



NEWS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCE

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FIRE, AMBULANCE AND ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

TOPIC C

FIRE SAFETY ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS (JAN – DEC 2011)

DECREASE IN NUMBER OF FIRE HAZARD ABATEMENT NOTICE (FHAN) AND NOTICE OF FIRE SAFETY OFFENCE (NFSO)

SCDF conducts fire safety enforcement checks on a regular basis to ensure that fire safety standards are well-observed and fire hazards are detected and rectified. Enforcement actions are also taken when feedback is received from the public, for example, through e-mails, letters and hotline calls. Such public feedback shows the fire safety consciousness of our community and more importantly helps to keep offenders on their toes, enhancing our fire safety environment.

2. Between Jan to Dec 2011, SCDF conducted 11,983 enforcement checks, an increase of 413 from the 11,570 checks conducted in 2010. Arising from the 11,983 enforcement checks in 2011, 2,632 FHANs were issued. This is a decrease of 12.8 % from the 3,017 FHANs issued in 2010. The FHAN serves as a warning to building owners and management to remove the fire hazard.

| Description | Jan -Dec 2010 | Jan- Dec 2011 | Absolute Change | % Change |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|
| No of Enforcement Checks | 11570 | 11983 | 413 | 3.6% |
| No of FHANs issued | 3017 | 2632 | -385 | -12.8% |
| No of NFSOs issued | 2183 | 2164 | -19 | -0.9% |

Table C1 : Number of Enforcement Checks, FHANs and NFSOs issued

3. A Notice of Fire Safety Offence (NFSO) instead of a FHAN is issued when the contravention is of serious nature and warrants a heavier penalty, for example, when unauthorised fire safety works are carried out. It carries with it a composition fine of between \$300 and \$500. A total of 2,164 NFSOs were issued in 2011, a decrease of 0.9% from the 2,183 NFSOs issued in 2010.

4. The lower number of FHANs and NFSOs issued could be attributed to the efforts of building owners and fire safety managers in identifying and removing potential fire hazards, thus resulting in lesser number of violations detected.

OBSTRUCTION TO EXITS AND FIRE ENGINE ACCESSWAYS IS MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR FOR FHANs

5. The most common fire hazard resulting in FHANs in 2011 was the obstruction to exits and fire engine accessways. During fire outbreaks, such obstructions can impede the smooth evacuation of occupants from the affected premises and also affect SCDF's early mitigation efforts. Although the number of FHANs for this offence continues to be high, it is encouraging to note that there is a drop of 13.1% from the number of FHANs issued in 2010, as shown in **Table C2**.

| Type of Fire Hazard | Jan – Dec 2010 | Jan – Dec 2011 | Absolute Change | % Change |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Obstruction (exits/fire engine accessway) | 756 | 657 | -99 | -13.1% |

Table C2: Fire Hazard Abatement Notice

UNAUTHORISED CHANGE OF USE IS MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR FOR NFSOs

6. The main contributing offence for the NFSOs issued was unauthorised change of use, which saw a slight increase of 0.5% in 2011. Of the 1,183 NFSOs issued for unauthorised change of use, a large proportion was due to the unauthorised change of use of premises to workers' dormitories, detected during our inspections. Such fire safety violations may have serious consequences, affecting the early mitigation of fires and impede evacuation in case of fires.

| Type of Offence | Jan -Dec 2010 | Jan- Dec 2011 | Absolute Change | % Change |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Unauthorised change of use | 1177 | 1183 | 6 | 0.5% |

Table C3: Notice of Fire Safety Offence

SCDF TAKES FIRM ACTION ON FIRE SAFETY VIOLATIONS

7. SCDF takes violations of fire safety requirements seriously and will not hesitate to take firm actions against building management who do not promptly take action to rectify fire safety violations despite warnings and fines. Court action will be taken for serious cases. For general fire safety violations, the maximum penalty can be up to \$10,000 and/or a jail term not exceeding 6 months. For carrying out unauthorised fire safety works, the building management can be fined up to \$50,000

and/or jailed for a term not exceeding 12 months.

8. Between Jan to Dec 2011, 49 charges were filed for court actions against fire safety offenders. Majority of the charges were for unauthorised change of use. Of the 49 court actions, 53% (26 cases) were for unauthorised change of use.

| Type of Offence | Jan -Dec 2010 | Jan- Dec 2011 | Absolute Change |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Unauthorised change of use | 102 | 26 | -76 |

Table C4: Court Action

9. On 1 October 2011, a company was fined a total of \$4,000 for two counts of fire safety infringements related to change of use without approval. The company had illegally converted the internal driveway area and part of the first storey of the industrial premises at 20 Benoi Crescent to workers' dormitories. The illegal workers' dormitories did not possess the required additional fire safety measures needed for the change of usage and thus posed a fire risk to the occupants residing within the premises.

ENHANCED FIRE SAFETY GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF COMMON AREAS IN HDB ESTATES

10. Over the years, the SCDF has been working closely with the Town Councils to reduce the number of fires in HDB estates. For example, since 2009, fire safety banners highlighting the common types of residential fires have been displayed at prominent locations within the housing estates. The SCDF has also been engaging the Town Councils to provide updates on fire safety issues through dialogues and briefings.

11. Fires involving discarded items at common spaces in HDB estates form the second biggest component of residential fires, accounting for 22% of the total residential fires in 2011.

12. As the agency responsible for the management and maintenance of the common property of HDB estates, Town Councils play an important role in ensuring that the housing estates are fire safe. Any public feedback received by SCDF relating to fire safety violations in HDB common areas is directed to the Town Councils for their follow-up action.

13. The Town Councils are responsible for the monitoring and removal of fire hazards like the obstruction of corridors, staircases, discarded items at common areas. They are also responsible to ensure that fire protection facilities (e.g. landing valves risers, hosereels) in common areas are regularly maintained and serviceable.

Poorly maintained fire protection facilities and obstructions of common areas can significantly affect early mitigation and rescue efforts during fire fighting operations.

14. To enhance the level of fire safety in HDB estates and for more consistency in fire safety management among the Town Councils, SCDF, in consultation with HDB and Town Councils has developed more specific guidelines on the safe and acceptable use of common corridors. The enhanced guidelines streamline the practice on the use of common corridors and facilitate the Town Councils in managing such usage. Common public feedback received by SCDF on fire safety violations in HDB estates were taken into consideration in developing the enhanced guidelines. A circular on the enhanced Fire Safety Guidelines has been provided to all Town Councils in Jan 2012. Please see [Annex A](#) for the Fire Safety Guidelines.

15. SCDF in collaboration with the NFEC and Town Councils will be conducting a public education campaign to promote greater awareness on fire safety and educate the residents on the enhanced fire safety guidelines. The campaign will be rolled out in Feb 2012. Publicity posters will be displayed at Town Councils' and Residents' Committees' notice boards, Community Clubs. Pamphlets will be distributed during Emergency Preparedness Days and Community Emergency Preparedness Programme. The SCDF will also work with the Community Emergency Response Teams to distribute the materials during the post fire public education blitz.

16. SCDF is also working with relevant agencies to explore ways to monitor and measure the Town Council's performance in ensuring fire safety standards in their respective estates through indicators such as number of fire safety violations and number of fire occurrences, with the objective of improving the overall state of fire safety in all residential estates.