

TOPIC C

FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS (JANUARY – DECEMBER 2013)

DECLINE IN NUMBER OF FHAN AND NFSO ISSUED

SCDF conducts enforcement checks regularly to ensure that fire safety standards are well-observed and fire hazards are detected and rectified. Inspections are also conducted by the SCDF in response to public feedback. Once verified, enforcement actions will be taken against the offenders. Such public feedback reflects the high level of fire safety consciousness of our community and more importantly, helps to keep offenders on their toes.

2. As shown in **Table C1** below, SCDF conducted 12,832 enforcement checks in 2013. Arising from these checks, SCDF issued 2,303 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHAN). This is a decrease of 38 (1.6%) from the 2,341 FHANs issued in 2012. The FHAN is a warning given to building owners and management to remove the fire hazard.

Description	Jan- Dec 2012	Jan- Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Enforcement checks	13,192	12,832	-360	↓2.7%
FHANs issued	2,341	2,303	-38	↓1.6%
NFSOs issued	2,634	2,403	-231	↓8.8%
Court prosecution cases	74	58	-16	↓21.6%

Table C1: Number of Enforcement Checks, FHAN and NFSO issued

3. A Notice of Fire Safety Offence (NFSO) instead of a FHAN is issued when the fire safety violation is of a serious nature that warrants a heavier penalty, for example when unauthorised fire safety works are carried out. It carries a composition fine of up to \$5000. Between January and December 2013, 2,403 NFSOs were issued, which represents a decrease of 231 (8.8%) from the 2,634 NFSOs issued in 2012.

4. 2013 saw a reduction in the issuance of both FHANs and NFSOs to the industrial premises. The number of FHANs issued to industrial premises fell from 1,463 in 2012 to 1,403 FHANs in 2013 while the number of NFSOs issued to such premises fell from 1,203 in 2012 to 1,057 in 2013.

5. While this is encouraging for it signifies greater level of compliance to the fire safety requirements, the fire hazards detected still warrant attention. Every fire hazard has the potential to result in fire, causing injuries and/or damages to properties. Every effort must be taken by members of the public to reduce fire hazards so as to lower the fire risks in our environment.

AN ANALYSIS ON FHAN

Almost a quarter of the total FHANs issued in 2013 was for exits signs not being illuminated

6. The most common fire hazard for the issuance of FHANs in 2013 was related to exit signs not being illuminated, which contributed to 520 (22.6%) of the total FHANs. As shown in **Table C2**, this registered an increase of 92 cases (21.5%). Of the 520 FHANs issued for exit signs not illuminated, 403 (77.5%) occurred in industrial premises. Building owners need to ensure that the exit signs are illuminated at all times. During fire outbreaks and smoke logged situations, exit signs play an important role in guiding the occupants towards the available exit passageways to evacuate.

Type of Fire Hazard	Jan- Dec 2012	Jan- Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Exit signs not illuminated	428	520	92	↑ 21.5%
Obstruction (exits/fire engine access ways)	648	427	-221	↓34.1%
Unauthorised storage of combustible /flammable materials	370	268	-102	↓27.6%

Table C2: Breakdown of FHAN (top 3 types of fire hazard)

Significant drop of 34.1% in FHANs issued for obstruction to exits and fire engine access ways

7. There was a significant drop in the number of FHANs issued for the obstruction to exits and fire engine access ways by 221 cases (34.1%). Despite the drop, obstruction to exits and fire engine access ways was the second highest violation, contributing to 427(18.5%) of the total FHANs issued. During emergencies, such obstructions can impede the smooth evacuation of occupants from the affected premises and also hamper SCDF responders from mitigating the incident effectively.

Significant drop of 27.6% in FHANs issued for unauthorised storage of combustible/flammable materials

8. Another significant drop in the issuance of FHANs was the unauthorised storage of combustible/flammable materials which fell from 370 in 2012 to 268 in 2013. Building owners and members of the public should continue to practice good housekeeping and store combustibles/flammables in proper places as the indiscriminate storage of such items within premises increases the fire load.

AN ANALYSIS ON NFSO

44.9% of NFSOs were issued for unauthorised change of use

9. The most common fire safety violation contributing to the issuance of NFSOs was for the unauthorised change of use of premises, which amounted to 1,079 cases (44.9%) of the total NFSOs issued in 2013. Notwithstanding this, the decrease of 492 (31.3%) in the number of NFSOs issued for this category in 2013, as compared to 2012 is encouraging. This reduction is largely attributed to the drop in the number of unauthorised change of use violations in both industrial and residential premises.

Type of Offence	Jan- Dec 2012	Jan- Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Unauthorised change of use	1571	1079	-492	↓31.3%
Unauthorised fire safety works	526	546	20	↑3.8%
Storage &/or transportation of Petroleum &/or Flammable Materials without licence	220	195	-25	↓11.4%

Table C3: Breakdown of NFSO (top 3 types of offence)

10. Of the 1079 NFSOs issued for unauthorised change of use, 457 cases (42.4%) occurred in industrial premises, of which 143 cases were for the change of use of the car parks into storage areas and 79 cases were for the conversion of the factory spaces into workers' dormitories. The conversion of residential premises into workers dormitories registered 455 cases or 42.2% of the 1079 NFSOs issued for unauthorised change of use.

11. For unauthorised change of use, the owner of the premises will be issued with a fine and SCDF will re-inspect the premises to ensure compliance to the fire safety requirements. Follow-up enforcement action will be taken against owners who fail to comply. **Table C3** shows the breakdown of NFSOs issued for the top three offences.

11.4% decrease in NFSOs issued for the storage and/or transportation of petroleum &/or flammable materials without licence

12. The number of NFSOs issued for the storage and/or transportation of petroleum &/or flammable materials without licence reduced by 11.4%, from 220 cases in 2012 to 195 cases in 2013. The reduction in such violations is attributed to SCDF's efforts in curbing such problem. SCDF views the problem of unauthorised storage and transportation of LPG very seriously and will continue its efforts to control such hazardous activities.

COURT ACTION

46.6% of court cases were for the unauthorized change of use

13. SCDF views violations of fire safety requirements seriously and will not hesitate to take firm actions against building management who do not promptly rectify the fire safety violations despite warnings and fines. Court action will be taken against serious cases or repeated offenders. For general fire safety violations, the maximum penalty can be up to \$10,000 and/or jail term not exceeding 6 months. For carrying out unauthorised fire safety works, the person responsible (owner, building management, MCST) can be fined up to \$200,000 and/or jailed for a term not exceeding 24 months. In extreme cases, SCDF is empowered to effect temporary closure of premises.

14. Between Jan and Dec 2013, 58 charges were filed for court actions against fire safety offenders, a decrease of 16 cases (21.6%) from the 74 charges for 2012. Of the 58 court actions in 2013, 27 cases (46.6%) were for the unauthorized change of use. The top 3 types of offences which resulted in court action are shown in **Table C4** below.

Type of Offence	Jan- Dec 2012	Jan- Dec 2013	Absolute Change
Unauthorised change of use	52	27	↓25
Unauthorised fire safety works	10	12	↑ 2
Failure to comply with Fire Hazard Abatement Notice (non-payment of NOC fines)	5	10	↑5

Table C4 : Court Prosecution Cases (top 3 offences)

East Village Hotel fined \$41,000 for fire safety violations

15. The company operating the East Village Hotel at East Coast Road was fined a total of \$41,000 on 26 August 2013 for 4 counts of fire safety infringements. The company carried out fire safety works involving additions and alteration works to part of the building without approval. The space below the vehicular ramp of the building was converted to storage and rest area without SCDF's approval. In addition, the company failed to notify the SCDF within 14 days in writing on its appointment of a fire safety manager and also failed to ensure that the appointed fire safety manager carried out his/her duties.

**A SUMMARY OF THE SCDF ENFORCEMENT POWERS
AGAINST FIRE SAFETY OFFENDERS**

Enforcement Action	Description
Fire Hazard Abatement Notice (FHAN)	Under the Fire Safety Act, the FHAN is a warning given to building owners and management to remove the fire hazard. Most common fire hazards spotted resulting in FHANs are poor maintenance of hose reels and fire extinguishers and obstructed exits.
Notice of Composition (NOC)	Offenders who failed to rectify the violations after being issued with FHANs will then served with a fine termed NOC of up to \$5000
Notice of Fire Safety Offence (NFSO)	When the offence is of a more serious nature for example carrying out unauthorised fire safety works carried out, a NFSO is issued. The NFSO carries with it a composition fine of up to \$5000.
Court Action	Court action will be taken for serious cases. For general fire safety violations, the maximum penalty can be up to \$10,000 and/or jail term not exceeding 6 months. And for carrying out unauthorised fire safety works, the person responsible (owner, building management, MCST) can be fined up to \$200,000 and/or jailed for a term not exceeding 24 months. In extreme cases, SCDF is empowered to effect temporary closure of premises.