



NEWS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

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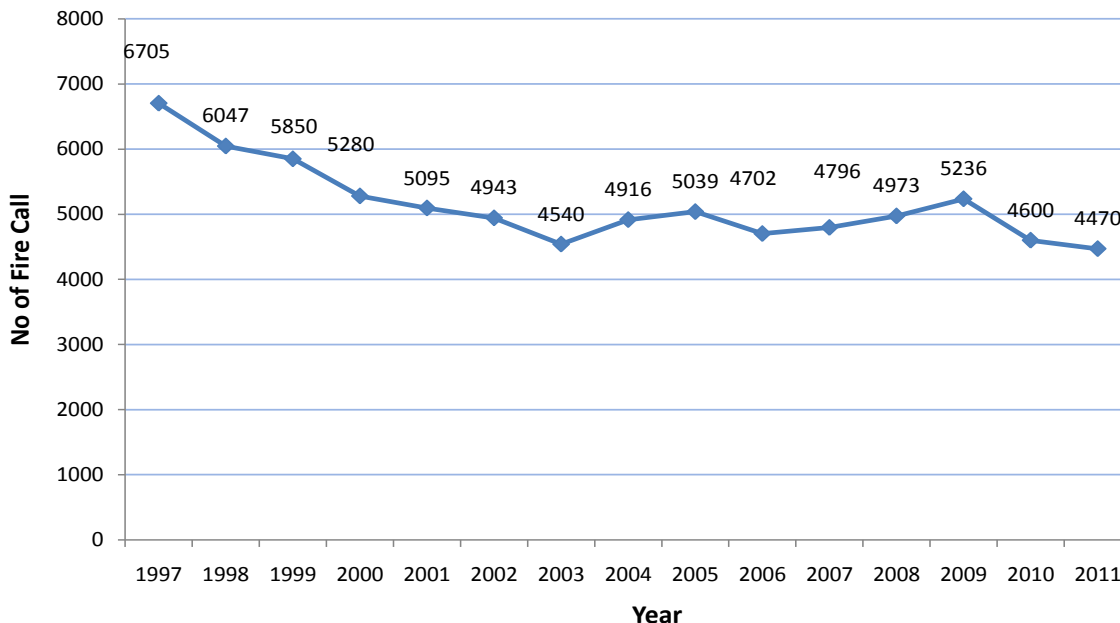
FIRE, AMBULANCE AND ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

TOPIC A

FIRE INCIDENT STATISTICS (JAN – DEC 2011)

FIRE INCIDENTS AT ALL TIME LOW

Between Jan to Dec 2011, SCDF responded to a total of 4,470 fires, a decrease of 3% from the 4,600 fires in 2010. This is the lowest number of fire incidents recorded in more than a decade. The total number of fires in the last 15 years (1997 to year 2011) is as shown in **Graph A1 below**:



Graph A1: Total number of fires (1997 -2011)

2. The overall downward slide in the number of fires over the years can be attributed to greater public awareness on fire safety and the concerted public education efforts by SCDF and its community partners. This includes the National

Fire and Civil Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC), Community Emergency and Engagement Committees (C2E), grassroots leaders, and the community at large.

3. Nationwide programmes such as Community Emergency Preparedness Programmes (CEPP), Emergency Preparedness (EP) Days, outreach programmes in schools, commercial and industrial sectors have been useful in forging a more fire safety conscious community.

DROP IN NUMBER OF FIRES ACROSS ALL TYPES OF PREMISES

4. The breakdown of fire calls by type of premises as shown in **Table A1** below. Of the 4,470 fires, 3,254 involved residential premises, while 565 involved commercial, industrial, social and communal premises. Non-building (e.g. vegetation and vehicle) fires contributed to 651 cases. The marked decrease in non-building fires was attributed largely to the significant fall in vegetation fires.

Description	Jan-Dec 2010	Jan-Dec 2011	Absolute Change	% Change
Fires in Residential Premises	3267	3254	-13	-0.4%
Fires in Non Residential Premises (Commercial, Industrial, Social & Communal)	590	565	-25	-4.2%
Non-Building Fires	743	651	-92	-12.4%
Total Number of Fires	4600	4470	-130	-2.8%

Table A1: Breakdown of fires by type of premises

ENCOURAGING DROP IN RUBBISH FIRES, DISCARDED ITEMS FIRES

5. Of the 3,254 fires in residential premises, rubbish fires formed the main bulk at 40% (1,309 cases). These rubbish fires normally comprise fires involving rubbish chutes and rubbish bins mainly located at lift lobbies. Fires involving discarded items at common spaces in public housing estates such as corridors, passageways, lift lobbies, staircases and void decks, form the second biggest component of residential fires, accounting for 22% (708 cases) of the total number of residential fires.

6. Although the number of rubbish fires continues to be high, it is encouraging to note that there is a drop from 1,354 cases in 2010 to 1,309 cases in 2011. See **Table A2**. The drop in the number of fires involving discarded items, from 801 cases to 708 cases, is also encouraging.

Types of Residential Fire	Jan-Dec 2010	Jan-Dec 2011	Absolute Change	% Change
Rubbish Fires (Rubbish chutes & rubbish bins)	1354	1309	-45	-3.3%
Discarded Items Fires	801	708	-93	-11.6%

Table A2: Rubbish fires and discarded items fires in Residential Premises

7. Residents should continue to play their part to prevent rubbish fires. They should completely extinguish lighted cigarettes and douse charcoal embers with water before disposal, and avoid throwing flammable substances like paint, oil or kerosene into rubbish chutes/bins.

8. Likewise, residents are advised not to discard items outside their homes or at the common areas such as corridors and lift lobbies as these can fuel fires when lighted materials are indiscriminately thrown onto them. They should make arrangements with the Town Councils for removal of bulky items such as cupboards, sofas, etc. Residents should adopt the guidelines on the use of common areas in HDB estates. (see Annex A on the Fire Safety Guidelines on the Use of Common Areas in HDB estates). Anyone who observes items being discarded at common areas should also report them to the Town Council.

INCREASE IN FIRES INVOLVING UNATTENDED COOKING AND HOUSEHOLD CONTENTS AND GAS FIRES

9. One area of concern is the number of unattended cooking fires. This forms the third biggest component of residential fires, accounting for 15% of the total number of residential fires. As shown in Table A3, the number of fires for this category increased from 474 to 500.

Description	Jan-Dec 2010	Jan-Dec 2011	Absolute Change	% Change
Unattended Cooking Fires	474	500	26	5.5%
Fires involving Household Contents	259	338	79	31%
Gas Fires	20	43	23	115%

Table A3: Unattended cooking fires, household content fires and gas fires in Residential Premises

10. Leaving cooking unattended even for a short while could result in fire outbreaks that cause significant damages to their house and may even compromise the safety of the occupants. Residents should conscientiously adopt the following habits:

- a. Avoid leaving their cooking unattended; and

- b. Turn off cooking appliances when not in use or whenever they need to attend to other personal matters, even for a short while.

11. Residents are also advised to exercise more caution when using gas from LPG cylinders. The number of gas fires also went up from 20 cases in 2010 to 43 cases in 2011. Such fires result from the accumulation of LPG gases which may have leaked from a faulty LPG cylinder, regulator, hose or stove.

12. In Feb 2011, SCDF sent out a circular to all LPG suppliers to inform them of the 5-point LPG Safety Check Programme. Under this programme, suppliers are required to ensure that their dealers carry out 5-point safety check on LPG systems installed in households at least once a year. The 5-point safety check includes the hose, regulator, hose clips, cylinder and joints/connection. To certify the conduct of the 5-point check, the dealer is required to mark its company's stamp onto the LPG safety tag attached to the LPG cylinder. The SCDF has also been educating the public about the 5-point check through exhibitions conducted at the residential heartlands during the Emergency Preparedness Days.

13. Another area of concern is the number of fires involving household contents. As shown in **Table A3**, there were 338 fires involving contents of households (e.g. furniture, clothing, mattresses and praying altars) in 2011, an increase of 79 from the 259 cases for the same period last year. Fires involving furniture, clothing, mattresses, etc are usually caused by the indiscriminate disposal of lighted materials such as cigarette butts or children playing with lighted materials.

14. On 29 June 2011, a fire broke out at a unit at Blk 54 Lorong 5 Toa Payoh. The fire involved household contents and was caused by a boy who was playing with lighted materials. As a result of the fire, four persons suffered minor injuries and were conveyed to hospital. Three of the casualties were residents of the affected unit while the last casualty was from another unit. One of the bedrooms and items placed along the corridor were completely burnt, while the rest of the flat and corridor sustained heat and smoke damage.

15. Fires involving household contents can be avoided if proper fire safety practices are observed. Here are some preventive measures:

- a. Keep lighted materials out of children's reach;
- b. Store flammable substances in a safe place;
- c. Do not smoke in bed and extinguish cigarette butts/matches completely;
- d. Don't have window curtains near altars or stoves; and
- e. Don't keep papers near altars or stoves.

16. It is useful for households to keep a fire extinguisher at home to tackle incipient fires. With proper training in the use of a fire extinguisher, they will be able to put out an incipient fire or prevent it from developing and spreading further even before the responders arrive. This will certainly minimise the damage to property and risk to lives.

POST FIRE PUBLIC EDUCATION BLITZ IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND CD READY HOMES PROGRAMME

17. SCDF in collaboration with its community partners, has introduced various outreach programmes as part of its post fire public education blitz. Since Jan 2012,

the post fire public education blitz efforts have been further enhanced to include the setting up of mobile fire safety exhibitions at the void decks of the affected blocks. The exhibition will showcase pictures of the actual fire scenes of the premises (with no mention of the particular unit) to ensure a more impactful delivery of the fire safety message.

18. In the event of a fire, SCDF will alert the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) from the affected area. The CERT members will then work with the respective Civil Defence Division and Town Council to set up and man the exhibition booth. The CERT members will also conduct house-to-house visits to distribute fire safety pamphlets and educate the residents on fire safe practices. The CERT members' familiarity with the residents makes it easier for them to convey the fire safety messages to their neighbours living in their constituencies and vicinity.

19. Fire safety is a collective community responsibility and everyone should play their part to reduce fire occurrences in Singapore. Residents are encouraged to take ownership of their home's safety by participating in the CD Ready Homes Programme. The programme educates the public about the importance of emergency preparedness at home and helps them assess their own preparedness through a self-validation checklist. The checklist, available in four official languages, can be collected at Civil Defence Divisions and Community Clubs. It can also be downloaded from scdf.gov.sg. Since its launch in April 2011, 16,000 households have participated in CD Ready Homes Programme.

LESS FIRES AT COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL/COMMUNAL PREMISES

20. The number of fires at commercial premises (including offices, hotels, shopping complexes, places of public recreation/entertainment) fell by 5% from 309 in 2010 to 294 in 2011, as shown in **Table A4**. The decrease can be attributed to the untiring efforts of the NFEC, building owners and fire safety managers in ensuring a high level of fire safety standard to keep their buildings safe from the threats of fires.

Description	Jan-Dec 2010	Jan-Dec 2011	Absolute Change	% Change
Fires at Commercial Premises	309	294	-15	-4.9%
Fires at Industrial Premises	160	176	16	10.0%
Fires at Social/Communal Premises	121	95	-26	-21.5%

Table A4: Breakdown of fires at Non-Residential Premises

21. The number of fires at industrial premises in 2011 increased marginally by 16 cases. See **Table A4**. These fires were found mainly in warehouses or factories and largely involved rubbish and discarded items, contents and electrical items.

22. The reduction in the number of fires involving social/communal premises can be attributed to a decrease in the number of fires involving rubbish collecting centres.

FIRE INJURIES/FATALITIES

23. The number of injuries arising from fires increased by 22 persons to 165 persons, as shown in **Table A5**.

24. There were four fatalities due to fire incidents from Jan to Dec 2011. The first fatality was due to a residential unit fire which occurred at Marine Terrace in March 2011. Two fatalities resulted from the industrial fire at Benoi Road in May 2011. The fourth fatality was due to a residential unit fire at Stirling Road in May 2011.

Description	Jan-Dec 2010	Jan-Dec 2011	Absolute Change	% Change
Number of fire injuries	143	165	22	15.4%
Fatalities	0	4	4	-

Table A5: Number of fire casualties