

# NEWS RELEASE



## FIRE, EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AND FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS 2021

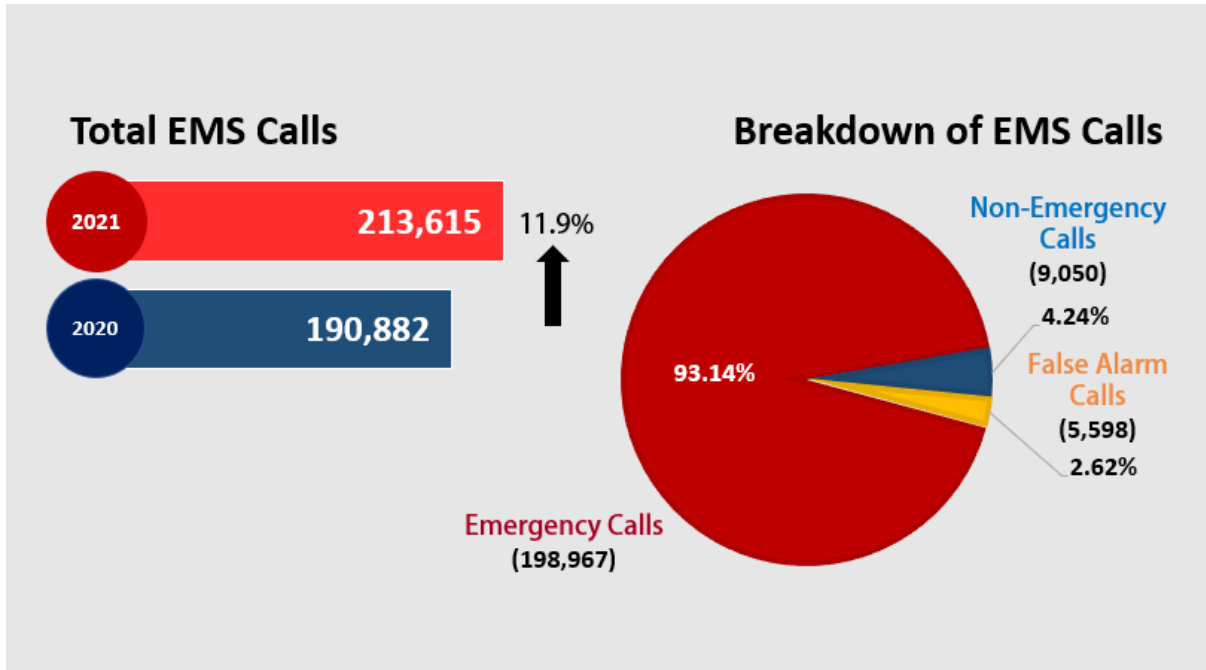
### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls increased in 2021.** The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) responded to 213,615 EMS calls last year, or about 585 calls a day. There was an increase of 2.4% in the number of non-emergency calls, largely due to COVID-19 related cases. However, false alarm EMS calls encouragingly fell by 8.1%.

2. **The total number of fire incidents decreased by 1.8% in 2021.** While the number of fire incidents in residential premises and non-building places fell by 4.2% and 4.1% respectively, the number of non-residential fire cases rose by 7.5% in 2021. Fires involving power assisted bicycles and personal mobility devices decreased, but remain a concern.

3. **SCDF conducted 11,075 fire safety enforcement checks in 2021** and issued 1,161 Notices of Offence (Fire Safety Offence) – NOOs (FSO), and 2,555 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices (FHANs).

Overview

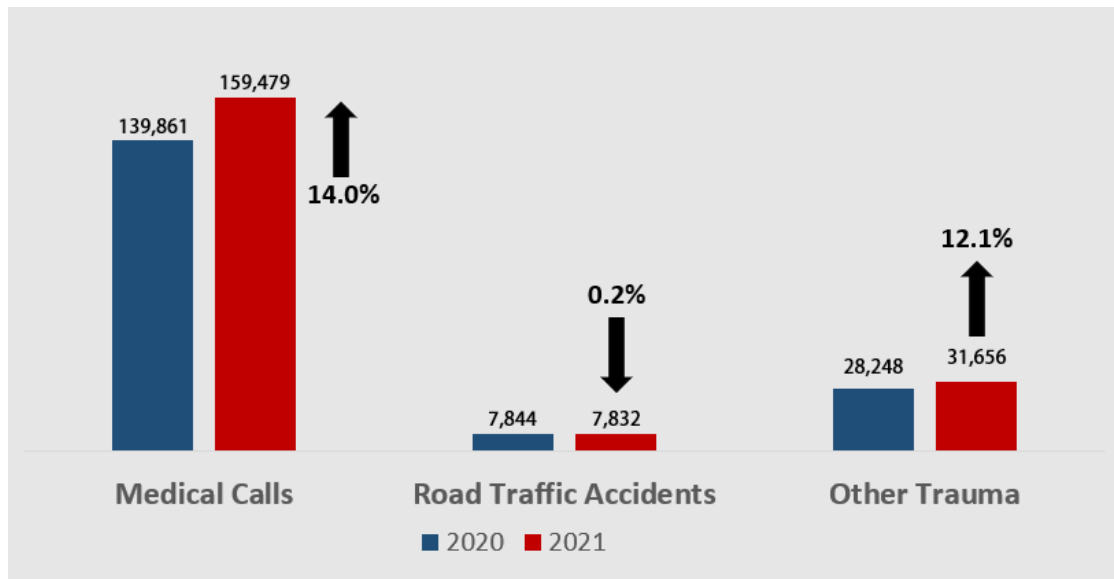


4. SCDF responded to 213,615 EMS calls in 2021, an increase of 11.9% from 190,882 calls in 2020. Of these, there was an increase of 13.1% in the number of emergency calls, from 175,953 in 2020 to 198,967 in 2021. This increase was due to a surge in COVID-19 related calls from September to November 2021. During these three months, SCDF responded to about 63,000 calls, which was 36.5% higher than the same period in 2020.

**Emergency Calls**

5. Of the 198,967 emergency calls received in 2021, 80.2% were medical-related (e.g. chest-pain, breathlessness, unconsciousness and cardiac arrest); 15.9% were trauma cases (e.g. industrial accidents, falls and assaults); and the remaining 3.9% were related to road traffic accidents. The number of calls involving the elderly (aged 65 and above) remained the highest among all age categories, at 44.2%. The breakdown of emergency calls in 2020 and 2021 is reflected in [Chart 1](#).

Chart 1: Breakdown of emergency calls in 2020 and 2021



### Non-Emergency and False Alarm Calls

6. The SCDF has been conducting intensive publicity campaigns since 2018 to raise awareness on calling 995 for medical emergencies only. This has generally resulted in a year-to-year decrease in both non-emergency calls and false alarms calls.

7. Non-emergency<sup>1</sup> calls dropped from 10,534 in 2019 to just 8,835 in 2020. While 2021 saw an increase in non-emergency calls by 2.4% to 9,050 calls, this was largely due to the increase in the number of suspected COVID-19 cases at the time of call. Many were COVID-19 related cases that were assessed to be non-emergencies, as they were not seriously ill and did not need to be conveyed to hospital.

8. As for false alarm<sup>2</sup> calls, it has been decreasing since 2019. This trend has continued with an encouraging decrease of 8.1%, from 6,094 calls in 2020 to 5,598 calls in 2021.

9. To ensure that SCDF's EMS can provide swift conveyance to hospitals for those with life threatening and emergency conditions<sup>3</sup>, SCDF urges individuals who are not experiencing life-threatening emergencies to refrain from calling 995. For confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients, SCDF will only convey those with severe Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) symptoms or serious medical conditions. COVID-19 patients, including suspected cases, with no ARI symptoms do not need SCDF's EMS. This is in line with Protocol 2 guidelines from the Ministry of Health (MOH); such cases do not need to go to hospital emergency departments.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-emergency calls are cases where urgent medical assistance by SCDF is not required, including cases where patients are either uninjured or have no medical complaints.

<sup>2</sup> False alarms calls include incidents where calls are cancelled or where no patients are found at the incident scenes when the ambulance crew arrive.

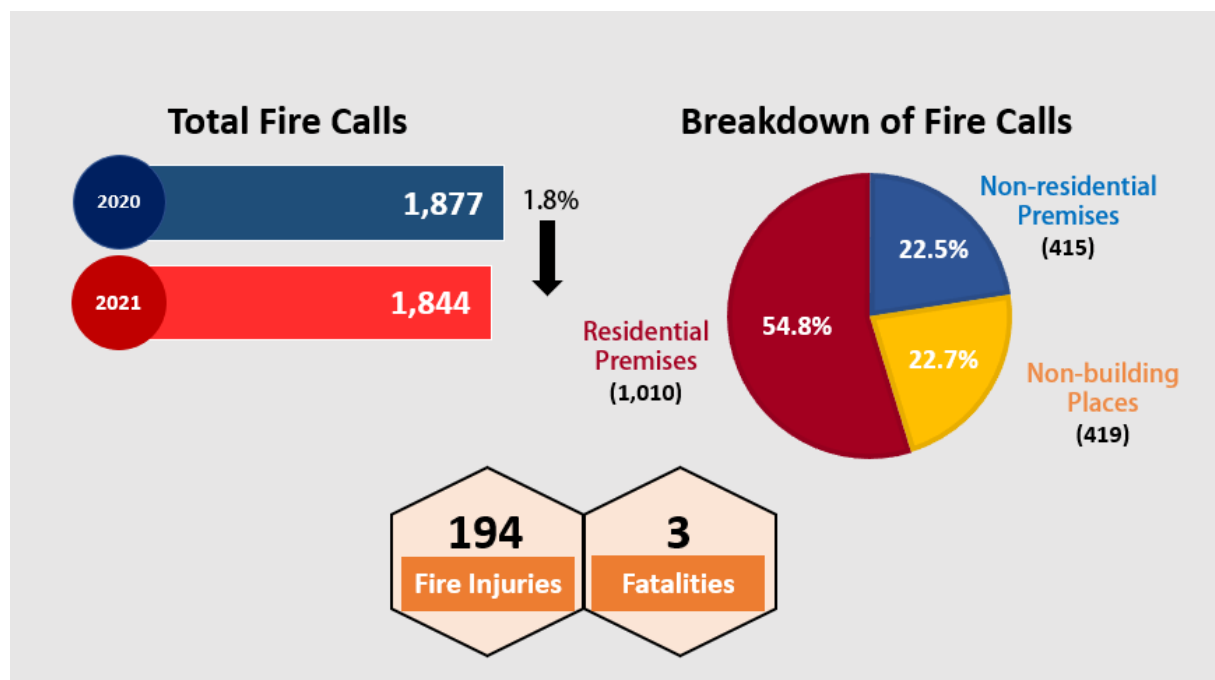
<sup>3</sup> These conditions include chest pain, breathlessness, drowsiness or confusion, sudden onset of limb or body weakness, difficulty in speech or drooping of the face, severe bleeding from injuries, loss of consciousness, and unexplained jerking of the body or fits.

## SCDF's Involvement in Whole-of-Government (WOG) COVID-19 Response

10. Since 2020, SCDF has been at the frontlines helping to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, SCDF's EMS personnel, comprising Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians and contracted Private Ambulance Operators, conveyed about 10,600 COVID-19 positive cases and over 12,300 suspected cases. In addition, SCDF deployed 25 officers in six minibuses to support MOH in decanting stable COVID-19 patients to appropriate care facilities<sup>4</sup>. Close to 700 patients were decanted from 28 September 2021 to 31 October 2021.

## FIRE INCIDENTS STATISTICS 2021

### Overview



11. SCDF responded to 1,844 fire calls in 2021, a decrease of 1.8% from 1,877 in 2020. There were 194 fire injuries in 2021, an increase from 184 in 2020. There were three fire fatalities in 2021.<sup>5</sup>

12. Fires of electrical origin<sup>6</sup> was the leading type of fire in 2021, accounting for 588 cases (31.9%). Cooking activities was the next highest cause of fires with 408 cases (22.1%), followed by dropped light<sup>7</sup> with 349 cases (18.9%). SCDF will continue to publicise fire safety advisories and educate the public on fire prevention measures, including through key partners like the National Fire and Emergency Preparedness Council (NFEC) and the Fire Safety Managers' Association Singapore (FSMAS).

<sup>4</sup> This involves the transport of stable COVID-19 patients from hospitals to Community Isolation Facilities (CIF), from hospitals to their residence under the Home Recovery Programme, as well as from worker dormitories to CIF.

<sup>5</sup> There were 3 fire fatalities in 2021 and these involved residential fire incidents at Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10 on 5 March 2021, Yishun Street 22 on 8 May 2021 and Woodlands Drive 16 on 3 June 2021.

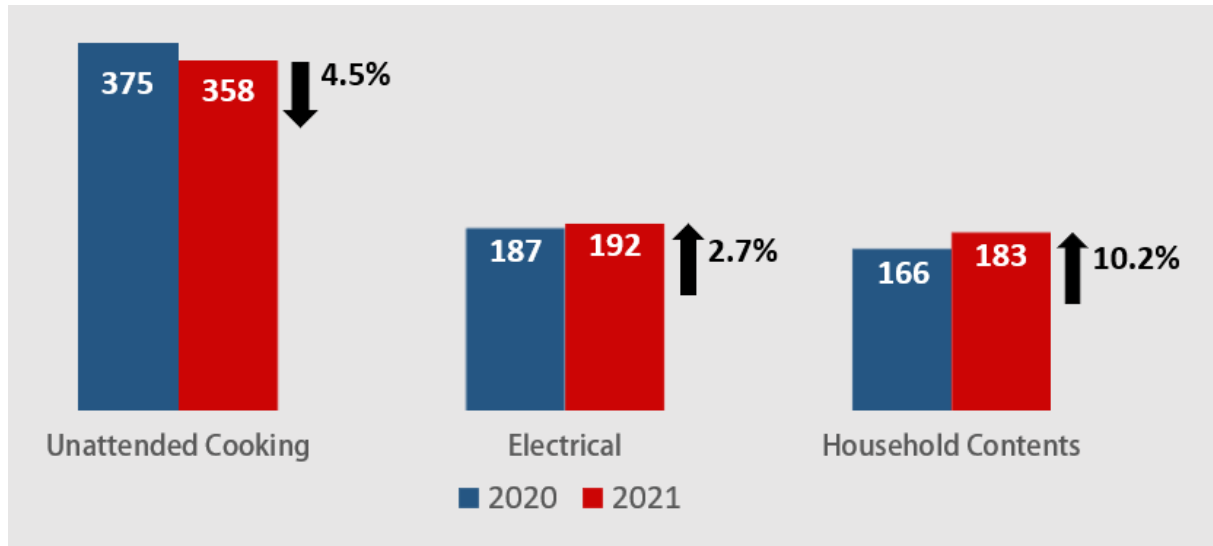
<sup>6</sup> Fires involving faulty wirings or electrical appliances which ignite nearby combustible materials.

<sup>7</sup> Fires involving lighted cigarette butts that are not completely extinguished, embers from charcoal and lighted incense sticks.

## Fires in Residential Premises

13. There were 1,010 fire incidents in residential premises (private and public) in 2021, a decrease of 4.2% from 1054 cases in 2020. The top three types of fire in residential premises are reflected in [Chart 2](#).

Chart 2: Top three types of fires in residential premises



14. Fires resulting from the overheating of food contents, as a result of unattended cooking, formed the largest component of fires in residential buildings. This is a decrease of 4.5% from 2020, to 358 cases in 2021.

15. The number of electrical fires rose slightly by 2.7% to 192 cases in 2021. The majority of these fires were typically caused by electrical faults in wirings or electrical appliances or due to the overloading of electrical sockets.

16. Fires involving household contents increased by 10.2% to 183 cases in 2021.

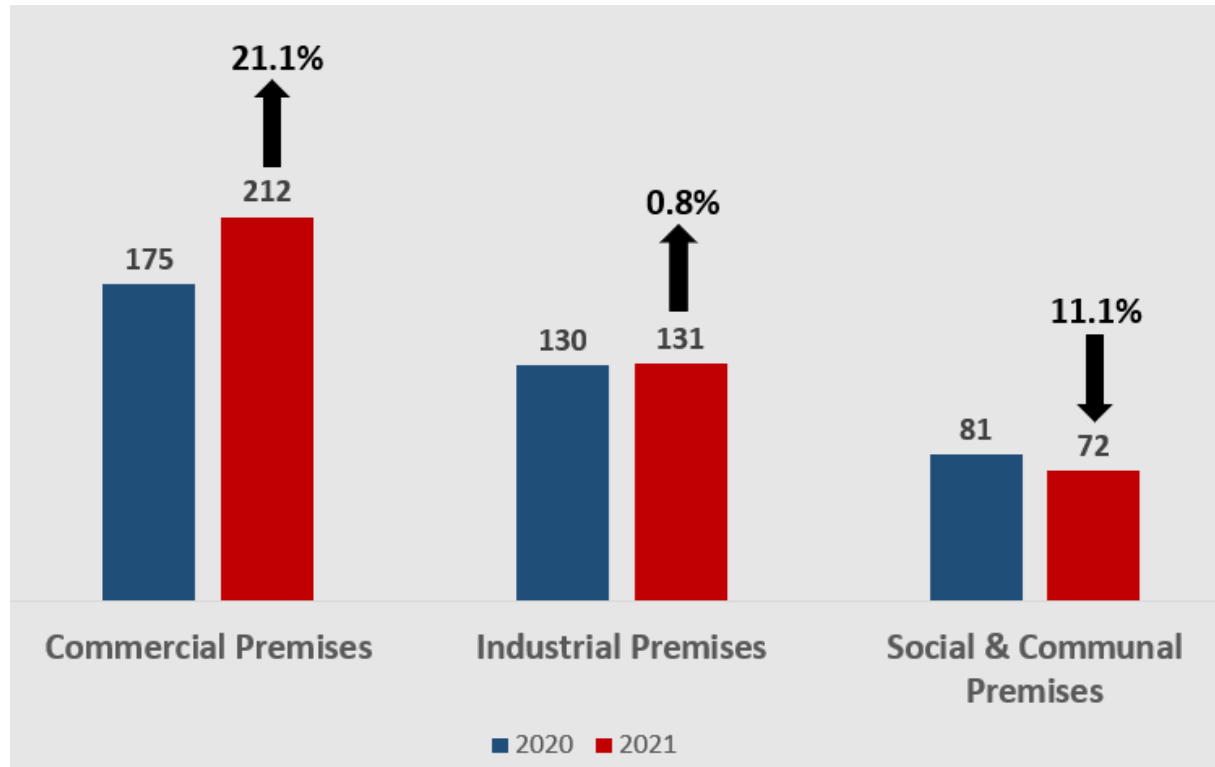
17. There was a substantial decrease in fire incidents involving discarded items (24.9%), from 193 to 145 cases in 2021. These fire incidents typically occur in common areas, such as lift lobbies, staircase landings and common corridors. This notable decrease was due to ongoing efforts by the SCDF and the NFEC in engaging the Town Councils, as well as in educating the public on fire prevention measures such as keeping common areas clear of clutter, and not indiscriminately disposing of lighted materials like lit cigarette butts.

18. SCDF will continue to distribute fire safety advisories and educate the public about fire prevention measures in residential premises. Since September 2020, SCDF has rolled out its fire safety advisory video and infographics on preventing unattended cooking fires via the digital display panels at HDB blocks.

## Fires in Non-Residential Premises

19. In 2021, SCDF responded to 415 fire incidents in non-residential premises, an increase of 29 cases (7.5%) from 386 cases in 2020. The breakdown of fires in non-residential premises is in [Chart 3](#).

Chart 3: Breakdown of fires in non-residential premises



20. There was an increase in the number of fire incidents in commercial and industrial premises in 2021. Fires in commercial premises increased by 21.1% to 212 cases while industrial premises saw a slight increase in fire incidents by 0.8% to 131 cases. Fires in social and communal premises decreased by 11.1% to 72 cases in 2021.

21. SCDF will continue to collaborate with the NFEC, building owners and Fire Safety Managers, in organising fire safety outreach programmes, such as dialogues and seminars, to ensure a high level of fire-safety awareness among the occupants. Regular enforcement checks will also be conducted at these premises to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations.

## Fires in Non-Building Places

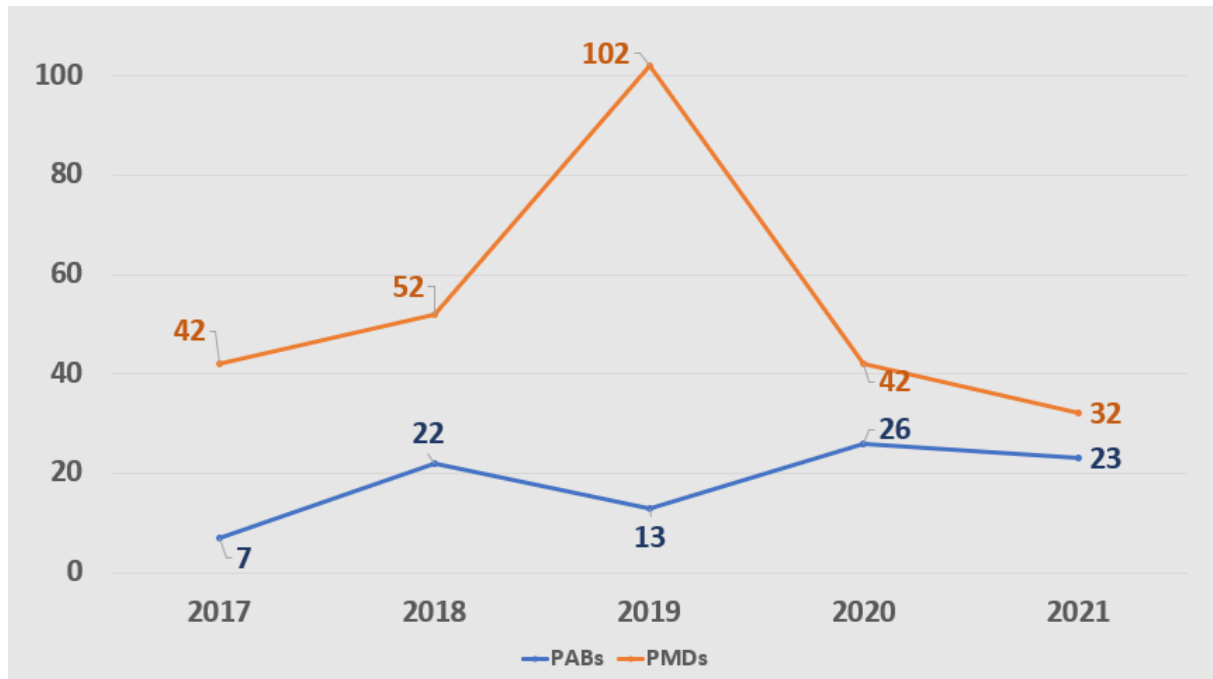
22. There were 419 fire incidents in non-building premises (e.g. vegetation and vehicle fires) in 2021, a decrease of 4.1% from 437 in 2020. This was primarily due to the decrease in the number of vegetation fires which fell by 7.7% to 179 in 2021. The number of discarded item fires at such places also decreased considerably, by 31.4% to 24 in 2021, from 35 in 2020.

23. There were 155 vehicle fires in 2021, an increase of 2 cases (1.3%) from 2020. Of these cases, motor car fires accounted for more than half, at 82 cases (52.9%).

## General Trend: Fires Involving Active Mobility Devices

24. There was an overall decrease in the number of fires involving active mobility devices in 2021, which includes Personal Mobility Devices (PMDs) and Power Assisted Bicycles (PABs), by 19.1%, from 68 in 2020 to 55 in 2021. A drop of 23.8% for fires involving PMDs and 11.5% for fires involving PABs was observed between 2020 and 2021 (see Chart 4 below).

Chart 4: Fires involving PABs and PMDs over the last 5 years (2017 – 2021)



25. In 2021, 30 fires or 54.5% of the fires, involving PMDs and PABs, occurred at residential premises. Members of the public who own PABs and PMDs should continue to be vigilant when handling such devices as these fires can result in serious damage to property and even casualties.

26. It is important for the public to be aware of the fire safety risks associated with PMDs and PABs, and what they can do to reduce these risks.

### Fire Safety Tips on PMDs and PABs:

- Do not leave batteries or devices to charge unattended for an extended period of time or overnight.
- Do not charge PABs/PMDs immediately after use.
- Do not charge PABs/PMDs or their batteries near combustible materials or along an escape path.
- Do not tamper with, modify, or attempt to repair a device on your own.
- Do not buy or use non-original batteries.
- Do not purchase PMDs that do not have the UL2272 Certification Mark.
- Do not purchase PABs that do not have the EN15194 certification and affixed with LTA's orange seal of approval.

- Charge PABs/PMDs on a hard, flat surface to allow for optimal dissipation of heat.
- Use a power adaptor that carries the Safety Mark and is recommended by the manufacturer.
- Examine batteries regularly for any damage or deformities such as bloating, corrosion or powdery residue.

## **Community First Responders for Minor Rubbish Fires and Medical Emergencies**

27. Rubbish chute/bin fires tend to be small scale, carry minimal risk of spreading and therefore pose a lower risk to human life. Such fires can easily be put out by members of the public. In 2021, about 61% of rubbish fires had been put out by members of the public prior to SCDF's arrival at the scene.

28. The Community First Responder initiative was launched in 2018 as part of the SCDF myResponder app. This initiative alerts members of the public to minor rubbish chute and bin fires within their immediate vicinity. Currently, there are about 2,986 active responders who would be notified of such minor fires via the myResponder app. In 2021, SCDF sent out alerts for 1,638 rubbish chute and bin fires. 1,419 individuals responded to these incidents and helped put out the fire.

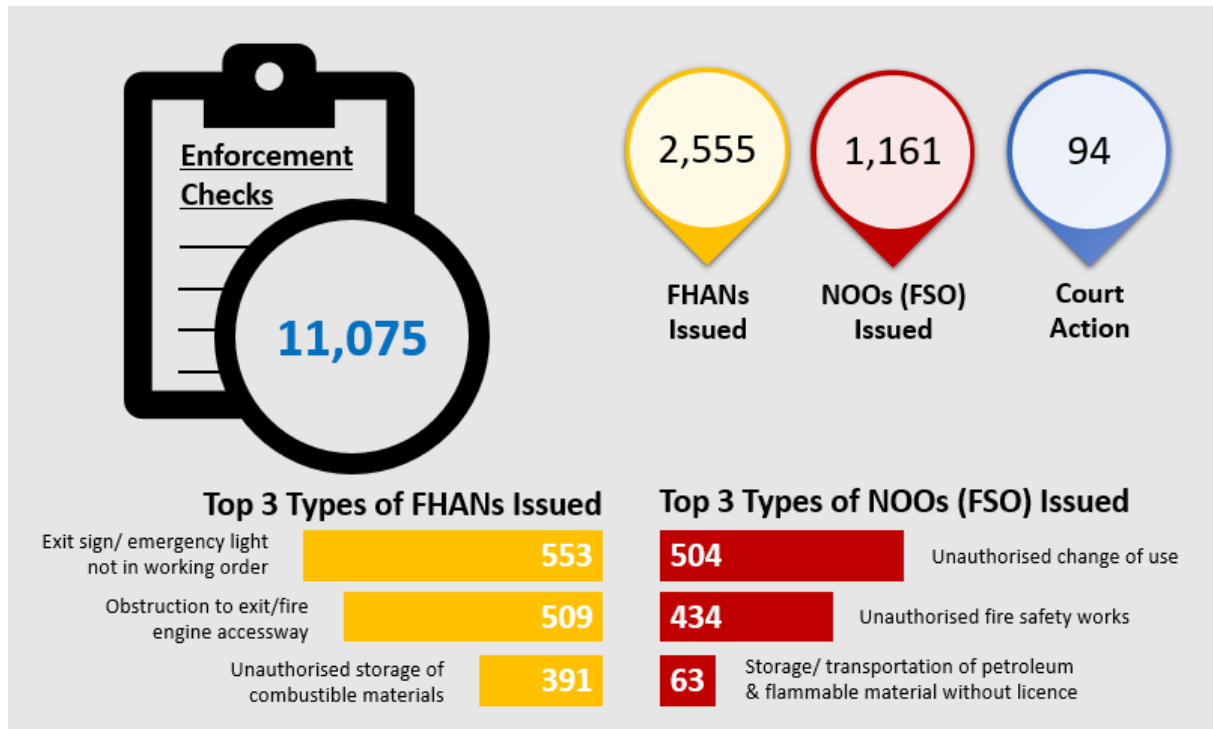
29. In addition, 2,180 alerts for suspected cardiac arrest cases were sent out in 2021 via the myResponder app. 1,253 individuals responded to these incidents and helped attend to the victims.

30. Empowering Community First Responders (CFRs) to respond prior to SCDF emergency responders' arrival increases the survival rate of cardiac arrest victims. CFRs who step forward and respond to minor fires will help SCDF optimise its emergency resources to attend to life-threatening and other higher-priority cases. We encourage members of the public to register as CFRs through the SCDF myResponder mobile application, and to be trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator (CPR-AED) skills. While it is not necessary to have prior training in basic first-aid in order for one to be a CFR, being equipped with these life-saving skills will enable CFRs to be more confident when rendering assistance to cardiac arrest victims.

31. Members of the public can sign up for the 1-hour Dispatcher-Assisted First Responder Plus Programme or SCDF's Community Emergency Preparedness Programme (CEPP) to learn life-saving skills (including CPR-AED) free of charge (visit [www.scdf.gov.sg/savealife/](http://www.scdf.gov.sg/savealife/) for more information). Even if untrained, CFRs can assist by fetching the AED or by directing the EMS crew to the incident site. CFRs can also be verbally guided on how to perform CPR by SCDF Operations Centre specialists or through the GIF animation on the CPR procedure sent by the latter via SMS.



## Overview



32. In 2021, SCDF conducted 11,075 enforcement checks, and issued 2,555 FHANs<sup>8</sup> and 1,161 NOOs (FSO)<sup>9</sup>.

33. The most common fire hazard in 2021 was non-functioning exit signs and emergency lights, which accounted for 21.6% of all FHANs issued. The most common fire safety violation was unauthorised change of use of premises, which accounted for 43.4% of all NOOs (FSO) issued in 2021.

34. There were 94 cases of fire safety violation that were prosecuted in Court in 2021. The majority were due to unauthorised change of use of premises (45 cases or 47.9%), followed by unauthorised fire safety works (22 cases or 23.4%). An example of fire safety violations and the penalties meted out is as follows:

In January 2022<sup>10</sup>, a company, which failed to obtain approval for plans for fire safety works and approval for plans for change of use, was fined \$22,500 for various violations that compromised the building's fire safety. These violations entailed:

- a. The addition of glass partitions within the premises without approval.
- b. The addition of a mezzanine floor within the premises without approval.

<sup>8</sup> Under the Fire Safety Act, a Fire Hazard Abatement Notice (FHAN) is issued to building owners or other responsible parties to require them to abate fire hazards.

<sup>9</sup> A Notice of Offence (Fire Safety Offence), NOO (FSO), is to inform the offender to rectify the offence before an offer to compound the offence is made.

<sup>10</sup> The offence was committed in 2020. The case was referred to the Courts in 2021 and the company was convicted in 2022.

- c. Converting the perimeter fencing and its surrounding area into a storage area.
- d. Converting the exit staircase landing into a storage area.
- e. Converting an area within the premises for accommodation purposes.

35. SCDF will work with building owners to ensure the fire safety of premises, even as new safe management measures are implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes ensuring that occupants can be quickly and safely evacuated during a fire.<sup>11</sup> SCDF takes a serious view of fire safety and has been conducting frequent enforcement checks, both proactively and in response to public feedback.

### **Fire Safety Feedback**

36. Members of the public are encouraged to report any fire hazards that they come across. They can do so by submitting photographs and a brief description of the fire hazard using the myResponder mobile application, by calling the fire hazard reporting line at 1800-280-0000, or by sending an email to [SCDF Fire Safety Feedback@scdf.gov.sg](mailto:SCDF_Fire_Safety_Feedback@scdf.gov.sg). However, they should refrain from calling 995 to report such cases, as this emergency hotline should be reserved for reporting life-threatening emergencies.

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<sup>11</sup> Since early July 2020, inspections of higher risk premises have been heightened (i.e. shopping malls where there is large congregation of transient population) to ensure that fire safety guidelines are complied with and that exit facilities remain accessible and unobstructed.