It is also important to observe other fire safety requirements, including the approved occupancy load for premises (to avoid overcrowding), so as to enhance fire safety standards in buildings.

3. If you are in any public premises, ensure that you look out for the nearest exit door or staircase, in the event that you need to evacuate during an emergency.

ON-LINE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

1. The following websites provide many other fire safety tips:

a. <http://www.nfec.gov.sg>

b. <http://www.scdf.gov.sg>