

POLICE NEWS RELEASE

ANNUAL CRIME BRIEF 2018

Singapore Remains One of the Safest Cities in the World

Crime Remained Low Though Overall Crime Rate Increased Slightly

Singapore remains one of the safest cities in the world. Singapore was again ranked first in the Gallup Global Law and Order Report 2018¹, with 94% of residents reporting that they felt safe walking home alone in their neighbourhoods at night. The World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index 2017-2018² also ranked Singapore first for order and security.

2. In 2018, the total number of reported crimes increased slightly by 1.4% to 33,134 cases, from 32,668 cases in 2017. The Overall Crime Rate³ also increased slightly, with 588 cases per 100,000 population in 2018, compared to 582 cases per 100,000 population in 2017.

3. The increase in the number of reported crimes was largely due to a rise in scam cases. Excluding cases from the top 10 types of scams⁴, the total number of reported crimes decreased by 1.9% to 27,338 cases in 2018, from 27,863 cases in 2017 (see Annex A-1).

4. Of note, theft and related crimes decreased by 8.6% to 12,279 cases in 2018, from 13,431 cases in 2017. In particular, the number of shop thefts fell by 5.9% to 3,575 cases in 2018, from 3,800 cases in 2017, while the number of theft-in-dwelling cases decreased by 8.1% to 2,727 cases in 2018, from 2,968 cases in 2017. In addition, the number of motor vehicle and related thefts⁵ fell by 10.6% to 886 cases in 2018, from 991 cases in 2017. Bicycle thefts registered a significant decrease of 42.3% to 522 cases in 2018, from 905 cases in 2017 (see Annex A-2).

5. The decline in theft cases can be largely attributed to the Police's continued crime prevention efforts, including increased Police presence at malls and other

¹ Extracted from: <https://news.gallup.com/reports/235310/gallup-global-law-order-report-2018.aspx>

² Extracted from: <https://worldjusticeproject.org/our-work/wjp-rule-law-index/wjp-rule-law-index-2017-2018>

³ Overall Crime Rate refers to the Overall Crime per 100,000 population. It is computed by dividing the number of crime cases reported over the total Singapore population, and multiplied by 100,000. It is used by many overseas Police forces to measure crime rate.

⁴ Top 10 types of scams refer to e-commerce scams, loan scams, internet love scams, credit-for-sex scams, investment ruse scams, business email impersonation scams, China officials impersonation scams, lucky draw scams, ICA impersonation scams and fraudulent subscriptions of handphone lines.

⁵ Motor vehicle and related thefts include theft of motor vehicles, theft of motor vehicle components parts and theft from motor vehicles

crowded places, during peak periods such as the Great Singapore Sale and the year-end-festive periods. The Police have also been engaging shop owners to enhance CCTV coverage, install anti-shop theft gantries and put up crime prevention posters. We will continue to work closely with the retail industry to develop crime prevention initiatives to deter shop thefts.

6. The decrease in the number of motor vehicle and related thefts can be partly attributed to Police's Vehicle On Watch (VOW) project. The in-vehicle cameras of participating vehicles serve as a strong deterrence against such crimes, and also provide crucial leads to aid Police investigations. To date, close to 10,000 vehicle owners with in-vehicle cameras have signed up for the VOW project.

Crime-Free Days

7. In 2018, 165 days were free from the three crimes of snatch theft, housebreaking and robbery in Singapore. Individually, 322 days were free from snatch theft, 227 days were free from housebreaking and 303 days were free from robbery. (See Annex A-3).

Scams Situation in 2018

Decrease in Internet Love Scams, but E-Commerce Scams, Loan Scams, Credit-for-Sex Scams and China Officials Impersonation Scams Remain a Concern

8. Internet love scams decreased by 20.1% to 660 cases in 2018, from 826 cases in 2017. The total amount cheated fell to around \$27.5 million in 2018, from around \$37 million in 2017. This is partly attributable to the Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force (TCTF) that was set up in October 2017 under the Commercial Affairs Department to investigate transnational scams, including internet love scams. The TCTF has since closed over 600 bank accounts and recovered more than S\$1.4 million. The decrease in internet love scams was also in part due to the Police's continued and successful collaboration with foreign law enforcement agencies such as the Royal Malaysia Police and Hong Kong Police Force.

9. However, e-commerce scams, loan scams, credit-for-sex scams and China officials impersonation scams increased (see Annexes A-4 and B). In total, these scams increased by 36.1% to 3,954 cases in 2018, from 2,905 cases in 2017.

a. E-Commerce Scams

- E-Commerce scam cases increased by 11.4% to 2,125 cases in 2018, from 1,907 cases in 2017.
- The total amount cheated increased by 35.7% to about \$1.9 million in 2018, from about \$1.4 million in 2017. In 2018, the largest amount cheated in a single case was close to \$69,000.

- 70% of the e-commerce scams took place on Carousell. The common scams involved electronic products and tickets to events and attractions, such as tickets for Universal Studios Singapore.
- The Police continued to work closely with relevant stakeholders, such as Carousell, to remove suspicious advertisements and feature scam advisories to raise awareness against e-commerce scams. Carousell also introduced CarouPay, a form of escrow payment which will hold money paid by buyers until the sale is acknowledged by both buyers and sellers, to mitigate the risk of buyers falling prey to scams.

b. Loan Scams

- Loan scam cases increased by 151% to 994 cases in 2018, from 396 cases in 2017.
- The total amount cheated increased by 253.4% to about \$2 million in 2018, from about \$566,000 in 2017. In 2018, the largest amount cheated in a single case was close to \$90,000.

c. Credit-for-Sex Scams

- Credit-for sex scam cases increased by 28.7% to 533 cases in 2018, from 414 cases in 2017.
- The total amount cheated increased by 50% to about \$1.5 million in 2018, from about \$1 million in 2017. In 2018, the largest amount cheated in a single case was close to \$100,000.

d. China Officials Impersonation Scams

- China officials impersonation scam cases increased by 60.6% to 302 cases in 2018, from 188 cases in 2017.
- The total amount cheated decreased by 0.8% to about \$12.7 million in 2018, from about \$12.8 million in 2017. In 2018, the largest amount cheated in a single case was close to \$1.7 million.

10. The prevalence of internet penetration and use of smartphones in Singapore have contributed to the increase in online crimes. (see Annex D for a quote by the Director, Commercial Affairs Department). A significant proportion of online crimes are committed remotely by foreign syndicates that continue to find ways to prey on victims. The Police will continue to work closely with foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on such foreign syndicates targeting Singaporeans.

Police's Education and Engagement Efforts Against Scams

11. Apart from enforcement, the Police continued to increase public education and engagement efforts with stakeholders, such as convenience stores, remittance agencies and banks, to raise awareness of scams. This included training frontline counter staff to spot signs of victims who could be in the midst of a scam, and displaying crime advisories prominently at counters and automated teller machines (see Annex D for a quote by the Director of Operations Department).

12. On 9 November 2018, the Police, in collaboration with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), launched the 'Let's Fight Scams' campaign. The campaign calls on the community and businesses to pledge their support towards a united front against scams. As an anti-scam advocate, members of the public will receive regular scam alerts, which they can help to spread to their loved ones.

13. The Police also disseminated crime advisories against e-commerce scams, loan scams, Government officials impersonation scams and internet love scams to all households in Singapore in December 2018.

14. We have also engaged major online shopping platforms, such as Carousell, Lazada and Shopee, to implement measures to safeguard consumers against e-commerce scams.

15. In addition, the Police also worked with inter-agency stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Law, to share the list of licensed moneylenders and feature anti-unlicensed moneylending messages on the Registry of Moneylenders website. We will continue to work with the relevant stakeholders and community in extending outreach efforts to educate the public against loan scams.

16. Members of the public can also visit the website www.scamalert.sg to learn about the various types of scams and take steps to avoid falling victim (see Annex D for a quote by the Chairman of NCPC).

Unlicensed Moneylending Situation in 2018

Shift in Unlicensed Moneylending (UML) Harassment to Non-Damage and Non-Confrontational Tactics

17. The total number of UML-related harassment cases increased by 21.1% to 4,619 cases in 2018, from 3,814 cases in 2017. UML-related harassment by electronic means cases increased by 33.5% to 3,719 cases in 2018, from 2,785 cases in 2017. Such cases accounted for the majority of the UML-related harassment cases reported in 2018. UML-related harassment cases involving damage to property decreased by 12.5% to 900 cases in 2018, from 1,029 cases in 2017.

18. The Police's enforcement efforts to disrupt UML syndicate operations, strong partnership with the community and the introduction of additional Police Cameras in neighbourhoods forced UML harassers to shift to non-damage and non-confrontational tactics, such as placing harassment notes in letterboxes.

19. However, the proliferation of new communication platforms and smartphones have made it easier for UML harassers to conduct their harassment via electronic means and simultaneously target larger groups of people. More victims are therefore being harassed via SMS and social media platforms.

20. The Police will continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders, such as the Infocomm Media Development Authority, to disrupt UML harassers employing such tactics and increase public outreach efforts on anti-unlicensed moneylending.

21. The Police also observed that more foreign workers are increasingly borrowing money from unlicensed moneylenders. The Police have engaged maid employment agencies and businesses to educate foreign workers against borrowing from loansharks and to warn them of the severe consequences of getting involved in UML activities.

Other Areas of Concern in 2018

Increase in cases under the Computer Misuse Act

22. Cases under the Computer Misuse Act increased by 40.3% to 1,204 cases in 2018, from 858 cases in 2017. Such cases include unauthorised access or transaction of an individual's online accounts, unauthorised purchases using credit/debit cards and phishing emails that obtained sensitive personal information such as passwords and credit cards details.

23. Members of the public should be alert and safeguard their personal particulars and online credentials such as internet banking details, their Personal Identification Number (PIN) or One-Time Password (OTP). They should also be wary of phishing emails or websites.

24. Credit/debit card holders should opt for SMS OTP verification for charges to your credit/debit card and register for an SMS notification for any charges incurred. Members of the public should also be careful with their credit/debit card details.

Increase in Outrage of Modesty Cases

25. Outrage of modesty (OM) cases increased by 11.9% to 1,747 cases in 2018, from 1,561 cases in 2017. OM cases on public transport and at entertainment night spots remain key concerns.

- a) OM cases at entertainment night spots increased by 34.3% to 145 cases in 2018, from 108 cases in 2017; and
- b) OM cases on public transport decreased by 2.4% to 202 cases in 2018, from 207 cases in 2017. However, this accounts for 11.6% of all OM cases.

26. The Police have enhanced their presence at public transportation nodes through stepped-up patrols. We will continue to work closely with the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and public transport operators to reach out to commuters by distributing anti-OM advisories. Public education videos with anti-OM messages are also screened at MRT and bus interchanges. These advisories and videos educate the public on what they can do when they encounter such a crime, and remind them to stay vigilant (see [Annex C](#)).

27. The Police continued to work with public entertainment (PE) outlets to prevent OM cases. On 5 September 2018, the Police, supported by the NCPC and major PE outlets in Clarke Quay, Orchard Road, Marina Bay and Sentosa, launched the Smart Clubbing Campaign at Zouk. The campaign aimed to promote smart and safe clubbing behaviours, and to reduce OM cases and other crimes in PE outlets. Posters and noticeboards warning patrons about these crimes were displayed prominently at these nightspots. Local artiste Ms Irene Ang was featured in the campaign video and shared crime prevention measures.

28. The Police are also working with ride-hailing company Grab to disseminate “smart clubbing” messages via its Grab app using location and time-based algorithms to target customers in the vicinity of popular nightspots.

Strong Police-Community Partnership to Fight Crime

29. Public education remains a key component in our overall strategy to combat crime.

30. The community plays a vital role in the fight against crime. In August 2018, Citizens on Patrol (COP) also expanded the scope of their patrol to cover MRT stations, beginning with Queenstown MRT station.

31. Members of the public can assist Police in investigations by providing crucial information via i-Witness, on the Police@SG mobile application or via the SPF website. In 2018, the Police received more than 35,000 submissions from the public, which assisted us in solving cases.

32. The number of calls made to the anti-scam helpline increased by over 30%. Web traffic to the Scamalert website also increased by close to 30%. The Police and NCPC will continue to use the anti-scam helpline and Scamalert website to educate and raise awareness amongst the public against scams.

33. With strong support from the community and stakeholders, Singapore will continue to remain one of the safest countries in the world (see Annex D for a quote by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigation and Intelligence)).

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
20 FEBRUARY 2019 @ 3PM**

2018 Crime Statistics in Singapore



Overall Crime

2017

32,668 Cases

2018

33,134 Cases

1.4%



Overall Crime Excluding Top 10 Types of Scams

2017

27,863 Cases

2018

27,338 Cases

1.9%

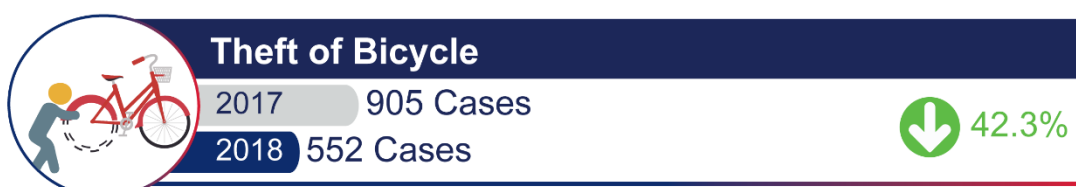
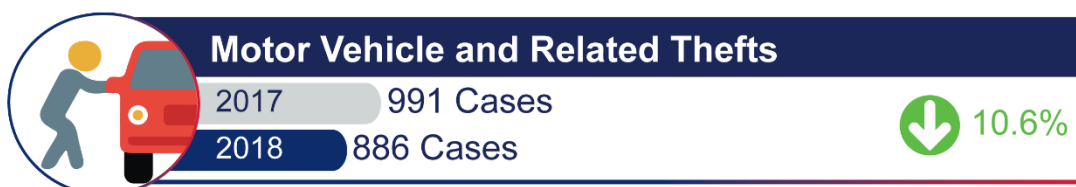
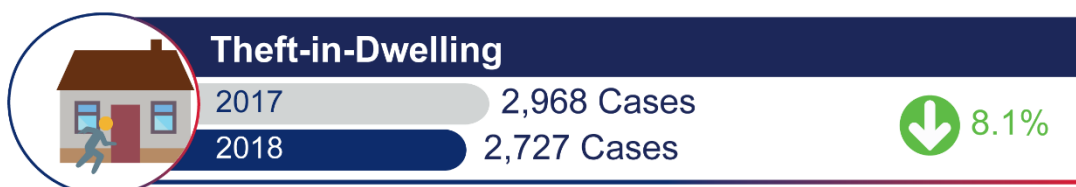
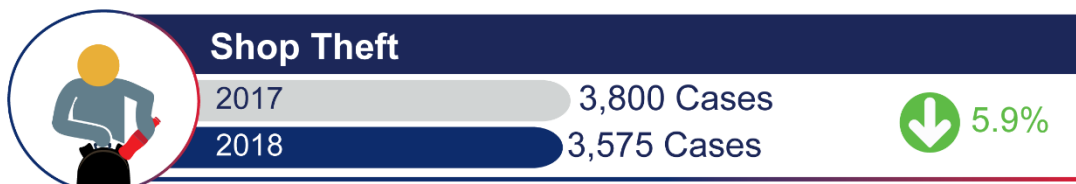
Top 10 Types of Scams	2017	2018	Change
E-Commerce Scam	1,907	2,125	11.4% 218 Cases
Loan Scam	396	994	151.0% 598 Cases
Internet Love Scam	826	660	20.1% 166 Cases
Credit-for-Sex Scam	414	533	28.7% 119 Cases
Investment Ruse Scam	417	431	3.4% 14 Cases
Business Email Impersonation Scam	332	378	13.9% 46 Cases
China Officials Impersonation Scam	188	302	60.6% 114 Cases
Lucky Draw Scam	72	159	120.8% 87 Cases
ICA Impersonation Scam	176	112	36.4% 64 Cases
Fraudulent Subscription of Handphone Lines	77	102	32.5% 25 Cases
Total Number of Scam Cases	4,805	5,796	20.6% 991 Cases



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



Theft and Related Crimes



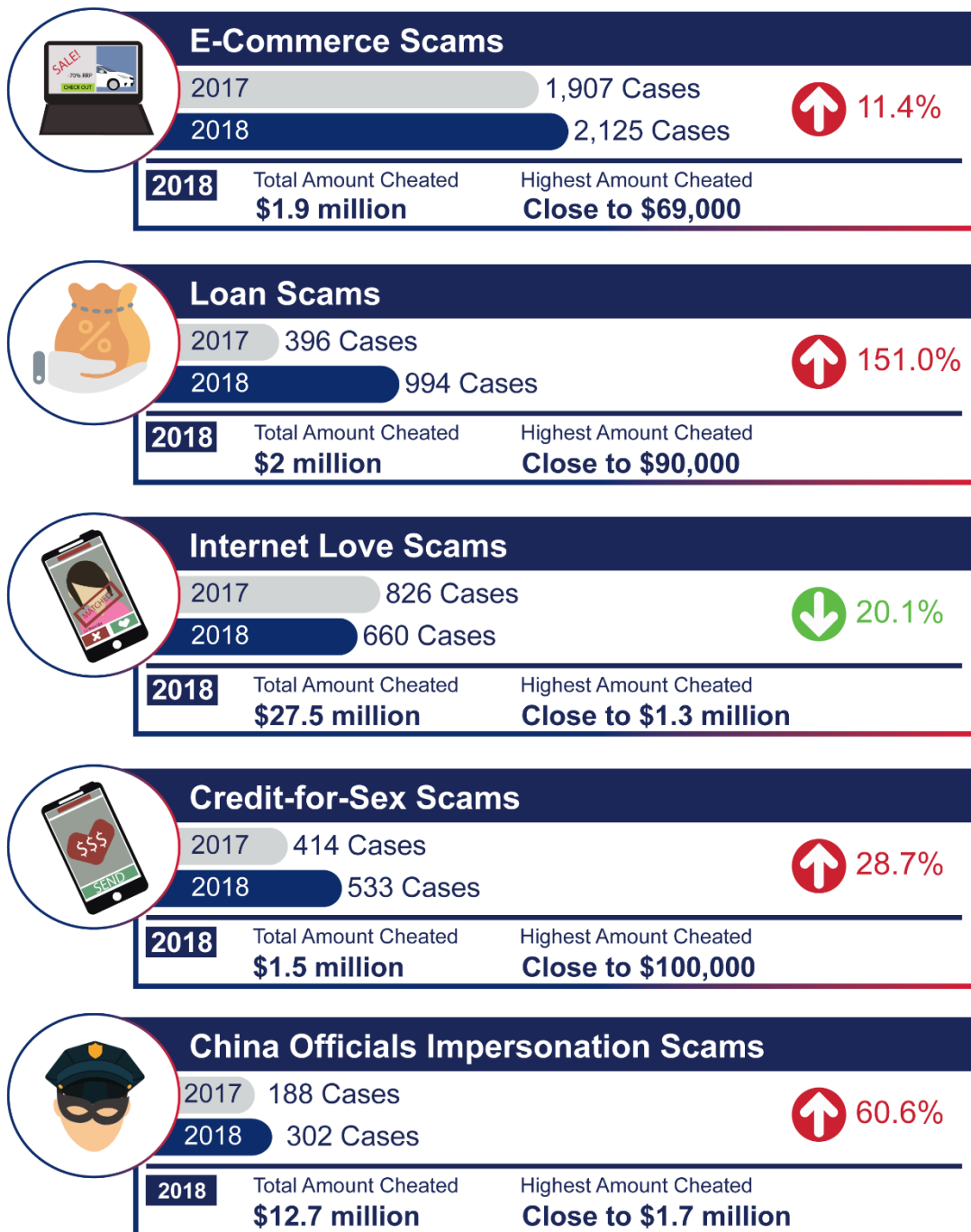
Crime-Free Days in 2018



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



Scams of Concern



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



Crime Prevention Measures against Scams

1. E-Commerce Scams:

- Online platforms such as Carousell provide a consumer-to-consumer marketplace that offers strangers the ease of transacting without the need to meet up, making it susceptible to being exploited by scammers.
- Exercise extra caution when you come across unrealistic bargains for goods, such as concert tickets, apparel, hotel stays and electronic products.
- Always check the buyer's or seller's track record. Buy only from reputable vendors and sellers.
- If advanced payments are required, use shopping platforms that provide arrangements to only release your payment to the seller upon your receipt of the item.

2. Loan Scams:

- Licensed moneylenders are not allowed to advertise their business through SMSes or WhatsApp messages.
- Ignore such advertisements. Do not give out personal information to anyone, such as NRIC and contact numbers, and bank details such as account numbers.
- Do not reply to these messages. Instead, block or report the number as spam on WhatsApp or through third party applications.

3. China Officials Impersonation Scams:

- Be wary of calls from people claiming to be officials, especially those from foreign countries.
- Government agencies will not ask you to make payments over the phone.
- Be suspicious of callers who do not give you enough information about themselves to verify their identity.
- Refrain from giving bank details, credit card numbers, OTP codes from tokens or passport numbers to strangers over the phone.
- Call the Anti-Scam Helpline at 1800 722 6688 to check, if you receive calls from persons claiming to be Government officials asking for payments over the phone.

4. Credit-for-Sex Scams:

- Be wary of strangers who befriend you online. They may not be who they claim to be.
- Be wary of offers for escort, massage or sexual services on social media. Think twice before making payment using online credits.
- Do not send money to people you do not know well, especially if you have not met them in person.

Advisory and Crime Prevention Measures against Outrage of Modesty

A victim of molestation should seek help and call '999' as soon as possible to increase the chances of apprehending the suspect early. Remember the prominent features of the suspect, the direction the suspect went, and the mode of transport. If it is safe to do so, the victim or other witnesses of the crime may assist to detain the suspect while waiting for the Police to arrive. The Police would like to remind the public to remain vigilant at all times and adopt the following crime prevention measures:

- Avoid taking short cuts through dark and secluded places. Keep to well-lit areas where there are people and traffic;
- Always be alert and attentive to your surroundings. If you suspect that you are being followed, remain calm and proceed to a crowded area or call the Police for assistance;
- Carry a shrill alarm;
- When returning home alone or late at night, arrange for a family member or trusted friend to escort you home;
- Avoid taking the lift with a stranger. Allow the stranger to take the lift and wait for the next one; and
- When on board public transport, always be alert and attentive to your surroundings. Where possible, move away if someone stands or sits exceptionally close to you.

Quotes

The Police will continue to work with our partners, the community and business stakeholders in the fight against crime. We will continue with our multi-pronged approach of public education, leveraging technology to fight crime and sustaining our tough enforcement efforts, to keep Singapore safe and secure.

– Deputy Commissioner of Police Florence Chua
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigation and Intelligence)

Crime has moved with the consumers. As tech-savvy consumers move online to create a vibrant e-commerce and social media community, criminals too have also joined this community. While the internet enables us to buy almost anything from anywhere at any time, the same technology enables online criminals to purvey their scams to unsuspecting victims from anywhere in the world or prey on unsuspecting Singaporeans.

While the Police will continue to work with stakeholders, including e-commerce and social media platforms to roll out crime preventive initiatives, it is imperative that all of us be aware and keep ourselves updated of such threats on the internet and exercise vigilance to protect ourselves from falling victim to scams.

– Mr. David Chew
Director of Commercial Affairs Department

Strong Police-community partnership is key in fighting crime. The Police continues to engage stakeholders and the community to fight crime. For example, the Police values our strong and continued partnership with entities such as Carousell in implementing measures to deter e-commerce scams, and also major public entertainment night spots such as Zouk to deter outrage of modesty.

To address the rising trend of outrage of modesty cases, the Police will continue with our multi-pronged approach of raising public awareness, and increasing Police's presence and stakeholders' engagement, especially at public entertainment night spots and public transport networks, to prevent and deter such cases.

– Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police How Kwang Hwee
Director of Operations Department

In recent years, the NCPC has devoted a large part of its resources to educate the public on scams. The level of awareness today is high but yet Singaporeans continue to lose millions of dollars to scams every month. NCPC will continue to work with the Police and the community to identify the gaps and do whatever it takes to help Singaporeans from falling victim to scams.

*– Mr. Gerald Singham
Chairman, National Crime Prevention Council*