



# SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE

## POLICE NEWS RELEASE

### ANNUAL CRIME BRIEF 2016

#### Decrease in Overall Crime in 2016

Overall crime decreased by 2.2%, from 33,839 cases in 2015 to 33,099 cases in 2016. This was largely due to a decrease in four of the six crime classes, namely Violent/Serious Property Crimes, Housebreaking and Related Crimes, Theft and Related Crimes and Commercial Crimes. (See Annexes A-1 and A-2).

2. Among these crime classes, the following trends are noteworthy:
  - a. Violent/Serious Property Crimes registered a 30-year low  
Violent/Serious Property Crimes fell 16.7%, from 299 cases in 2015 to 249 cases in 2016. In particular, Robbery declined 22.0%, from 123 cases in 2015 to 96 cases in 2016.
  - b. Housebreaking and Related Crimes registered a 30-year low  
Housebreaking and Related Crimes decreased by 11.8%, from 340 cases in 2015 to 300 cases in 2016. In particular, Housebreaking fell 15.2%, from 250 cases in 2015 to 212 cases in 2016.
  - c. Theft and Related Crimes registered a 30-year low  
Theft and Related Crimes decreased by 9.6%, from 15,615 cases in 2015 to 14,122 cases in 2016. In particular, Theft in Dwelling fell 11.4%, from 3,528 cases in 2015 to 3,127 cases in 2016.

#### ***Leveraging Technology to Fight Crime***

3. The network of Police cameras has been helpful in fighting crime. To date, Police cameras have been installed in 10,000 Housing & Development Board (HDB) blocks and multi-storey car parks (MSCPs) under the PolCam 1.0 roll-out plan which started in April 2012. The Police will continue to install Police cameras at new Build-To-Order HDB blocks and MSCPs.
4. Under PolCam 2.0, the Police will expand its network of cameras to further enhance the safety and security of our neighbourhoods and public spaces. PolCam 2.0 will cover the installation of cameras at town centres, neighbourhood centres, hawker centres and link-ways leading to transportation nodes such as MRT stations and bus interchanges. The first cameras under PolCam 2.0 were installed in June 2016 at Ang Mo Kio Town Centre, Bedok Town Centre and Jurong Gateway. Police cameras will be progressively installed over the next few years at 2,500 locations islandwide.
5. Police cameras have provided useful leads to aid investigations. As of 2016, about 3,400 video footages from such cameras helped the Police solve more than 1,600 cases, including unlicensed moneylending, theft and outrage of modesty cases.

*"The overall crime situation in Singapore improved in 2016 with decreases in four of the six crime classes. Notably, crimes such as Robbery, Housebreaking, Motor Vehicle Theft and Snatch Theft registered a 30-year low. The Unlicensed Money Lending (UML) situation continued to improve. UML-related harassment figures were at a 10-year low.*

*The overall crime rate per 100,000 population similarly decreased from 611 in 2015 to 588 cases in 2016. This was the lowest in the last three years and compares favourably with other major cities. Singapore remains one of the safest countries in the world today.*

*While the Police are encouraged by these achievements, we will press on with our multi-pronged approach of tough enforcement action, community partnerships, public education and leveraging technology in our continuous fight against crime, so as to keep Singapore safe and secure."*

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

### **Overall Decrease in Commercial Crimes But Online Cheating Remains a Concern**

6. Commercial Crimes decreased by 0.2%, from 8,426 cases in 2015 to 8,411 cases in 2016. However, within this crime class, the following types of scams – Cheating involving E-Commerce, Internet Love Scam, and China Officials Impersonation – remain a significant concern. (See Annex A-3)

7. As online fraud transcends national boundaries, the Police work closely with foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on overseas syndicates targeting Singaporeans. The Police will also continue with our public education and outreach efforts to create awareness on the evolving scam tactics. For example, on 20 November 2016, the Anti-Scam Helpline was launched for members of the public to contact the authorities for advice on scams. As of end 2016, more than 330 calls had been received. An impersonation scam case was also successfully prevented through the hotline.

8. The Police strongly advise members of the public to exercise caution and vigilance when communicating with strangers through the phone or online and social media. Members of the public can visit the website [www.scamalert.sg](http://www.scamalert.sg) to increase their awareness of the many types of scams and take steps to avoid falling victim to them. The Police would also like to highlight to members of the public that once their money has been transferred overseas, it can be very difficult, if not impossible, to recover. Please refer to Annex B for more details of anti-scam public education initiatives and crime prevention measures.

## **Decrease in Credit-for-Sex Scams**

9. Credit-for-Sex scam cases decreased by 33.9%, from 1,177 cases in 2015 to 778 cases in 2016. The total sum cheated fell from around \$3 million in 2015 to around \$1.7 million in 2016.

10. This improvement was due to increased engagement efforts by the Police with convenience stores to train their counter staff to spot victims of scams and to display prominently crime advisories at the stores. There was also good international cooperation with overseas law enforcement agencies. The Commercial Affairs Department has worked closely with the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China to cripple several credit-for-sex scam syndicates based in China. In 2016, the Police noted a resurgence of credit-for-sex scams and worked with the Chinese Police to trace and neutralise new criminal syndicates targeting the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore. Through two major operations in 2016 in China, the Chinese Police detained at least 140 suspects in connection with these scams.

*"Since the launch of the Anti-Scam Public Education Campaign in 2014, the Police and the National Crime Prevention Council have conducted more than 300 roadshows islandwide to share anti-scam messages with the public. More recently, our Anti-Scam TV commercial featuring local celebrity Li Nanxing, included the advice: 别慌, 别信, 别给任何人你的资料或金钱 (Don't panic, don't trust, don't provide your personal information or cash to others). We all play a part in the fight against crime. To avoid becoming a victim of crime, members of the public must stay vigilant. In the coming year, the Police will continue to fight crime through greater community engagement efforts, inter-agency collaboration and international cooperation with overseas law enforcement agencies."*

*– Mr David Chew  
Director, Commercial Affairs Department*

## **Improvements in Other Crime Areas in 2016**

### **Unlicensed Money Lending (UML) Harassment at 10-Year Low**

11. The Police's multi-pronged approach of leveraging technology through the use of Police cameras, tough enforcement action, community partnerships, public education and strict laws to curb UML activities have resulted in a continued downward trend in UML-related harassment cases. UML-related harassment cases registered a 10-year low in 2016, decreasing by 20.1%, from 4,242 cases in 2015 to 3,388 cases in 2016.

### **Motor-Vehicle Related Thefts at 30-Year Low**

12. Theft cases involving motor vehicles, namely Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft of Motor Vehicle Component Parts and Theft from Motor Vehicles, fell 27.8%, from 1,533 cases in 2015 to 1,107 cases in 2016. This could be partly attributed to the increase in popularity of in-vehicle cameras and the Vehicle On Watch (VOW) project.

13. The VOW project involves residents with in-vehicle cameras to help enhance neighbourhood safety. These in-vehicle cameras act as additional "eyes" capturing neighbourhood crime and providing crucial leads for Police investigations. Since 2015, the VOW project has expanded to include more than 5,500 vehicle owners with in-vehicle cameras, covering more than 500 car parks in various housing estates.

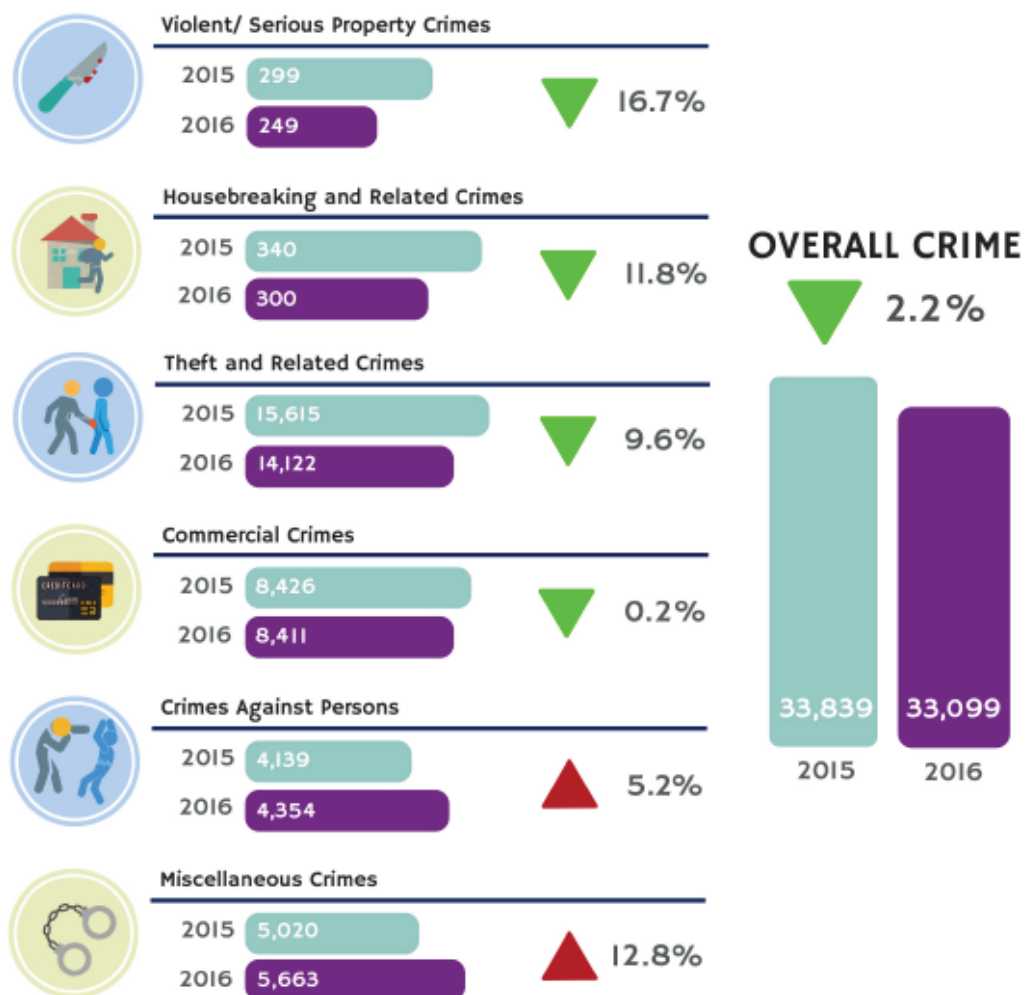
## **Strong Police-Community Partnership to Jointly Fight Crime**

14. Singapore remains a safe place. In 2016, there were 135 days free from snatch theft, housebreaking and robbery (See Annex A-4). However, we must not take our safety and security for granted. In addition to the Police's tough enforcement efforts, community partnerships and public education remain a key component in our overall strategy to combat crime.

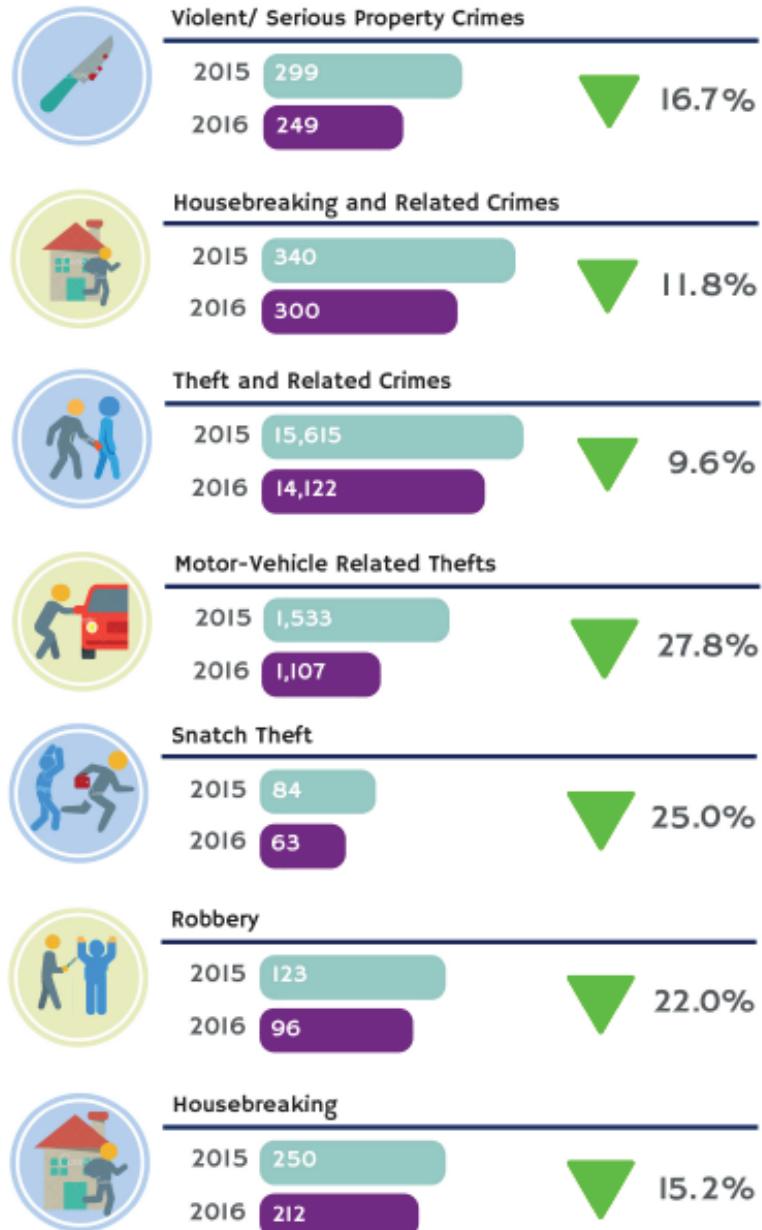
15. The community plays a vital role in the fight against crime. Members of the public can augment the Police's investigations into crimes by providing the Police with crucial information (in the form of text and multimedia files) via i-Witness in the Police@SG mobile application or on the SPF website. Since the launch of i-Witness in April 2016, the Police have received about 6,400 submissions from the public via this platform. The Police would like to thank residents and community partners for the strong support to jointly keep our neighbourhoods safe and secure.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT  
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE  
10 FEBRUARY 2017 @ 10.00 AM**

## 2016 CRIME STATISTICS IN SINGAPORE



## CRIMES THAT REGISTERED A 30-YEAR LOW IN 2016



## SCAMS OF CONCERN



### Cheating involving E-Commerce



### Internet Love Scam



### China Officials Impersonation Scam



## CRIME-FREE DAYS IN 2016



### Snatch Theft

2015 298

2016 306



8 days



### Housebreaking

2015 186

2016 209



23 days



### Robbery

2015 256

2016 284



28 days



### Snatch Theft, Housebreaking and Robbery

2015 104

2016 136



32 days



## **A. ANTI-SCAM PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

Criminals hide behind the anonymity of the internet to prey on victims across national borders. These criminals often prey on people's feelings for loved ones or other personal motivations.

2. The Police have implemented the following public education and outreach initiatives:

- The Police have worked with the National Crime Prevention Council to spread anti-scam messages into the heartlands. This is done through the use of newspaper inserts, advertisements on public transport, hawker centres, lift decals and community roadshows.
- In 2016, more than 90 community roadshows were conducted islandwide, with about 100 Crime Prevention ambassadors sharing anti-scam messages with the public.
- The Police have worked closely with other Government agencies, including MOE, MOM and MSF, to disseminate advisories to targeted groups in the community.
- The newly-revamped Scam Alert website ([www.scamalert.sg](http://www.scamalert.sg)) now features information on the latest scams and allows members of the public to share their experiences with others. The scamalert.sg website also allows members of the public to conduct keyword searches to check if certain usernames, handphone numbers and bank account numbers have been featured in the scam victims' stories found on the website. This provides the public an additional resource for verification before committing to any payments. The scamalert.sg website saw its visitorship double from 154,000 in 2015 to more than 321,000 in 2016.
- In 2016, three anti-scam TV commercials were produced to raise public awareness and vigilance on scams, in addition to the Police's resident television programme, Crimewatch.
- A series of scam prevention videos and posts were rolled out on both Facebook and YouTube as educational resources. To date, the videos and posts have received over 1.3 million views on both Facebook and YouTube.
- The Police also work closely with stakeholders, which include convenience stores, remittance agencies and banks, to display crime advisory messages at significant transaction points. Scam variants are flagged out quickly to stakeholders so that their staff are vigilant to new scams and help to intercept them. To date, scams amounting to some \$1 million had been successfully intercepted and this highlights the success of strong Police-community partnership in fighting scams. In recognising the efforts of these stakeholders in crime prevention and to reinforce the importance of such collaborations, the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) held an Appreciation Awards presentation on 11 January 2017.

3. In 2016, the Police conducted five islandwide enforcement operations targeting scams. More than 300 individuals related to more than 850 reports were arrested, involving a total amount of about \$1.8 million.

4. In the same year, the Police worked with the Chinese Police to trace and neutralise new criminal syndicates targeting Singapore residents from China. The Chinese Police conducted a series of major operations at various locations in China and arrested at least 140 suspects for their involvement in Credit-for-Sex scam cases. The suspects were believed to have targeted the Chinese-speaking community in Singapore.

## **B. CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES**

### **1. 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.

### **2. 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.

### **3. China Officials Impersonation:**

- Be wary of calls from people claiming to be officials, especially those of foreign countries.
- Know that official 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 government officials asking for payments over the phone.

For more information on the above, visit [www.scamalert.sg](http://www.scamalert.sg)