



# NEWS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

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## SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE FIRE AND AMBULANCE STATISTICS

### TOPIC 1

### FIRE INCIDENT STATISTICS (JAN – DEC 2009)

#### **DROP IN RUBBISH FIRES, UNATTENDED COOKING FIRES AND HOUSEHOLD CONTENTS FIRES ENCOURAGING**

SCDF responded to a total of 5236 fires between Jan and Dec 2009, an increase of 263 cases (5%) from the 4973 cases last year. This increase was in part attributed to a rise in vegetation fires by 97 cases for 2009. This was mainly due to the dry season during Jan - Mar 2009.

2. Fires in residential premises contributed to 3544 cases (68%) of the total fires for the period. Of the 3544 fires in residential premises, rubbish fires formed the main bulk at 1561 (44%). Rubbish fires comprise fires involving rubbish chutes and rubbish bins located at lift lobbies. Although the number of rubbish fires continues to be high, it is encouraging to note that there was a drop of 138 cases (8%) in 2009, as shown in **Table 1**.

| Description                                    | Jan-Dec 2008 | Jan-Dec 2009 | Absolute Change | % Change |
|--|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| Rubbish Fires<br>(Rubbish Chutes/Rubbish Bins) | 1699         | 1561         | -138            | -8%      |

**Table 1: Breakdown on Rubbish Fires at Residential Premises**

3. Residents should continue to play their part to prevent rubbish fires and conscientiously adopt the following habits:

- a. Completely extinguish lighted cigarettes and other combustible material before disposal;
- b. Douse charcoal embers with water before disposal; and
- c. Avoid throwing flammable substances like paint, oil or kerosene into rubbish chutes/bins.

4. There was a drop of 7% in the number of fires involving contents in the house (e.g. furniture, clothing, mattresses and praying altars). **Table 2** shows the breakdown on the fires involving household contents and unattended cooking

fires. This drop is indeed encouraging and the public should continue to be vigilant and be aware of the fire hazards in their homes. The number of unattended cooking fires also fell from 533 in 2008 to 517 in 2009.

| Description              | Jan – Dec<br>2008 | Jan – Dec<br>2009 | Absolute<br>Change | %<br>Change |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Household Contents Fires | 305               | 285               | -20                | -7%         |
| Unattended Cooking Fires | 533               | 517               | -16                | -3%         |

**Table 2: Breakdown on Household Contents and Unattended Cooking Fires**

5. This decrease in the number of rubbish fires, unattended cooking fires and fires involving household contents could be attributed to greater public awareness on fire safety measures and the joint public education efforts by SCDF, National Fire and Civil Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC) and the Town Councils to put up banners at housing estates highlighting common household fires, including rubbish chute fires and unattended cooking, and the conduct of community engagement programmes in the heartlands by the grassroots.

**INCREASE IN FIRES INVOLVING DISCARDED ITEMS  
-PUBLIC URGED NOT TO LEAVE DISCARDED ITEMS AT COMMON AREA**

6. One area of concern is fires involving discarded items at common areas such as corridors, lift lobbies, staircases and void decks. As shown in **Table 3**, the number of fires for this category increased by 38% from 467 cases in 2008 to 644 cases in 2009. Fires involving discarded items at common spaces have the potential to be more serious in nature due to the high fire load present. Besides, such fires can hinder the smooth evacuation of occupants.

| Description                                 | Jan-Dec<br>2008 | Jan-Dec<br>2009 | Absolute<br>Change | %<br>Change |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Discarded Items Fires<br>(at common spaces) | 467             | 644             | 177                | +38%        |

**Table 3: Breakdown on Discarded Items Fires at Residential Premises**

7. Fires involving discarded items can be easily prevented if residents do not leave unwanted household items outside their homes or at common areas such as corridors and lift lobbies. These items, especially combustible items such as bulky furniture and newspapers, can easily start fires when lighted materials such as incense sticks and cigarette butts are indiscriminately thrown onto them. Residents should make arrangements with the Town Councils to remove any bulky items.

## LESS INDUSTRIAL FIRES

8. The number of fire outbreaks at industrial premises plunged by 11% from 158 in 2008 to 140 in 2009, as shown in **Table 4**. Owners and Management should continue to ensure that all measures are taken to prevent fires in such premises at all times as any fire outbreaks could translate into valuable losses in man-hours and property damages for the affected businesses.

| Description               | Jan – Dec<br>2008 | Jan – Dec<br>2009 | Absolute<br>Change | %<br>Change |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Industrial Premises Fires | 158               | 140               | -18                | -11%        |

**Table 4: Industrial Premises Fires**

## SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN VEGETATION FIRES

9. There was a significant increase in vegetation fires by 97 cases (23%) in 2009 due to the unusual dry spell experienced between Jan to Mar 2009. To prevent such fires, members of public are advised not to throw lighted materials such as cigarette butts and match sticks onto grass patches, gardens and fields. Unwanted furniture should also be properly disposed off instead of leaving them in open fields/gardens, which can serve as additional fuel to burning vegetation.

| Description      | Jan – Dec<br>2008 | Jan – Dec<br>2009 | Absolute<br>Change | %<br>Change |
|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Vegetation fires | 426               | 523               | 97                 | 23%         |

**Table 5: Vegetation Fires**

## INDISCRIMINATE DISPOSAL OF LIGHTED MATERIALS MAIN CAUSE OF FIRES

10. Dropped Light remains the highest contributing cause of fires, contributing to 65% of all fires. "Dropped Light" includes cigarette butts that were not properly extinguished, embers from charcoal, lit incense sticks and lighted matchsticks.

## NO FIRE FATALITIES FOR LAST TWO YEARS

11. Similar to 2008, there were no fatalities due to fire incidents in 2009. The number of persons who sustained injuries for the period also remained fairly constant. See **Table 6** for the breakdown.

| Description               | Jan – Dec<br>2008 | Jan – Dec<br>2009 | Absolute<br>Change | % Change |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Number of fire injuries   | 122               | 127               | 5                  | 4%       |
| Number of fire fatalities | 0                 | 0                 | 0                  | 0        |

**Table 6: Number of Fire Casualties**

### **FESTIVE SEASON – FIRE SAFETY ALERT**

12. With the festive season approaching, SCDF would like to urge all members of public to continue to be vigilant against fire occurrences. Whether hosting family gatherings or heading abroad for vacations, bearing in mind simple fire safety tips can prevent injuries and damage to properties caused by fires. Fire safety is a collective community responsibility and together we can help to reduce fire occurrences in Singapore. Some useful fire safety measures are listed in the **Annex**.