

TOPIC B

EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE STATISTICS (JANUARY – DECEMBER 2013)

INCREASE OF 5.3% IN EAS CALLS

SCDF's Emergency Ambulance Service (EAS) responded to a total of 150,155 calls between January and December 2013, an increase of 5.3% over the 142,549 calls in 2012. See **Table B1** for the breakdown on type of calls:

Description	Jan - Dec 2012	Jan - Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Emergency Calls	137,341	144,326	6,985	↑5.1%
Non-Emergency Calls	2,232	2,837	605	↑27.1%
False Alarms	2,976	2,992	16	↑0.5%
Total	142,549	150,155	7,606	↑5.3%

Table B1: Breakdown of Total EAS Calls

DEMAND FROM THE ELDERLY GREW BY 8.2%

2. The increase is largely attributed to the growing demand for ambulance service from an ageing population. In 2013, 54,310 calls were made by elderly (aged 65 and above), an increase of 8.2% over the 50,203 calls in 2012. The elderly group made up of 10.5%¹ of the Singapore Resident Population but contributed to 36.2% of the total EAS calls that SCDF responded to in 2013. See **Table B2** for the breakdown of EAS calls by age group:

Age Group	Jan - Dec 2012	Jan - Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Aged below 65	89,370	92,853	3,483	↑3.9%
Aged 65 and above	50,203	54,310	4,107	↑8.2%

Table B2: Breakdown of EAS Calls by Age Group

NON-EMERGENCY CALLS CONSTITUTE 1.9% OF EAS CALLS

3. The number of non-emergency calls increased by 27.1% from 2,232 in 2012 to 2,837 in 2013. As shown in **Table B3** below, the percentage of non-emergency calls constituted 1.9% of the total EAS calls that SCDF responded

¹ Based on 2013 figure from Singapore Department Statistics

in 2013, which is a 0.3% increase as compared to the 1.6% of the total EAS calls in 2012. Attending to non-emergency calls reduces the availability of ambulances for those with real emergencies.

Non-Emergency Calls	Jan - Dec 2012	Jan - Dec 2013
Number of Non-Emergency Calls	2,232	2,837
% of Non-Emergency Calls	1.6%	1.9%

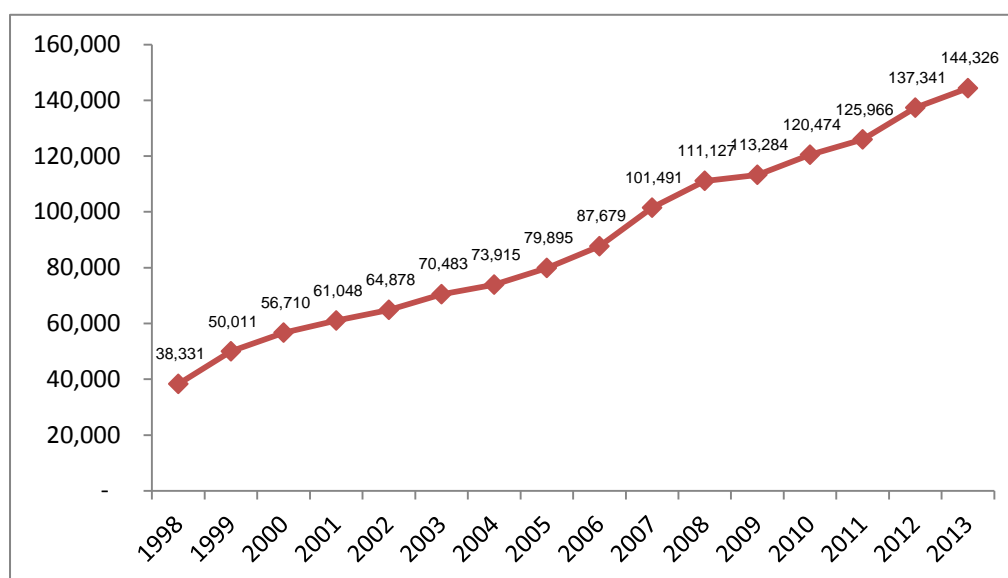
Table B3: Number of Non-Emergency Ambulance Calls

4. In order to curb the increase in the number of non-emergency ambulance calls, SCDF will continue in its public education efforts on the proper use of its EAS through exhibitions, distribution of posters and leaflets. Members of the public are encouraged to visit the SCDF website for information on what constitutes an emergency or non-emergency medical case.

(www.scdf.gov.sg/content/scdf_internet/en/general/information/information_on_scdf_and1777ambulanceservices.html) For medical cases that are non-life threatening, the public is urged to call 1777 where the service of the private non-emergency ambulance operators can be engaged. This will allow more emergency resources to be channelled towards life-threatening cases (See **Annex B** for the advisory on the use of EAS).

EMERGENCY CALLS CONSTITUTE 96.1% OF EAS CALLS

5. Emergency calls made up 144,326 cases (96.1%) of the total calls responded. The number of emergency calls rose by 6,985 (5.1%) from 137,341 cases in 2012 to 144,326 cases in 2013. There has been a steady increase in the number of emergency ambulance calls over the last 15 years, as shown in **Graph B1** below.



Graph B1: Year-to-Year Comparison of Emergency Ambulance Calls (1998 - 2013)

6. The breakdown for emergency cases is shown in **Table B4** below. Of the total 144,326 emergency calls, 106,905 cases (74.1%) were medical cases, 11,022 cases (7.6%) were road traffic accidents and 26,399 cases (18.3%) were trauma cases related to industrial accidents, falls and assaults. There was a dip in the number of road traffic accident-related injuries by 1,539 cases (12.3%) but an increase of 6,363 cases (6.3%) in the number of medical emergency cases (e.g. cases involving chest pain, breathlessness, unconsciousness and cardiac arrest).

Description	Jan - Dec 2012	Jan -Dec 2013	Absolute Change	% Change
Medical Emergency Cases	100,542	106,905	6,363	↑6.3%
Trauma - Road Traffic Accidents	12,561	11,022	-1,539	↓12.3%
Other Trauma Cases	24,238	26,399	2,161	↑8.9%
Total	137,341	144,326	6,985	↑5.1%

Table B4: Breakdown of Emergency Ambulance Calls

SCDF TO INCREASE THE FLEET SIZE OF EMERGENCY AMBULANCES

7. To meet the rising demand in the number of EAS calls, since October 2013, the SCDF has increased the number of its emergency ambulances to 50.

8. To handle the projected increased in workload, SCDF will progressively increase the number of emergency ambulances over the next few years. SCDF will also continue to monitor and manage the overall performance of the EAS so as to meet the demand of Singapore's growing and ageing population.

A NEW GENERATION OF EMERGENCY AMBULANCES

9. As part of its fleet renewal programme, SCDF has introduced a new generation of emergency ambulances with enhanced features that will set new benchmark for the ambulance industry in Singapore and the region. More information on the new ambulances will be unveiled at the SCDF Work Plan Seminar 2014 on 17 April 2014.

DEPLOYMENT OF MOH NURSES TO STRENGTHEN 995 EMERGENCY MEDICAL DISPATCHES

10. The SCDF 995 Operations Centre is the nerve centre to deploy SCDF resources to all emergency calls. Since 2013, to improve the survival of cardiac arrest cases where every minute is crucial, SCDF has made provision for its 995 specialists to provide callers with chest-compression only CPR instructions over the phone.

11. To further enhance the quality of its emergency medical dispatch, SCDF has worked with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to deploy staff nurses at its Operation Centre to provide timely medical advice to the callers. This includes helping the 995 specialists to quickly identify patients with symptoms of cardiac arrest so as to swiftly guide the callers over the phone to initiate the chest-compression only CPR procedure on the patients.

12. Such telephone assistance on chest-compression only CPR procedure can assist all callers, including those without any formal training in CPR, to execute the CPR procedure on the patients. Rapid intervention in the first few minutes following a cardiac arrest will increase a victim's chances of survival. In fact, minimally interrupted chest compressions and early defibrillation are two proven measures to enhance the survival of cardiac arrest patients.

13. SCDF urges the public to cooperate with the 995 specialists who can provide life saving instructions over the phone while the ambulance is en-route to the location and thereby increase a patient's chance of survival prior to SCDF's arrival.

**ADVISORY ON THE USE OF SCDF'S
EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE (EAS)**

a. **Call 995 for emergencies only.**

An emergency is an illness or injury that could end in death or serious complication if it is not treated immediately

Cases generally classified as emergencies for which EAS should be used:

- Loss of consciousness
- Difficulty in breathing or choking
- Sudden, severe chest pain or breathlessness
- Sudden abdominal pain that does not subside
- Dislocated or broken bones
- Deep cuts or wounds with profuse bleeding
- Head injuries with bleeding, drowsiness or vomiting
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Poisoning e.g. inhalation of toxic gases or drug overdose resulting in unconsciousness

Cases generally classified as non-emergencies for which EAS should not be used:

- Mild fever
- Coughs and colds
- Chronic aches and pains
- Minor cuts and bruises
- Slight burns and scalds
- Mild diarrhoea or vomiting
- Toothaches
- Minor nosebleed
- Localised rash

b. **Give Way to Emergency Vehicles**

As every second counts during emergencies, it is important for emergency vehicles to arrive at the incident site swiftly. You can help save a life by driving responsibly.

Upon hearing the emergency siren and/or seeing the flashing lights, motorists should:

- Stay calm and check where the emergency vehicle is coming from
- Give way by signalling early and filter towards the left if it is safe to do so
- If unable to move to the left safely, slow down to let the emergency vehicle overtake
- Do not speed up to block an overtaking ambulance or try to outrun the emergency vehicle as this is dangerous

c. **Help the SCDF ambulance crew to swiftly reach those in need of assistance**

- Get someone to wait for the ambulance crew to guide them to the patient's exact location
- If you see the ambulance crew, make way for them or take the next lift.
- Help the ambulance crew hold the lift
- Keep the doors/gates open for the ambulance crew
- Keep the common corridors clear of any obstruction (clear width of at least 1.2m for ambulance crew's stretcher access)
- Standby to assist if required