

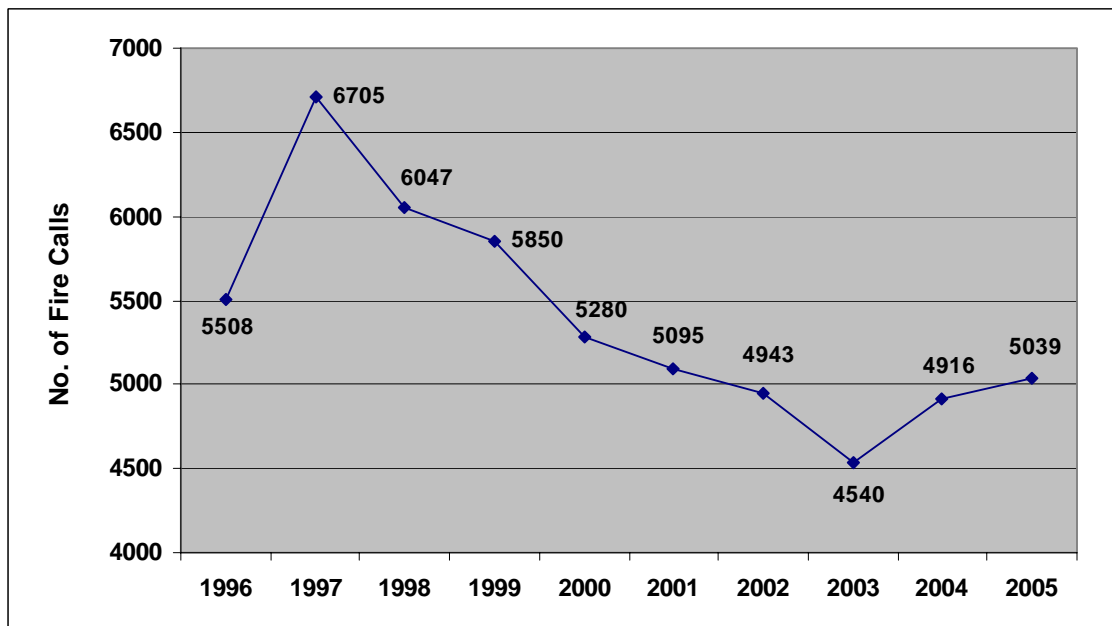


SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

FIRE INCIDENT STATISTICS (JAN – DEC 2005)

TOTAL FIRE CALLS

1. In 2005, the SCDF responded to a total of 5039 fires in Singapore. Although this figure marginally exceeds that of 2004 by 123 cases (3%), it remains relatively low when compared to records of previous years. See **Graph 1**. The increase of fire incidents in 2005 is attributed to the sharp increase in non-building fires, primarily due to the record high number of vegetation fires during the dry spell in early 2005.



GRAPH 1: NUMBER OF FIRE CALLS ATTENDED BY SCDF FROM 1996 TO 2005

GENUINE FIRE CALLS

2. Of the 5039 calls, 3056 involved residential premises, while 635 commercial and industrial premises. The remaining 1348 cases were non-building fires. See

Table 1. Non-residential fires refer to those affecting commercial, industrial, social and communal premises. Non-building fires involve those involving vegetation, rubbish (at open ground) and vehicles.

DESCRIPTION	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Residential Premises	3210	3056	-154	-5
Non Residential Premises	681	635	-46	-7
Non Building	1025	1348	+323	+33
TOTAL	4916	5039	+123	+3

TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN OF GENUINE FIRE CALLS

RESIDENTIAL FIRES

3. Of the 3056 residential fires, 2889 cases involved HDB flats which fell by 152 cases. The other categories of residential premises listed in **Table 2** registered slight changes. Fires involving landed properties increased from 89 in 2004 to 95 last year. Private condos saw 13 less fires, recording only 64 fire incidents last year. Workers' Quarters went up by 5 cases last year to reach 8 cases. While this is a minimal change, such quarters do house many people, thereby more lives are at stake. Of the 8 fires at these quarters last year, 2 were found to have been illegal quarters. The contractors concerned were fined \$300 each.

DESCRIPTION	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
HDB Flats	3041	2889	-152	-5
Landed Properties	89	95	+6	+7
Private Condo	77	64	-13	-17
Workers Quarters	3	8	+5	+167
TOTAL	3210	3056	-154	-5

TABLE 2: BREAKDOWN OF GENUINE FIRE CALLS (RESIDENTIAL)

Rubbish fires

4. **Table 3** shows the different types of residential fire outbreaks in 2005. Once again, rubbish fires continued to be the main component of the total fires at residential premises last year, accounting for 58% (ie. 1777 rubbish fires). Of these, 1050 comprises rubbish chute fires, 405 rubbish/discarded items fires, and 322 rubbish bin fires. Although there was a drop of 36 cases from the previous year, it remains disturbing for such fires can be easily prevented.

TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL FIRES	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Rubbish Fires (Rubbish chutes, discarded items & rubbish bins)	1813	1777	-36	-2

Unattended Cooking	529	549	+20	+4
Contents*	406	358	-48	-12
Electrical Fires	206	181	-25	-12
Bicycles/Motorcycles	68	44	-24	-35
Gas	42	26	-16	-38
Others**	146	121	-25	-17
Total	3210	3056	-154	-5

* Contents include furniture, clothing, awning, mattresses, praying altar, door mat.

** Others include notice boards, banners and lifts.

TABLE 3: TYPES OF FIRES IN RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

Rubbish chute fires

5. Common causes of rubbish chute fires include indiscriminate and irresponsible disposal of lighted materials such as cigarette butts, charcoal and incense materials. This type of fire increased by 10 cases last year. To further raise awareness of preventing such fires, SCDF and NFPC rolled out a public education program in December last year. For a start, there were 2 blocks where repeat cases of rubbish chute fires which occurred at Admiralty Drive¹ and Marine Drive². These were identified as rubbish chute fire 'hot spots' and were visited by RC members and SCDF personnel who advised residents on eradicating such fires.

Rubbish bin fires

6. Blazes involving rubbish bins at common space such as lift lobbies contributed to 11% (322 cases) of total fires at residential premises. Although such fires tend to be small and may not cause serious harm, the resultant smoke can be a source of irritation to residents. The public is urged not to throw lighted materials at rubbish bins to cut down such fires.

Rubbish/discarded items fires

7. Last year, there were 405 cases of rubbish/discarded items fires. While this is a fall of 31 cases over 2004, residents should note that bulky items placed along corridors and lobbies impede smooth evacuation during emergencies. They also make 'ready' fire load for fire mischiefs and incendiary fires.

Unattended cooking

8. The number of fires involving unattended cooking increased by 4% last year to hit 549 cases. These fires are usually caused by absent-mindedness of occupants.

NON-RESIDENTIAL FIRES

¹ 6 cases of rubbish chute fire occurred at Blk 360A Admiralty Drive in 2005.

² 4 cases of rubbish chute fire occurred at Blk 74 Marine Drive in 2005.

9. Of the 635 non-residential fires last year, 314 involved commercial premises while 159 involved industrial premises. The remaining 162 cases were social/communal premises. See **Table 4**.

DESCRIPTION	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Commercial	340	314	-26	-8
Industrial	197	159	-38	-19
Social/Communal	144	162	+18	+13
TOTAL	681	635	-46	-7

TABLE 4: FIRE INCIDENTS AT NON-RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

Commercial premises

10. 314 fire incidents last year involved commercial premises. This is a drop of 26 cases or 8% over 2004. Out of these 314 cases, 54 of them occurred at Multi-storey Car Park (MSCP) - 16 cases higher than the figure in 2004. Most of these MSCP fires involved rubbish (eg. rubbish bins and discarded items), accounting for about 46% (ie. 25 cases) of total fire outbreaks in such car parks.

11. The other major component of MSCP fires are related to vehicle fires. Last year, there were 26 vehicle fires at MSCPs, compared to 16 cases in 2004. Out of these 26 vehicle fires, 17 cases involved motorcycles, which is an increase of 11 cases over 2004's figures. Bedok, Tampines and Hougang have registered higher frequency of motorcycle fires at MSCPs last year. About 80% of vehicle fires (ie. 21 cases) in MSCPs last year were incendiary in nature.

12. Members of public can help to lower fires at MSCPs by being more vigilant and by reporting to the management and the Police when fire hazards or suspicious people are spotted at the buildings.

Industrial premises

13. Fire outbreaks at industrial premises fell by 38 cases (19%) last year to 159 cases, from 197 in 2004. The sharpest drop was in fires at flatted factories, which dropped from 58 cases in 2004 to 38 last year. Fires at industrial compounds similarly fell last year, from 94 in 2004 to 85. Fires at warehouses (26 cases) and HDB/JTC units (10 cases) also spotted similar trend, falling by 4 and 5 cases respectively.

NON-BUILDING FIRES

14. Non-building fires (including vegetation and vehicles) grew last year, from 1025 instances in 2004 to 1348 last year. This can be attributed to the huge 60% increase (ie. 300 cases) in vegetation fires experienced last year. See **Table 5**.

DESCRIPTION	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Vegetation	500	800	+300	+60

Rubbish (in open space)	231	241	+10	+4
Vehicles	177	168	-9	-5
Others*	117	139	+22	+19
TOTAL	1025	1348	+323	+32

* Others include bus stops, tentage and canvas.

TABLE 5: FIRES INVOLVING NON-BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of Vegetation fires	242	519	355	500	800

TABLE 6: VEGETATION FIRES OVER LAST 5 YEARS

15. To help prevent vegetation fires, members of public are advised not to throw lighted materials such as cigarette butts and match sticks on grass patches, gardens and fields. Unwanted items (including discarded furniture) should not be dumped in open fields which can serve as fuel to burning vegetation.

16. SCDF has worked with Related Agencies to put in place suitable measures against bush fires. This includes exchange of useful information such as dryness index provided by the Meteorological Service to SCDF so that dry spells and areas affected could be pre-empted. With this information, SCDF will patrol the affected areas during the hottest period of the day, which is between 2pm and 4pm, to water these areas to prevent fires from starting.

17. Based on SCDF's input, PUB has also been installing dry hydrant systems to provide ready water source for firefighting operations at terrains which have inadequate water supplies. Such systems have been installed at Tampines Ave 12 and Fort Road. Separately, SLA and NParks has been engaging its land occupants to regularly trim the grass and to provide buffer zones to key agricultural areas.

CAUSES OF FIRES

18. Major causes of fires in Singapore last year include 'light thrown down' and overheating of food'. Together, they have resulted in 3691 fire outbreaks, or 73% of total fire incidents in Singapore. See **Table 7**.

DESCRIPTION	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Light thrown down	2885	3090	+205	+7
Incendiary/Suspicious	371	376	+5	+1

Overheating of Food	585	601	+16	+3
Electrical Origin	566	498	-68	-12
Naked Light	301	277	-24	-8
Others	208	197	-11	-5
TOTAL	4916	5039	+123	+3

TABLE 7: CAUSES OF FIRES

19. Fires caused by 'light thrown down' last year increased by 205 cases which account for 61% of total fire outbreaks. Preventing indiscriminate disposal of lighted materials (such as cigarette butts) or indiscriminate storage of discarded items especially highly combustible materials (such as wooden furniture) in open/common spaces can reduce fires caused by 'light thrown down'.

20. Incendiary fires climbed slightly to 376 cases last year, from 371 cases in 2004. Electrical fires on the other hand fell by 68 cases to 498. Also decreasing last year were fires caused by 'naked light' (eg. lit candle and oil lamp), which dropped from 301 cases in 2004 to 277 cases.

FIRE INJURIES

21. The number of injured fire victims fell by 20 (15%) from 131 in 2004 to 111 last year.

22. In 2005, SCDF rescued 111 casualties from fire related incidents. Out of which 6 were trapped and SCDF had to break into their units to rescue them. This was a slight increase of 11 (11%) from 2004, which saw 100 casualties rescued.

DESCRIPTION	2004	2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Number of casualties saved	100 (out of 55 incidents)	111 (out of 83 incidents)	+11	+11
Number of trapped casualties	13 (out of 5 incidents)	6 (out of 9 incidents)	- 7	- 54

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF CASUALTIES SAVED FROM FIRE INCIDENTS

FIRE FATALITIES

23. There was 1 fire death last year, compared to 7 in 2004. The fatality (a male Malay) was involved in a HDB fire at Bukit Batok West Ave 2 on 16 May 2005. That

fire also led to the injury of a female Malay who suffered burns on her arms and body.

DESCRIPTION	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of fire fatalities	11	0	1	7	1

TABLE 9: FIRE FATALITIES OVER LAST 5 YEARS

RESCUE CALLS

24. SCDF responded to 1384 rescue calls last year, registering a marked increase of 137 cases (11%). This includes height rescue, industrial accidents, persons trapped in machines, escalators and locked-premises.

Description	Jan-Dec 2004	Jan-Dec 2005	Absolute Change	% Change
Rescue Incidents	1247	1384	+137	+11
Road Traffic Accidents	971	1020	+49	+5
TOTAL	2218	2404	+186	+8

TABLE 10: RESCUE CALLS