

# NEWS RELEASE



# SCDF

The Life Saving Force

... for a safer Singapore

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE



## **Two private Ambulance Operators to wear SCDF uniforms and respond in SCDF ambulances from 1 December; have been upskilled to respond to wider range of emergencies**

From 1 December 2020, medical crews from two Private Ambulance Operators (PAOs) contracted to the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) will respond to emergency calls in SCDF ambulances and wear SCDF uniforms while doing so, following a new contract between SCDF and the two PAOs.

2. Under this new model, crews from Unistrong Technology and Lentor Ambulance are trained to respond to a wider range of emergencies, such as Mass Casualty Incidents (MCI) and unconventional threats involving chemical, biological, radiological and explosive (CBRE) elements.

### **PAOs Contracted by SCDF**

3. Due to the rising number of medical calls, SCDF started to augment its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) fleet with contracted PAO ambulances<sup>1</sup> in 2009. Since then, the PAO fleet has expanded from ten ambulances to 30 presently.

4. The above contractual arrangement with the PAOs is based on a Contractor-Owned-Contractor-Operated (COCO) model. Under this model, the PAOs own and maintain their own fleet of ambulances, medical equipment and communication devices, as well as provide the manpower to operate the ambulances. Over the past 11 years, the contracted PAOs have contributed to SCDF's delivery of quality EMS.

### **A New GOCO model**

5. From 1 December 2020, SCDF will transit to a new Government-Owned-Contractor-Operated (GOCO) model, to further enhance the SCDF's ability to respond to a wide range of emergencies and maintain a high level of quality patient care.

### **Increased operational capabilities and readiness**

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<sup>1</sup> To qualify as a PAO paramedic, personnel must undergo training in paramedicine from SCDF or the Singapore Armed Forces, or other accredited institutions such as Nanyang Polytechnic, Institute of Technical Education, or Justice Institute of British Columbia. These paramedics must also pass both the Paramedic Specialist Proficiency Test and the Ambulance Proficiency Test administered by SCDF.

6. SCDF's operational capabilities and readiness will be enhanced under this new GOCO model.

7. The two contracted PAOs will provide the EMS personnel to operate the 30 SCDF-issued ambulances assigned to them, in fire stations across Singapore.<sup>2</sup> SCDF will also issue additional fully-equipped ambulances on top of these 30 to the PAOs, that will serve as additional resources that can be activated to support SCDF during major prolonged emergencies. Off-duty PAO EMS personnel can also be tapped on, to respond to such emergencies.

8. SCDF will be responsible for the maintenance of all medical and communication equipment on these ambulances, while the PAOs will be responsible for the general maintenance of the ambulances. To ensure compliance with SCDF's vehicle maintenance regime, SCDF will conduct regular audits on these ambulances.

9. SCDF will maintain overall command and control over all medical resources (which may include PAO ambulances and crews) deployed to large-scale incidents.

#### Continual education and training

10. Since June 2020, about 350 EMS personnel from the two PAOs have undergone a three-day upskilling programme to equip them with the skills to respond to and manage more complex medical emergencies, including MCI and those involving CBRE elements. Under the new model, all new PAO recruits from 2021 onwards will be required to attend this upskilling programme. Refer to **Annex A** for visuals of this training.

11. PAO personnel will also be required to attend relevant continuing training, and to undergo half-yearly re-certification tests administered by SCDF.

12. **Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) Janice Oh**, SCDF's Senior Assistant Director from the EMS Readiness Branch said: "In this upskilling programme, the PAO EMS personnel were assessed through various theory tests and practical exercises, all in line with SCDF's rigorous standards for emergency medical care. They now have stronger competencies to serve the public better."

#### PAO personnel to don SCDF uniform

13. To project a cohesive public image, PAO personnel assigned to SCDF ambulances under this new GOCO model will wear SCDF uniforms. They can be

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<sup>2</sup> SCDF will, in time, work towards prioritising SCDF ambulances to respond to higher acuity medical emergencies as part of the tiered response framework, after further upskilling of its organic resources and other operational initiatives.

distinguished by the PAO's insignia badge worn above the nametag on the uniform. Refer to **Annex B** for photos of these insignia badges.

### **A New Model of Partnership**

14. SCDF will work with PAOs to deliver the highest quality of patient care. **Jonathan Koh, Chief Executive Officer of Lentor Ambulance** said: "Moving onto a GOCO contract, it is an enhanced partnership with SCDF in terms of equipment, crew training, and service standards, to provide an excellent emergency ambulance service to our fellow residents in Singapore. Building on 11 years of excellent partnership with SCDF, Lentor Ambulance is honoured and humbled to carry on serving our fellow residents." **Edward Teo, General Manager of Unistrong Technology** added: "Having been appointed as a Private Ambulance Operator, we are pleased to partner SCDF in implementing the GOCO model for the emergency ambulance services. We see the significant benefits of allowing the Private Ambulance Operators to focus on operations and, as a result, deliver quality services to the public."

15. **Assistant Commissioner (AC) Yong Meng Wah**, Director of SCDF's Emergency Medical Services Department said: "The new GOCO model will allow SCDF to provide even more reliable, consistent, and high-quality patient care in the face of an increasingly complex operating environment and greater demand for emergency medical services. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with the PAOs in our shared mission of saving and protecting lives."

**Singapore Civil Defence Force**  
**30 November 2020**

Visuals of PAO training



*PAO crew member undergoing training on mass casualty management*



*PAO crew members undergoing CBRE training*

Photos of PAO insignia



*Insignia badges for Unistrong Technology (L) and Lentor Ambulance (R) crews*



*Group shot of crew members from the two PAOs standing side-by-side with an SCDF paramedic in front on an SCDF ambulance*



*PAO crew members in SCDF uniforms and the PAOs' insignia*