



## SCDF reminds property owners and occupiers to seek approval for the change of use of any premises

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) reminds all property owners and occupiers to seek SCDF's prior approval if they wish to change the use of any premises or part thereof.

### Importance of seeking approval for COU

2. Under the Fire Safety Act, a Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) must be obtained before the premises can be occupied or used. Persons who wish to change the use of any premises or part thereof must seek SCDF's approval for the change of use (COU). The building owner or occupier must engage (i) a Qualified Person (QP)<sup>1</sup> to prepare and submit the COU plans for SCDF's approval; and (ii) a Registered Inspector (RI)<sup>2</sup> to inspect the completed fire safety works.

3. When an unauthorised COU of any premises is detected, a Notice of Offence (NOO) will be issued to the person responsible, requiring that the fire safety violation be rectified by reinstating the affected area to its original usage. Alternatively, that person may engage a QP to advise on the fire safety requirements that need to be fulfilled to change the use of the affected area to other purposes.

### SCDF takes a serious view of COU offences

4. SCDF takes a very serious view of unauthorised COUs as it is a major fire safety violation which increases fire risk and hinders emergency escape routes, putting lives in danger during a fire outbreak.

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<sup>1</sup> A QP is a registered architect or professional engineer who can prepare and submit plans to SCDF for approval, in accordance with the Regulations made under the Fire Safety Act. More information on QPs can be found at <https://www.scdf.gov.sg/home/fire-safety/plans-and-consultations/plan-approval>.

<sup>2</sup> A RI is a person who is registered under the Fire Safety Act to be qualified and competent to inspect fire safety works in buildings to ascertain the degree of compliance of fire safety requirements. More information on RIs can be found at <https://www.scdf.gov.sg/home/fire-safety/permits-and-certifications/registered-inspector>.

5. Those found to have breached general fire safety regulations can be fined up to \$10,000 and/or face a jail term of up to six months. For serious offences, the person responsible can be fined up to \$200,000 and/or jailed for a term not exceeding 24 months, and in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine of up to \$1,000 for every day which the offence continues after conviction. SCDF may also exercise its powers to require a temporary closure of the premises.

6. Last year, four persons who were property owners or occupiers were charged in court for contravening Section 30(1) of the FSA<sup>3</sup>, for the COU of vehicle parking areas in their premises without prior approval. Court action was taken against them as responsible entities as these were serious cases, and they were fined between \$3,500 to \$4,000. For photos of unauthorised COU of vehicle parking areas, please refer to **Annex A**. Please refer to **Annex B** for a list of the premises and charges meted out to the responsible entities.

7. More information on the FSC can be found at <https://www.scdf.gov.sg/home/fire-safety/permits-and-certifications/fire-safety-certificate-temporary-fire-permit>.

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<sup>3</sup> Section 30 (1) of the FSA Cap 109A, 2000 Revised Edition states that any person who changes the use of a premises shall, if such change of use would cause the existing fire safety measures to become inadequate, prior to carrying out the change, apply to the Commissioner for approval to change the use of the premises. The Fire Safety Act has since been revised, and the relevant section is now Section 61 (1) of the Fire Safety Act 1993.

Photos of Unauthorised COU of Vehicle Parking Areas





**ANNEX B**

List of premises and charges meted out against  
unauthorised COU of vehicle parking areas

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Date of Prosecution</b>	<b>Offence Description</b>	<b>Charge meted out</b>
1	24 Tagore Lane, Singapore 787481	23 February 2021	Responsible entities allowed vehicle parking areas to be changed to unauthorised storage areas.	Responsible entities were fined between \$3,500 and \$4,000
2	71 Woodlands Avenue 10, Singapore 737743	22 June 2021		
3	20 Shaw Road, Singapore 367956	26 October 2021		
4	55 Serangoon North Avenue 4, Singapore 555859	7 December 2021		