



SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE

POLICE NEWS RELEASE

ANNUAL CRIME BRIEF 2017

Singapore Remains One of the Safest Cities in the World

Crime Remained Low and the Overall Crime Rate Fell in 2017

Singapore remains one of the safest cities in the world. Singapore was ranked first in the Gallup Global Law and Order Report 2017¹, with 97% of residents feeling safe walking home alone in their neighbourhood at night. The Economist Intelligence Unit Safe Cities Index 2017 Report² ranked Singapore as the second safest city in the world, and first in the domain of Personal Security.

2. Overall Crime **decreased by 1.3%** to 32,668 cases in 2017, from 33,099 cases in 2016. Likewise, the Overall Crime Rate³ also registered an improvement, with 582 cases per 100,000 population in 2017 compared to 590 cases per 100,000 population in 2016.

3. The improvement was largely due to a decrease in two of the six crime classes, namely *Violent/Serious Property Crimes* and *Theft and Related Crimes* (see Annexes A-1 and A-2). Among these crime classes, the following two registered an **all-time low**:

a. Violent/Serious Property Crimes

Violent/Serious Property Crimes decreased by 13.3% to 216 cases in 2017, from 249 cases in 2016. In particular, the number of robberies declined by 28.1% to 69 cases in 2017, from 96 cases in 2016.

b. Theft and Related Crimes

Theft and Related Crimes decreased by 4.9% to 13,431 cases in 2017, from 14,122 cases in 2016. In particular, the number of cases involving theft from persons decreased by 22.7% to 677 cases in 2017, from 876 cases in 2016, while the number of shop thefts fell by 3.0% to 3,800 cases in 2017, from 3,919 cases in 2016. In addition, the number of

¹ Extracted from: news.gallup.com/reports/214607/gallup-global-law-order-report-2017.aspx

² Extracted from: <http://safecities.economist.com/safe-cities-index-2017>

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.

motor vehicle and related thefts⁴ fell by 10.5% to 991 cases in 2017, from 1,107 cases in 2016.

4. The decline in thefts can be largely attributed to Police's continuous crime prevention efforts, including increased Police presence at malls and crowded places during peak periods such as the Great Singapore Sale and the year-end festive period. The Police will continue to work closely with the retail industry to develop new crime prevention initiatives to curb shop theft.

5. The decrease in the number of motor vehicle and related thefts can be partly attributed to the Police's Vehicle On Watch (VOW) project. The in-vehicle cameras of participating vehicles serve as a strong deterrence against crime, and also provide crucial leads to aid Police investigations. To date, more than 9,000 vehicle owners with in-vehicle cameras have signed up for the VOW project in more than 800 car parks island-wide.

More Crime-Free Days

6. In 2017, 323 days were free from snatch theft, 240 days were free from housebreaking and 301 days were free from robbery. Taken together, there were 174 days that were free from snatch theft, robbery and housebreaking in Singapore in 2017. (See Annex A-3).

Scam Situation in 2017

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

7. Credit-for-sex scams decreased by 46.8% to 414 cases in 2017, from 778 cases in 2016. The total amount cheated fell to around \$1 million in 2017, from around \$1.7 million in 2016. China officials impersonation scams decreased by 62.5% to 188 cases in 2017, from 501 cases in 2016. The total amount cheated fell to around \$12.8 million in 2017, from around \$23.6 million in 2016.

8. However, members of the public continue to fall for scams like Internet Love Scams and E-Commerce Scams (see Annexes A-4 and B).

a. Internet Love Scams

- Internet Love Scam cases increased by 30.1% to 826 cases in 2017, from 635 cases in 2016. The total amount cheated increased by 54.2% to about \$37 million in 2017 from about \$24 million in 2016. The largest amount cheated in a single case in 2017 was close to \$6 million.

⁴ Motor vehicle and related thefts include theft of motor vehicles, theft of motor vehicle component parts and theft from motor vehicles.

- Internet Love Scam cases have been increasing year on year. Many people are still trusting and transferring money to strangers whom they have befriended online.

b. E-Commerce Scams

- Although E-Commerce Scam cases decreased by 10.9% to 1,907 cases in 2017, from 2,140 cases in 2016, they remain a concern due to the high number of reported cases. The total amount cheated decreased slightly to \$1.4 million in 2017, from \$1.5 million in 2016. The largest amount cheated in a single case in 2017 was close to \$60,700.
- The decrease in the number of E-Commerce Scam cases can largely be attributed to increased publicity of such scams, especially before the school holidays and festive seasons. For example, the Police leveraged social media platforms to disseminate their advisories to raise awareness of E-Commerce Scams. The Police also continued to work closely with e-commerce platforms to enhance the detection and prevention of E-Commerce Scams.

Online Fraud Continues to Transcend National Boundaries

9. As online fraud transcends national boundaries, the Police will continue to work closely with foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on overseas syndicates targeting Singaporeans. For example, the improvement in credit-for-sex scam situation was in part due to the Police's continued and successful collaboration with our overseas counterparts. The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) has continued to work closely with partners such as the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) of the People's Republic of China, to identify and dismantle new criminal syndicates targeting the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore. In July 2017, MPS officers acted on critical information provided by the CAD, and conducted simultaneous raids in multiple provinces in China which resulted in the arrest of 55 syndicate members.

10. In 2017, the Police arrested and successfully prosecuted several money mules connected to the China officials impersonation scams in Singapore. To date, 50 persons have been arrested for acting as money mules. Of these, 31 have since been charged in Court and 17 have been convicted. The Police will continue to take down the money mules' networks in Singapore to prevent these transnational criminal syndicates from receiving their illegal proceeds.

11. CAD also worked closely with the Commercial Crime Investigation Department of the Royal Malaysia Police to tackle syndicates based in Malaysia committing Internet Love Scams. Two joint operations were conducted in February and September 2017, which saw a total of 38 persons arrested in Singapore and Malaysia for their involvement in at least 140 cases reported on both sides of the Causeway.

12. Online crimes are particularly challenging to solve because of the borderless nature of the internet. A significant proportion of online commercial crimes are committed remotely by foreign syndicates that will continue to find ways to prey on victims. These criminals often exploit people's feelings for loved ones or other personal motivations.

Police's Education and Engagement Efforts

13. Hence, apart from enforcement, the Police continued to increase their public education and engagement efforts with stakeholders such as convenience stores, remittance agencies and banks, to raise awareness of scams and work closely with them on prevention. This included training frontline counter staff to spot scam victims, and displaying crime advisories prominently at the counters and automated teller machines. These efforts have resulted in heightened awareness and vigilance amongst their staff, which helped them prevent at least 30 scam cases involving more than \$370,000.

14. The Police strongly urge the public to be cautious when making online purchases, to exercise due vigilance when making friends over the Internet, and to ignore calls from strangers demanding payments, or asking for personal or banking information. No Government agency will ask for payment or seek banking information over the telephone.

15. Members of the public can visit the website www.scamalert.sg to learn about the various types of scam and take steps to avoid being a victim (see Annex D for quote by Director CAD).

Unlicensed Moneylending Situation in 2017

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

16. Following the 10-year low in 2016, the total number of UML-related harassment cases registered an increase of 12.6% to 3,814 cases in 2017, from 3,388 in 2016. However, there was a significant drop of 21.3% in UML-related harassment cases involving damage to property, to 1,029 cases in 2017, from 1,308 cases in 2016. The increase in total UML-related harassment cases was due to a rise in the number of cases which did not involve any damage to property but harassment by electronic means. Such cases increased by 33.9% to 2,785 cases in 2017, from 2,080 cases in 2016, and formed the majority of the UML-related harassment cases reported in 2017.

17. Police's relentless enforcement efforts to disrupt the operations of UML syndicates, strong partnerships with the community, and the introduction of more Police cameras in the neighbourhoods, have forced the UML harassers to shift to non-damage and non-confrontational tactics. This is evident as UML-related

harassment cases with damage to property have continued to decrease since 2012.

18. However, the proliferation of new communication platforms and high usage of mobile devices have made it easier for UML harassers to conduct their harassment via electronic means as well as target larger groups of people simultaneously. More victims are being harassed via Short Message Service and social media platforms, while harassment notes are also placed inside letterboxes.

19. The Police will continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders such as the Infocomm Media Development Authority to make it harder for UML harassers to employ such tactics.

Other Crimes of Concern in 2017

Increase in Outrage of Modesty Cases

20. Outrage of modesty (OM) cases increased by 21.8% to 1,561 cases in 2017, from 1,282 cases in 2016. Specifically, OM cases on public transport and at entertainment night spots are key concerns, with the following observations:

- a. 60.5% increase in OM cases on public transport to 207 cases in 2017, from 129 cases in 2016; and
- b. 35.0% increase in OM cases at entertainment night spots to 108 cases in 2017, from 80 cases in 2016.

21. The Police have been educating the public to be vigilant against OM, and for victims of molestation to make a Police report as soon as possible. Reporting the crime early is crucial to help the Police identify and arrest the perpetrator.

22. The Police will be enhancing our presence at public transportation nodes through stepped-up patrols by our Transcom officers. During the morning and evening peak hours, officers will also engage commuters and distribute OM advisories. The Police will also be working closer with public transport operators and LTA. Some examples of joint initiatives implemented include putting up OM advisory posters on the platform screen doors of MRT stations and producing public education videos which are screened at bus interchanges and train platforms. These advisories and videos aim to educate the public on what they can do when they encounter such a crime, and to remind them to stay vigilant (see Annex C).

23. The Police have also been working with public entertainment outlets on measures to prevent crimes on their premises, such as the installation of surveillance cameras as a form of deterrence. In addition, public entertainment night spots are licensed by the Police under the Public Entertainments Act, and as part of the licensing conditions, operators must take steps to prevent crimes,

including OM. Practices such as ensuring sufficient lighting and preventing overcrowding are also in place, to reduce the likelihood of OM cases.

Strong Police-Community Partnership to Fight Crime

24. Public education remains a key component in our overall strategy to combat crime (see Annex D for quote by Director Criminal Investigation Department).

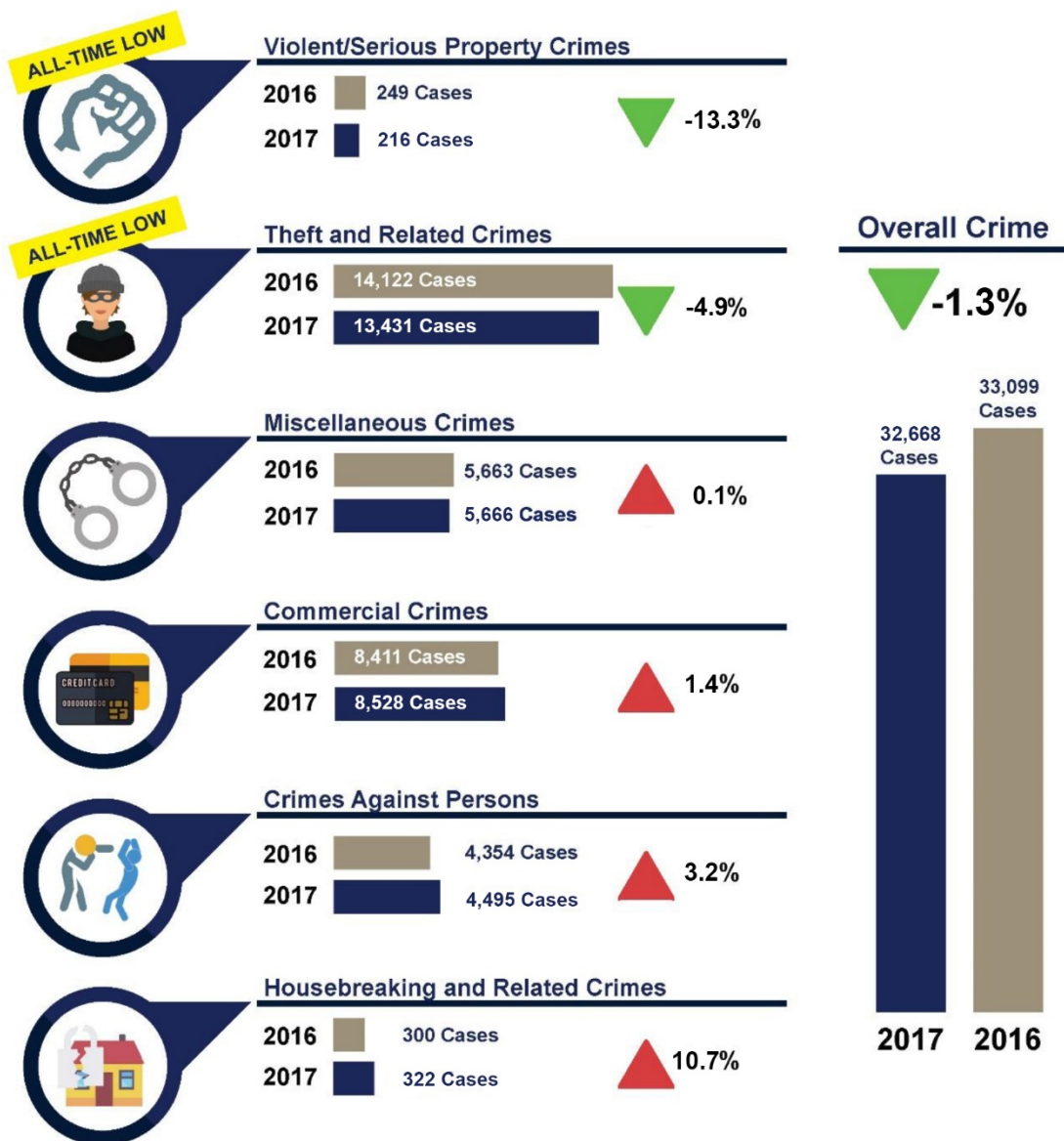
25. Other than efforts by the Police, the community plays a vital role in the fight against crime. Members of the public can help the Police in our investigations by providing crucial information via i-Witness in the Police@SG mobile application or via the SPF website. Since the launch of i-Witness in April 2016, the Police have received about 22,000 submissions from the public, and some of the information had assisted the Police to solve cases.

26. Members of the public can also join the Neighbourhood Watch Zone (NWZ) or the Citizens on Patrol (C.O.P) to help keep their neighbourhoods crime-free. To date, there are more than 8,000 C.O.P members island-wide and more than 700 NWZs in Singapore. The Police would like to thank residents and community partners for their strong support to keep our neighbourhoods safe and secure.

27. With strong support from the community, Singapore will continue to remain one of the safest cities in the world.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
3 FEBRUARY 2018 @ 9.30 AM**

2017 CRIME STATISTICS IN SINGAPORE



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SAFEGUARDING
EVERY DAY



CRIMES THAT REGISTERED AN

ALL-TIME LOW IN 2017



Robbery

2016 96 Cases

2017 69 Cases

-28.1%



Housebreaking

2016 212 Cases

2017 160 Cases

-24.5%



Snatch Theft

2016 63 Cases

2017 49 Cases

-22.2%



Motor Vehicle and Related Thefts

2016 1,107 Cases

2017 991 Cases

-10.5%



SINGAPORE
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SAFEGUARDING
EVERY DAY



CRIME-FREE DAYS IN 2017



Snatch Theft

2016 306 Days

2017 323 Days



17 Days



Housebreaking

2016 209 Days

2017 240 Days



31 Days



Robbery

2016 284 Days

2017 301 Days



17 Days



Snatch Theft, Housebreaking and Robbery

2016 136 Days

2017 174 Days



38 Days



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EVERY DAY



SCAMS OF CONCERN



Internet Love Scam



Total Amount Cheated

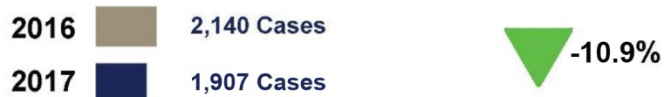


Highest Amount Cheated in 2017

Close to **\$6 million**



Cheating Involving E-Commerce



Total Amount Cheated



Highest Amount Cheated in 2017

Close to **\$60,700**



**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**

SAFEGUARDING
EVERY DAY



Crime Prevention Measures against Scams

1. Internet Love Scam:

- Be wary of strangers who befriend you online. They may not be whom they claim to be.
- Do not send money to people you do not know well, especially if you have not met them in person.
- Be in control of your emotions and meet all requests for money with a cool head, knowing that it may be a scam.
- Call the Anti-Scam Helpline at 1800 722 6688 to check, if you receive any message or call from someone claiming to be in trouble overseas and urgently needs you to send money.

2. Cheating involving E-Commerce:

- Exercise extra caution when you come across unrealistic bargains for 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.

Advisory and Crime Prevention Measures against Outrage of Modesty

A victim of molestation should seek help and call '999' 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 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

“Overall Crime in 2017 has decreased by 1.3%, bringing the crime rate down to the lowest in the last four years. Both Overall Crime and Overall Crime Rate have decreased for a second consecutive year in 2017. Overall crime rate stands at 582 cases per 100,000 population, and Singapore continues to be one of the safest countries in the world today.

Notably, crimes such as Robbery, Housebreaking, Motor Vehicle and Related Thefts and Snatch Theft have also registered an all-time low. There were also 174 days free from snatch theft, housebreaking and robbery in 2017. This is an increase of 38 days from 2016.

As crimes become increasingly transnational, we must not take our safety and security for granted. Police will continue to work with the community to keep crimes at bay, and fight crime through a combination of our tough enforcement efforts, public education, and use of technology to keep Singapore safe and secure.”

*-Mr Tan Chye Hee
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Investigations and Intelligence)*

“2017 was a busy year in terms of joint operations with overseas law enforcement agencies. The Commercial Affairs Department had several successful joint operations with the Chinese and Malaysian authorities in taking down criminal syndicates based overseas. These criminal syndicates were responsible for scams targeting Singapore victims from across our borders. Interrupting the activities of these criminal syndicates on their home ground sends a clear signal to the criminals that they cannot hide behind territorial boundaries, and that Singapore will collaborate with foreign law enforcement agencies to bring them to justice wherever they choose to operate.

Apart from robust enforcement efforts, the Police will also continue to engage the community and sensitise the public to the fact that scams can be perpetrated against them anywhere, anytime. While the Police remain committed to our five-pronged approach of enforcement, inter-agency collaborations, international cooperation, public education and community engagement, we all play an important part in safeguarding ourselves and our loved ones from crime.”

*– Mr David Chew
Director, Commercial Affairs Department*