

**POLICE
LIFE**

THE SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE MAGAZINE
2020 / ISSUE 03

COVID-19: OUR OFFICERS ON THE FRONTLINES



Illustrating Passion
SPF Volunteers: All About Us

CONTENT SPOTLIGHT



COVID-19: Our Officers on the Frontlines

Above their day-to-day policing duties, over 3,000 Singapore Police Force (SPF) officers are being deployed to assist in the nation's fight against COVID-19.

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Illustrating Passion

We live in a world that is becoming increasingly digital each day. Find out more about how one of our Full-time Police National Servicemen, Special Constable Zhafran, is able to contribute his talent for graphic design to the SPF in its efforts to keep up with digital communications.

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SPF Volunteers: All About Us

Working alongside the regular frontline officers, the SPF's volunteers play a huge role in keeping Singapore safe and secure. Read more from the people who have contributed their time to the SPF's various volunteer schemes and find out how you can sign up!

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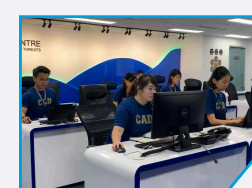
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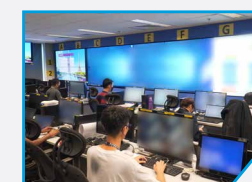
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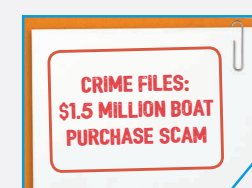
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Editor's Note: Some of the photos used in this publication were taken before the implementation of the Circuit Breaker measures in Singapore.

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Let's Get Social!

By Syam Roslan

Check out the Singapore Police Force's Facebook page to find out the latest happenings in the Force! Here are some of the highlights for the months of March and April!

Singapore Police Force
March 8 · Q

Happy International Women's Day.

Watch the video to catch our female police officers ASP Paige Lee, SSS Huda and SGT Aqliah answer some of the questions you asked on Instagram.

#askheranything #sgpolicefeatures



Watch together with friends or with a group

Poh JH, Zulfadli Isa and 1.3K others · 90 Comments · 452 Shares

Chan John To all female officers of spf a happy international woman day, as I salute to all female officers in the front line, safety and health important must balance with work and families

MD Abd Salute women's SPF. Despite attending to children and husband and family, they still stand strong to attend to public. Well done and God bless. Happy international Women's day and don't forget the men.

Rina Marliawati Oh my God...salute for women police's SPF... when I was kid my goal was to be a lady cop....



Singapore Police Force
March 14 · Q

"Singapore has been ranked No. 1 for order and security in an annual global survey on ordinary people's experience of their country's rule of law."

Read on to find out more!



STRAITTIMES.COM
Singapore tops global survey on order and security
Singapore has been ranked No. 1 for order and security in an annual...
1.1K · 84 Comments · 291 Shares

Debbie Chan Yes, as an ordinary Singaporean, I agree that overall law n order here is truly good. All thanks to the authorities at home affairs, internal security, SPF n etc. We r doing great.

Rajagopal Rajagopal Well Done SPF. It is our household brand.

Eugene Ong Singapore Police Force, among world's BEST. Safeguarding Everyday for 200 years

Singapore Police Force
April 16 at 8:18 PM · Q

STOP SPREADING FALSE RUMOURS ON POLICE'S ACTIONS

There are several posts that have been circulating on social media and text messaging platforms, making false claims and spreading unfounded rumours on Police's actions, which resulted in rumour-mongering and misinformation.

Such posts are highly irresponsible, and hurt public confidence and trust in the Police. It also undermines our officers, who are at the frontlines trying to keep Singaporeans safe and secure during this ...

See More



Ken Jin Tan Good job SPF! It hasn't been easy on your guys. I hope you're able to enjoy a break every once in a while!

Clara Tc The Singapore Police is doing a good job. Pls continue to protect us and Singapore. Fine and jail those who spread fake news.



Singapore Police Force
April 26 at 8:29 PM · Q

Last night, the nation sang Home in one voice.

Singapore 🇸🇬 is our Home. It takes all of us to fight against COVID-19, and protect our Home.

Here is our tribute, from more than 80 officers and their family members, to all frontliners, those working in essential services and the migrant worker community, as well as each and every one of you who is doing your part by #StayingHome.... See More



Watch together with friends or with a group · 5.4K · 266 Comments · 2.4K Shares

Jennifer Chong Thank you Singapore Police force! All of you are awesome! 🙏🙏🙏 You keep us safe, we must stay home for the frontline people.

Alice Lim Kopi Thank you SPF!!!! Thank you heros!! ❤️💙🎵 surprisingly, there's so many singers and musicians in SPF .. wow!!

Jerold Tan Rain or shine. Good times and bad. Thank you officers for always being on the frontlines for SG #SPF200

Alexandre Yamada Singapore is really unique in many ways! Not being a Singaporean, after being here for almost 9 years, I must say it really feels safe and at home to be in Singapore. Thanks Singapore for having us, the foreigners, part of your community.

Darius Lim Superbly moving. Brings back great memories of my NS days with the Singapore Police Force Band. Deepest gratitude to our police force and front liners. And take care everyone!



Singapore Police Force
April 17 at 10:09 PM · Q

MASK UP WHEN OUT!

Let us all do our part to keep each other safe. More details at [Go.gov.sg/mustwearmask](https://go.gov.sg/mustwearmask)



Suhaili Hamid You are the best thanks for keeping us safe 🙏🙏
Like · Reply · 2w

Sakil Azom Let us continue to stay safe and #StayHomeForSG #SGUnited
Like · Reply · 2w

Eric Lim Nice shot!
Like · Reply · 2w

Singapore Police Force
April 28 at 7:00 PM · Q

[KEEPING SINGAPORE SAFE AND SECURE]

The Police remain committed to our mission while supporting the Government's efforts against COVID-19.

Stay Strong. Stay United.

Together, we can overcome this!

#SGUnited



So Boring Ming Liang Thank You to all Frontlines officers wearing Blue Shirt and Blue Jeans for protecting us and sacrificing ur times with ur love ones a big shoutout to all the Frontline Officers thank you so much ❤️❤️❤️ u all have done a great job. Salute 🙏🙏🙏

Chalermchai Cah Many thanks for your hard work. You are being stretched in 3 dimensions and more than that. We will stay home and stay out of trouble.

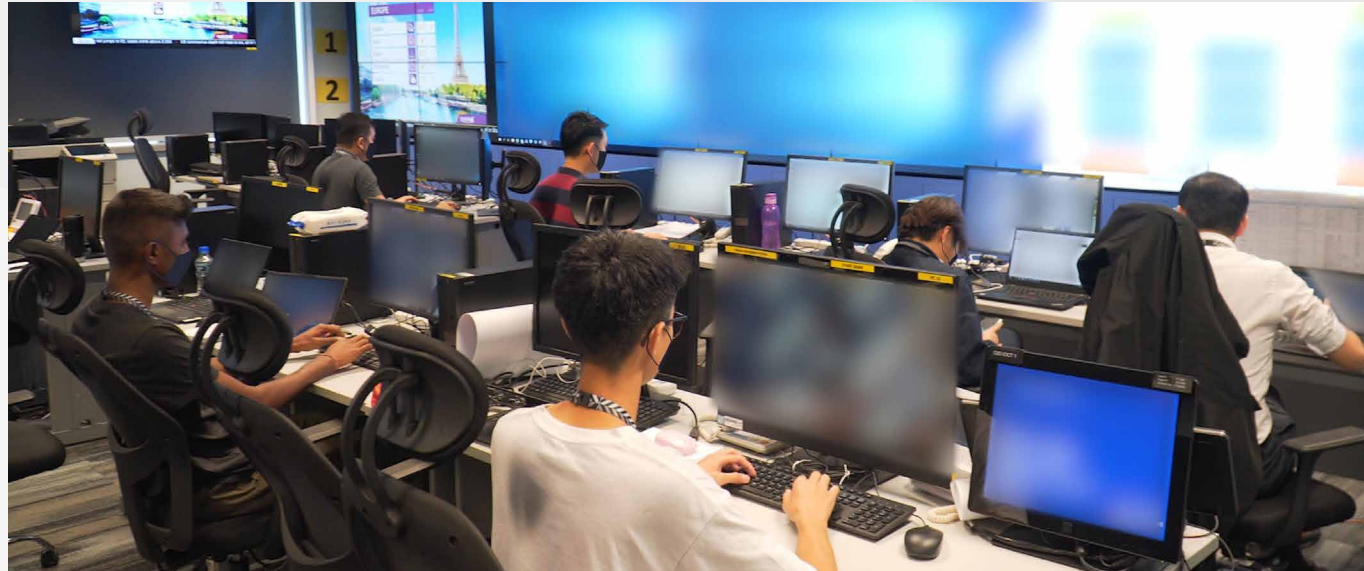
Frances Jeremiah Keep up e good work to all our men n women in blue. Im proud of e way u guys carry out ur duties, ever polite n some look good in ur uniforms too.

Clement Lee Wen Song You guys are awesome and thank you for your commitment and dedication and sacrifices that you have made and keep us all safe and secure kudos to all SPF men and women! 🙏🙏🙏

CONTACT TRACERS:

FIGHTING AGAINST COVID-19

By Irwan Shah
(Photos: Public Affairs Department)



COVID-19 has ravaged the world. It has infected over millions of people and causing hundreds of thousands of deaths. In support of our nation's battle against the pandemic, officers from the Singapore Police Force (SPF) have been roped in to assist with contact tracing operations since 24 January 2020, to help the Ministry of Health (MOH) identify links across identified COVID-19 cases. Police Life shares with you how the SPF is using its investigative expertise in these operations.

Enhancing Contact Tracing Effectiveness

There are two types of contact tracing operations that are ongoing – namely backward tracing and forward tracing. Backward tracing involves tracking the patients' activities log over the past two weeks before developing COVID-19 symptoms. This helps in finding the source of the virus transmission and the potential links with other cases from the same location. As for forward tracing, it is about mapping the patients' activities after developing symptoms until their admission to the hospitals. This step is essential to identify potential close contacts so that appropriate measures can be taken if they are feeling unwell.

While MOH oversees the contact tracing operations, the SPF assists by providing their investigation and analytics expertise to boost the effectiveness of these operations. To enhance the SPF's efforts, the interview team, analysis team and field team were formed to help with the contact tracing operations. Each team has their own unique skillsets and tasks, and they all report to the Police Contact Tracing Operation's Command Centre at Police Cantonment Complex.

The Command Centre

The Command Centre is at the heart of SPF's contact tracing efforts, responsible for the overall coordination of the contact tracing teams. They are the first to receive information about the ongoing cases from MOH and ensure that the relevant tasks are assigned to the respective police contact tracing teams. Thereafter, the consolidated findings by the interview team, analysis team and field team are gathered and sent promptly to MOH.

"The Command Centre also tracks outstanding tasks so that we can share the issues that we need MOH's assistance to follow up on. We do that quickly through our daily conference calls with MOH," said Superintendent of Police Connie Seek, Head Operations Cell of the Command Centre.

The Interview Team

The interview team is responsible for interviewing patients and their close contacts to map out the patients' activities before they developed symptoms. The officers involved in these backward tracing efforts will also have to visit a variety of places ranging from hospitals to peoples' homes. One of the challenges that the interview team faced was authenticating themselves as contact tracers since patients or their close contacts might be doubtful of the officer's identity.

"The general difficulty is in convincing the public that I am a contact tracer. People will tend to have doubts, and it will slow down our investigation efforts," said Assistant Superintendent of Police Johnny Lim, an officer from the interview team. *"I will usually give them the Criminal Investigation Department's hotline and ask them to verify through it while the officer is doing contact tracing. That is how we confirm our identity."*

The Analysis Team

The analysis team performs in-depth analysis of individual cases and tries to establish links between different sources of information to identify potential clusters and unknown sources of infection. The pool of information will then be combined and processed into useful data to develop several hypotheses which will be shared with the interview team for their verification. Depending on the new facts gathered, these hypotheses could be fine-tuned along the way.

"Notably, the data received can be voluminous, reaching up to hundreds of records per patient. Hence, we apply certain analytical tools to crunch all the data effectively," explained Ms Linda Teo, Assistant Director of Analytics and Technological Development Division. *"There are multiple perspectives and factors that we can put together to analyse. From here, we can hypothesise and bring out more questions."*

The Field Team

The field team comprises police officers from all the Land Divisions. They assist in tracing the close contacts of the patients whom MOH is unable to reach or find. One method is by trawling through over 50 Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) footage for about three to four hours daily. This requires a keen eye for detail and strong analytical skills as the officers will need to establish a person's identity through alternative means.

"Usually, we do not have a good facial image of the person we are looking for and we can only see their attire. So, we must go through one by one (CCTV footage) to ascertain the person's identity," explained Senior Staff Sergeant Mohamad Shapie Saleh, a Crime Strike Force officer from Bedok South Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) who is part of the field team.

Thereafter, they will clarify their enquiries on the ground by going to different places to verify the identities of these close contacts. The information gathered will then be consolidated by their respective NPCs' Command Posts and sent to the contact tracing Command Centre.

In This Together

There is an average of 50 to 60 police officers in the contact tracing teams, working tirelessly every day. Depending on the situation, these numbers may rise to more than 100. Despite their primary roles in other departments or divisions, these officers remain dedicated and steadfast in doing their part in the whole-of-government effort to fight against COVID-19!

COVID-19: OUR OFFICERS ON THE FRONTLINES

By Irwan Shah
(Photos: Public Affairs Department
& Bryan van der Beek)

Since late January this year, more than 3,000 Singapore Police Force (SPF) officers have been deployed to support the nation's battle against the COVID-19 virus. From contact tracing, securing the Government Quarantine Facilities (GQFs), assisting with dormitory operations and enforcing of circuit breaker measures, Police Life takes you through policing in unprecedented times!



Securing Quarantine and Isolation Facilities

Lodging facilities such as the GQFs are one of the measures to house Persons under Quarantine (PUQs) and those who are serving their Stay-home Notice (SHN) because of their assessed risk in contracting the virus. Since the activation of such facilities in late January this year, the SPF officers have been deployed to secure and maintain law and order at the various GQFs.

A typical day at a GQF involves a 12-hour shift that begins with a briefing on the occupancy rate of the facility. The officers will then be assigned to various points of the facility to commence their duties. Sometimes, these officers will also need to advise PUQs and their families on matters concerning their welfare. The GQF deployment, however, is not without its own set of challenges.

"The transition to this role was quite sudden. I had to quickly adapt and be ready to handle incidents that could happen at the facility. Since it is my first time doing this (GQF deployment), I must quickly familiarise myself with the work processes," explained Senior Staff Sergeant (SSSgt) Naufal.

The challenge that SSSgt Naufal cited is common among officers who have been deployed to the GQFs. Moreover, for these officers who are deployed on the frontlines, the operational and health risks are very real.

"I would be lying if I were to say that I am not worried, given that we are dealing with a new virus with a high infection rate," said SSSgt Norshidah, a deployed officer in one of the GQFs. *"However, we are properly equipped and have robust safety protocols in place to perform our duties. The important thing is to keep ourselves safe through regular handwashing, maintaining good personal hygiene and practising safe distancing."*

Aside from the GQFs, SPF officers are also deployed to similar facilities such as Stay-home Notice Dedicated Facilities, Community Care Facilities, Swab Isolation Facilities, Gazetted Isolation Areas, decant sites and other migrant worker dormitories.



Aiding Migrant Workers

The Forward Assurance and Support Team (FAST) comprises officers from the SPF and other government agencies who are roped in to tackle the sharp spike in COVID-19 cases in 43 migrant worker dormitories across Singapore. Their role is to maintain the welfare, health and safety of the migrant workers within the dormitories. These teams do so by working closely with the dorm operators to provide the dormitories with necessities such as food and medical care. The experiences of our SPF officers - planning and executing major deployments - proved useful to help kick-start several initiatives for the FAST operations.

"As police officers, most of us have been through major deployments. I also have some experience in planning for a major security event as well. So, all these come into play when we interact with the dorm operators," elaborated Superintendent of Police (Supt) James Tan, FAST Team Leader of Westlite Papan dormitory.

Together with the dorm operator, the FAST team from Westlite Papan came up with a system to ensure that the migrant workers follow the safe distancing measures while collecting their daily meals or while reporting sick at the assigned medical posts. Aside from monitoring their necessities, FAST officers are also responsible for monitoring the potential spread of COVID-19. For migrant workers who are symptomatic, they will be isolated and segregated from their peers until they receive their COVID-19 test results. These measures and systems are put in place to ensure that the migrant workers remain safe while still going about their daily lives within the dormitory. The cooperation between the FAST team and the dorm operator was not without its initial challenges, though.



"Things here develop fast. We were recalled, put together as a team from different Home Team agencies and the following day, I was deployed with a team of officers I had never met before," said Supt Tan. *"The first question in my mind was how to connect with the stakeholders and understand the situation on the ground."*

It certainly helped that the SPF has been actively reaching out to the migrant worker community years before the COVID-19 outbreak, through its Community Safety and Security Programme (CSSP). The CSSP was the catalyst to Project Alliance, which aims to engage community partners such as dormitory operators and the Singapore Contractors Association Limited, and organise outreach efforts to the migrant workers.

There were also migrant worker ambassadors who were appointed and trained to strengthen the Police's efforts in spreading awareness of crime prevention and improving safety and security within the dormitories. Through this existing bridge built with the migrant worker community, police officers were able to better communicate and understand the needs of these workers.

Another challenge that Supt Tan and his team faced included the decantation efforts, transferring healthy migrant workers from Westlite Papan to temporary lodging facilities. Although not daily, each round of the decantation process can take between 10 to 12 hours, involving hundreds of migrant workers. Communication might sometimes be marred since some of the migrant workers may be given conflicting information from their employers.



"When you have a large number of migrant workers wanting to leave, any confrontation or dispute, if not managed well, may escalate into a public order incident. As a police officer, this is the last thing that we want to see," quipped Supt Tan.

Ultimately, the FAST officers will need to ensure that all communication between the migrant workers and the various stakeholders are clear and that everyone is decanted in an orderly manner. Through the joint multi-agency operation, the FAST team can address and resolve queries by the migrant workers quickly by being the middleman between them and other relevant government agencies.





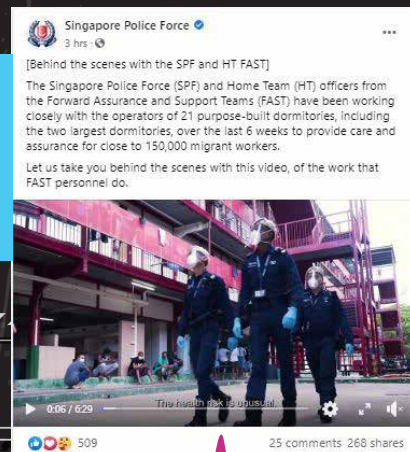
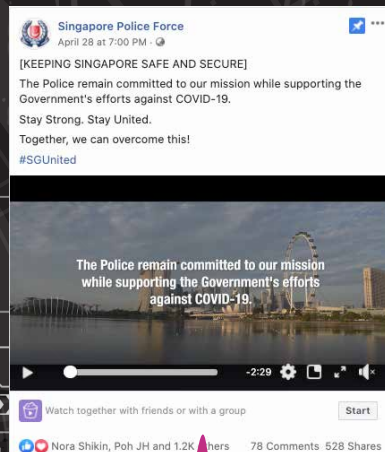
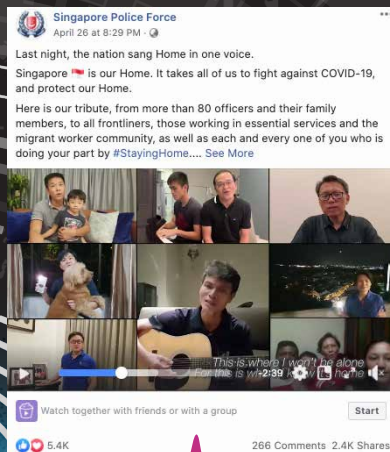
Policing in Unprecedented Times

During such trying times, the SPF officers continue with their day-to-day policing duties to maintain law and order. While police work on the ground remains largely the same, different policing challenges have emerged with the tightening of Circuit Breaker measures that were introduced to cope with the spike in COVID-19 cases. Police officers often encounter cases where they have been called in by Safe Distancing Ambassadors (SDA) to help mitigate situations when individuals are uncooperative.

"We will step in to intervene when SDAs from other agencies encounter difficulties during their enforcement of safe distancing measures. Despite the challenges faced during this period, police officers maintain our professionalism when dealing with situations on the ground. Our commitment in keeping Singapore safe and secure remains unchanged," said Staff Sergeant Noornazreen, a Ground Response Force officer from Toa Payoh Neighbourhood Police Centre.

While the situation on the ground remains highly dynamic, SPF officers remain dedicated and committed to overcoming any challenges in the face of adversity. Regardless of the risks that may come with their work, our officers will persevere and fight on as one SPF.

Let us salute all frontliners, those working in essential services, as well as each and every one of you who is doing your part in the fight against COVID-19. Together, we can overcome this!



A STORY OF COURAGE AND CIVIC-MINDEDNESS

By Syam Roslan
(Photo: Public Affairs Department)

A member of the public was recently commended by the Singapore Police Force (SPF) for rescuing a woman from a stranger who had trapped her in a public toilet.



On 11 November 2019, Reshi Kumar S/O Thenarasu was at a food centre located in West Coast when a man sought his help to rescue his wife who was being restrained by a male stranger in a handicapped toilet.

Fearing that the woman would be in great danger if he did not act quickly, Mr Reshi sprang into action, climbing over a two-meter-high-wall to get inside the toilet. The woman was found crying as she was cornered by a half-naked man whose trousers and undergarments were removed. Mr Reshi quickly unlocked the toilet door and warned the man to keep his distance from the woman as he helped her to get away.

While bystanders called for the Police, Mr Reshi guarded the entrance to prevent the perpetrator from escaping. When the Police arrived, the man tried to flee but was eventually detained by the Police with the assistance of Mr Reshi who gave chase. The man was subsequently arrested for outrage of modesty.

In a ceremony held at Clementi Division on 19 March 2020, the 23-year-old who recently completed his national service, was presented with the Public Spiritedness Award for his courageous act. Assistant Commissioner of Police Jarrod Pereira, Commander of Clementi Division said, *"Mr Reshi had displayed a strong sense of civic-mindedness and courage, and his actions have made the community a safer place for all."*

The story of Mr Reshi is just one of many examples where a member of the public stepped up to stop a crime. Whether you are a police officer, a volunteer with the Police, or a member of the public, everyone can play their part to safeguard Singapore every day!

POLICE DAY 2020

By Irwan Shah
(Photos: Public Affairs Department)

The Singapore Police Force celebrates Police Day on 3 June every year. It is on this day that we come together as one SPF to celebrate our achievements and recognise the contributions of past and present police officers. We also renew our pledge to continue to serve the nation and carry out our duties with courage, loyalty, integrity and fairness. As we commemorate Police Day this year, Police Life would like to share with you a wall of quotes from members of the public who penned down their appreciation for our officers who work tirelessly to keep Singapore safe and secure.



I appreciate how professional SPF officers are when dealing with cases that come suddenly. And they sacrifice their safety and time in order to protect us so that we can sleep well at night.

Jeffrey Tan,
Assistant
Operation Manager



"No words can describe how appreciative I am for the men and women of the Singapore Police Force. Without their unwavering commitment and dedication to the job, it is hard to imagine what Singapore would be like today. Kudos to all for doing their best in keeping our nation safe and secure. Keep up the good work!"

Jeremy Tan, Lawyer



Of course the Singapore Police Force is important. They work around the clock to keep our streets safe! We can safely walk the street at night past 10pm without worrying, it is all because of the security the SPF gives! This cannot be taken for granted! Other countries this freedom is not possible!

Daphne Khoo, Banker



A team that serves the nation with the highest level of integrity, commitment and agility. SPF contributes to making Singapore live up to its values and vision. We should celebrate and appreciate SPF every day, not only during its anniversary.

Leo Caballes, HR Director



I appreciate the SPF because they inspire a lot of people including myself to become an officer one day and plus the officers are all very friendly and hard working without you guys I wonder what our country would be like, thank you guys for your hard work and dedication to protect our country!

Adham, Student



I appreciate the fact that SPF safeguards Singapore on a daily basis to make sure that Singapore has a low crime rate. I also appreciate the fact that SPF works with NPCC to train cadets to be resilient, play a part in safeguarding Singapore and be students who have the knowledge of SPF's day to day routine so that we can appreciate the SPF and help in one way or another."

Chim Dong Han,
Student



I appreciate that we can trust the SPF in upholding justice in the country! Definitely not something to take for granted.

Jessica Lim,
Marketing Executive



I appreciate that the SPF is working round the clock to make sure we can sleep in peace. Knowing that there will be TransCom patrolling in MRT stations and bus interchanges, it makes me feel safe to take the public transport without worrying.

Darren Wong, Student



SPF officers are doing very great. Sacrifices are being done and risk involved. Appreciate all officers in this time of Covid and all officers are still on the ground to protect and prevent crime and keep people safe. Good job SPF.

Patrick Ong, Student



You guys are the reasons for me to feel safe no matter how late I come home! Appreciate your efforts SPF team!

Liew Sin Yee,
Product Specialist





**SINGAPORE
POLICE FORCE**
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



The first Police Day Parade held on 3 June 1971.

“The Government has designated 3rd of June to be Police Day, to reaffirm the fact that the Police is part of our society, responsible to an elected government, and the maintenance of law and order is a service to the community.”

- An excerpt from Professor Wong Lin Ken, Minister for Home Affairs during Police Week on 3 June 1971.

LET'S FIGHT SCAMS!

By Syam Roslan
(Photos: Commercial Affairs Department)

In recent years, scam cases have continued to rise as scammers find various ways to dupe unsuspecting victims out of their hard-earned money. In the latest Police News Release on Scam Situation between January and March 2020, at least S\$41.3 million was lost to scammers. This is about S\$9 million (or 27.9%) more compared to the same period last year. In this issue of Police Life, read on to find out the scam situation and why it is important that everyone stays informed and vigilant against scams.

TOP THREE SCAMS

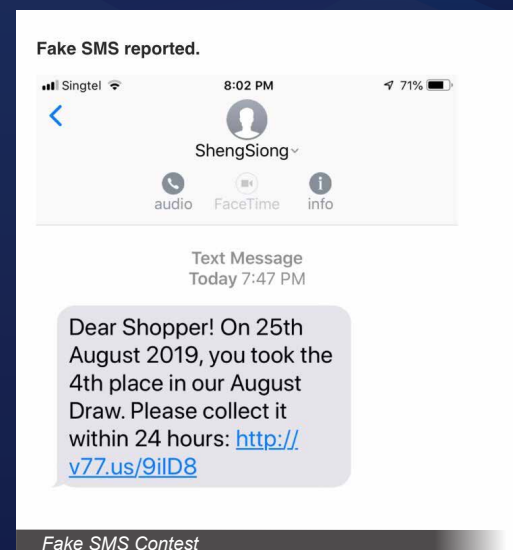
E-commerce scams, social media impersonation scams and loan scams were the top three scam types reported to the Police in the first three months of 2020.

E-Commerce Scams

The most common platforms for e-commerce scams in Singapore are digital platforms such as Carousell, Facebook, Instagram, Shopee and Lazada, where scammers typically tout low prices for their merchandise, which in turn attract unwitting online customers. To avoid being a victim of e-commerce scams, buy only from reputable platforms with customer protection policies or insist on paying only after the goods have been received or services have been rendered. Remember, if a deal is too good to be true, it probably is.

Social Media Impersonation Scams

Scammers would usually ask the victims for their personal details such as their mobile number, Internet banking account details and One-Time Password (OTP) on the pretext of helping them to sign up for fake contests or promotions allegedly organised by Lazada, Shopee and Qoo10. Victims would later discover that fraudulent transactions had been made from their bank accounts and mobile wallets without their consent. Never share your Internet banking account details and OTPs with anybody – legitimate contests or promotions will never ask for such details. Your OTP is like your ATM pin, do not reveal it to anyone.

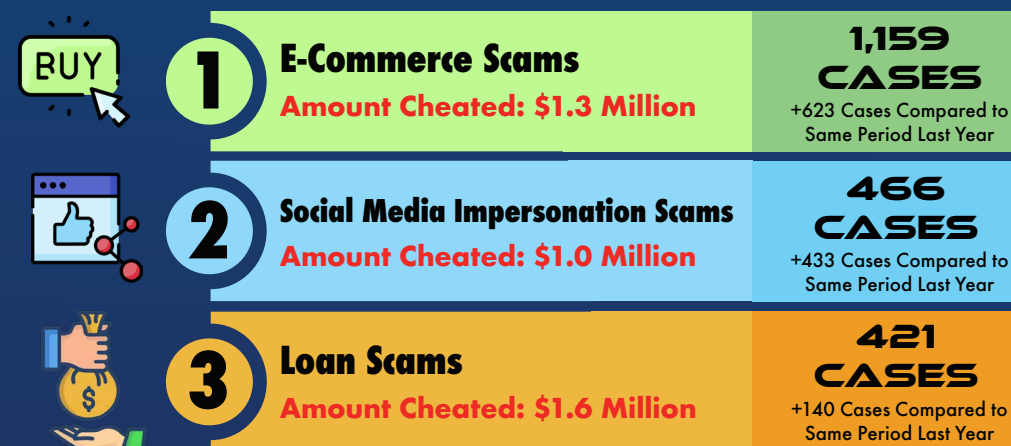


Loan Scams

Members of the public would receive SMSes or WhatsApp messages offering loans and loan services. The scammers may claim to be staff from a licensed moneylender. Interested parties are instructed to transfer money as a deposit before the loan can be disbursed. After making the transfer, victims find that the scammers are no longer contactable. In another variant of loan scams, spoofed loan advertisement messages are purportedly sent by banks such as POSB, DBS, UOB, CIMB and OCBC. Banks and licensed moneylenders are not allowed to send out such loan advertisements.

Despite incessant efforts to push out anti-scam advisories, some continue to fall into these traps. To arrest this situation, tougher enforcement measures were rolled out in 2019.

TOP THREE SCAM TYPES OF CONCERN (JANUARY TO MARCH 2020)



TOP TEN SCAM TYPES IN SINGAPORE IN 2019



POLICE EFFORTS TO FIGHT SCAMS

Disrupting Scammers' Operations through the Anti-Scam Centre

On 18 June 2019, the SPF set up the Anti-Scam Centre (ASC) under the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD). The ASC focusses on disrupting scammers' operations and mitigating victims' monetary losses through close collaboration with financial institutions, telecommunication companies and digital platform owners.

Since its formation, the ASC received more than 3,300 reports and was successful in freezing 2,600 bank accounts, and recovering approximately S\$3.7 million of losses. The ASC enhanced its operations by working closely with banks to swiftly freeze accounts suspected to be involved in scammers' operations. The fund transfers involving such accounts would be impeded within a matter of days – a significant improvement in process, which used to take up to two weeks.

In addition to the three major local banks (DBS, UOB and OCBC), seven more banks have joined this initiative since November 2019, further enhancing the close collaboration between the SPF and financial institutions to disrupt scammers' operations. As scammers adopt the use of PayNow as a money transfer platform, the ASC also worked with the Association of Banks in Singapore to reduce the time taken for banks to provide PayNow transaction details to the Police from weeks to just a few days. Just this process alone helped to increase the chances of recovery of monies scammed from the victims.



Tougher Anti-Scam Enforcement Actions

To deter local scammers from carrying out their crimes in Singapore, the Police have continued to ramp up islandwide enforcement actions. In 2019, the SPF conducted 85 operations targeting local e-commerce scammers, resulting in the arrest of 112 scammers who were responsible for 1,223 e-commerce scam cases. In addition, there were 10 enforcement operations targeting money mules who handed over their local bank accounts to scammers or assisted scammers to conduct money transfers using their personal bank accounts. In 2019, 1,040 money mules involved in more than 2,100 scam cases were investigated.

Centre recovers \$3.7m from scammers' accounts with banks' help

A specialised nerve centre to deal with reported scam cases has managed to recover 35 per cent or about \$3.7 million in victims' losses since it was set up last June.

Yesterday, police revealed that so far, 3,312 reports involving total losses of \$10.6 million have been referred to the Anti-Scam Centre under the Commercial Affairs Department.

Following the reports, the centre managed to freeze 2,600 bank accounts suspected to be involved in scammers' operations to recover some of the losses.

The centre has been working closely with the three major local banks – DBS Bank, United Overseas Bank and OCBC Bank – since its formation, to freeze suspicious bank accounts within a few days.

Previously, the process would have taken about two weeks, leading to a 4 per cent to 8 per cent recovery rate, said the officer-in-charge of the centre, Assistant Superintendent Teng Chin Hock.

Last November, it roped in seven more banks to join the initiative. They are: ANZ, CIMB Bank, Citibank, Standard Chartered Bank, Bank of China, HSBC and Maybank.

The centre has also worked with the Association of Banks in Singapore to shorten the time for banks to provide PayNow transaction details to the police, from weeks to a few days.

This increases the chances of recovery of money scammed from victims, said the police.

The setting up of the centre has allowed banks to work closely with

the police to disrupt scammers' operations more quickly, said ASP Teng.

In one recent case, an elderly woman was prevented from transferring a total of \$140,000 to a scammer who claimed to be her husband's business associate.

Bank staff were suspicious and alerted the centre when the woman attempted to make the transfer to

an account in Dubai.

Police officers were then dispatched to the scene to prevent the transfer.

However, for most victims of transnational scams, there is often little to no chance of recovering their losses after the transfer has been made, said ASP Teng.

Charmaine Ng

Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reproduced with permission.

73 being investigated over alleged scams totalling \$107k

Ng Huiwen

A total of 73 suspected scammers who allegedly cheated victims of more than \$107,000 are being investigated by the police.

The 45 men and 28 women are believed to be involved in 148 cases of scams, involving mostly e-commerce, the police said in a statement yesterday.

They are between the ages of 15

and 66, added the police, who mounted a three-day enforcement operation that ended on Thursday. The suspects are being investigated for cheating or money laundering.

Anyone convicted of cheating may be jailed for up to 10 years and fined.

Those found guilty of money laundering face a jail term of up to 10 years and a fine of up to \$500,000.

Police advised the public to:

Be wary of online advertisements of items at low prices that sound too good to be true. Do not buy on impulse. Read the reviews of the seller before committing to a purchase.

Be aware that scammers may use a local bank account or provide a copy of an NRIC or driving licence to dupe buyers into believing that they are genuine sellers.

Avoid making payments or

deposits in advance and use shopping platforms or arrangements that release payment to the seller only upon receipt of the item. Alternatively, arrange to meet the seller and pay only on delivery.

To avoid being an accomplice to crimes, the public should always reject requests from others to use their bank accounts or mobile phone lines.

They may be held accountable if

these accounts are linked to illegal transactions.

For more information on scams, the public can visit www.scamalert.sg or call the anti-scams hotline on 1800-722-6688.

Anyone with information on such scams may call the police hotline on 1800-255-0000 or submit information online at www.police.gov.sg/i-witness.

nghuiwen@spg.com.sg

115 arrested for suspected involvement in scams worth over \$253,000

The police are investigating 115 people for suspected involvement in scams, mostly in the area of e-commerce.

They are believed to be involved in 214 scam cases in which victims lost more than \$253,000, police said on Saturday.

The 64 men and 51 women, aged between 14 and 52, are being investigated for cheating

or money laundering.

Officers from the Commercial Affairs Department and seven police land divisions were involved in a five-day operation, beginning on last Monday, which led to the arrest of the 115 people.

Anyone found guilty of cheating may be fined and jailed for up to 10 years.

Anyone found guilty of

money laundering faces a jail term of up to 10 years, a fine of up to \$500,000, or both.

are linked to illegal transactions.

The police also said that people can avoid falling for online purchase scams by being wary of online advertisements for items being sold at cheap prices that sound too good to be true.

The police said buyers should avoid making payments or deposits in advance, and arrange for the money to be

released to the seller only after they receive the item.

For scam-related advice, call the anti-scams hotline on 1800-722-6688 or visit www.scamalert.sg.

Those who wish to provide information on scams may call the police on 1800-255-0000, or send the information online at www.police.gov.sg/i-witness.

THE STRAITS TIMES

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Source: The New Paper © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reproduced with permission.

Tackling Transnational Scam Cases

As a significant proportion of online crimes are committed remotely by foreign syndicates, the SPF continued to collaborate closely with foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on such syndicates targeting Singaporeans. In November 2019, the CAD worked with the Royal Malaysia Police, Hong Kong Police Force and the Macau Judiciary Police to jointly cripple a transnational Internet love scam syndicate based in Malaysia. Three Nigerian and 15 Malaysian scammers were arrested during the operations. The syndicate is believed to be involved in at least 139 cases of Internet love scams reported in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macau, involving losses of about S\$5.8 million.



Public Education Efforts against Scams

Apart from enforcement, the Police have also 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 individuals who could be unknowingly falling victim to scams, and displaying crime advisories prominently at counters and automated teller machines.

Together with the National Crime Prevention Council, the Police have undertaken many scam prevention initiatives and organised many anti-scam related events to warn the public about scams, including the 'Let's Fight Scams' campaign for community and business operators. Community events such as roadshows, festive events and the Community Safety and Security Programmes were also leveraged as platforms to spread the awareness of scams and prevention advice.

Fighting Crimes Together

Through these efforts, the SPF has shown that the fight against scams remains a priority. However, the public should also play their part in fighting scams. The majority of scams are perpetrated from overseas, and it is nearly impossible to recover monies once they are transferred out of Singapore. The Police urge the public to exercise caution when making any online transactions, and exercise due diligence to protect themselves from falling victim to scams. Members of the public should not divulge personal information, especially banking information, to others, including persons purporting to represent the Police or other law enforcement agencies.

To learn more about the various types of scams and how to avoid falling prey to it, please visit the website 'www.scamalert.sg'.

“

While the Police will continue to educate the public on crime prevention measures they can take, members of the public also need to play their part. They should be aware of the latest scam tactics and always exercise vigilance to protect themselves, their friends and families from falling victim to scams. Together, we can fight scams more effectively.

Mr David Chew
Director, Commercial Affairs Department

“

Be wary of common scam tactics like unbelievably low prices, being asked to disclose your one-time passwords (OTP), being told to pay government fines or assist in investigations by transferring money. It is every individual's responsibility to prevent scams, and prevent their friends and loved ones from being scammed. Let's take active steps to protect ourselves and our loved ones against scams and be a scam-wise community.

Mr Gerald Singham
Chairman, National Crime Prevention Council

CRIME FILES: \$1.5 MILLION BOAT PURCHASE SCAM

By Syam Roslan

In this edition of Crime Files, Police Life features a high-profile fraud case where a foreign syndicate's attempt to swindle a Singapore-based cruise and leisure company out of S\$1.5 million. The crime was thwarted by a team of resilient and quick-thinking police officers.

In 2017, Oceanic Group, a Singapore-based firm that deals with the buying and selling of non-commercial vessels like yachts and cruise ships, had agreed to broker a deal involving a foreign buyer to purchase a S\$50 million cruise ship.

On 2 September 2017, Mr Daniel Chui Mun Yew, managing director of Oceanic Group, and Mr Mohamed Ishak Bin Mohamed Ali Sina, a staff of Sir Money Changer Pte Ltd, went to France to collect 3.5 million Euros (S\$5.6 million) as a deposit from the buyer's representative as part of the agreement between both parties. Concurrently, Oceanic Group will pay S\$1.5 million in commission to the representative's agents in Singapore after receiving the deposit. It was agreed that the transactions would be paid in cash.

Real Notes Turned Fake



In a hotel room in Paris, the buyer's representative handed Mr Chui a duffel bag filled with Euro notes for the deposit. Upon verifying the cash amount through a physical count, Mr Chui contacted his office in Singapore to release the S\$1.5 million commission to the agents, Iosif Kiss and David Weidmann, who were already waiting at his office. Upon receiving the commission payment, the pair immediately left Oceanic's office. Back in Paris at a hotel lobby, Mr Chui decided to check the cash again in the duffel bag. To his horror, all the cash had "PLAY NOTES" inked on them, which meant that he had a bag full of counterfeit money. Mr Chui immediately called his office in Singapore to contact the two agents, but the pair did not respond to their calls. Oceanic staff immediately made a police report that night and submitted a CCTV footage of the pair taking a taxi after leaving the office.

Racing against Time

When Inspector (Insp) Ho Lei Siang, a Senior Investigation Officer tackling commercial crimes, was assigned the case, his first instinct was to issue a lookout alert for Iosif Kiss and David Weidmann, including to the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) in case the pair decided to flee the country. Using the CCTV footage provided by Oceanic Group, Insp Ho and his team tracked down the taxi driver and discovered that the pair alighted near Mustafa Centre. As Insp Ho and his team spent the night conducting ground investigations around the area, their earlier lookout alert paid off as they received news that ICA officers arrested the pair at the Woodlands Checkpoint.

Missing Money

Insp Ho immediately proceeded to the checkpoint to interview the pair and brought them back to the police station for further search and investigation. Back at the station, the team uncovered about S\$400,000 stashed in their boxer briefs, which meant that about S\$1.1 million was still missing. But the pair was uncooperative and refused to divulge where the missing money was. Armed with years of investigative experience, Insp Ho skillfully convinced Iosif Kiss to reveal further information, which were crucial clues to solving the case and retrieving the missing money.



Insp Ho learnt from Iosif Kiss that they had visited an Indian restaurant near to Mustafa Centre after receiving the payment, but was unable to name the place. The only information that Insp Ho had was that the restaurant had a statue of a deity believed to be the "Elephant God" on the wall of the restaurant and Iosif Kiss bought a can of coke costing S\$7 from the restaurant. After conducting extensive ground work, the breakthrough finally came when Insp Ho and his team found the restaurant as described by Iosif Kiss, which was further confirmed by CCTV footage showing the pair entering the restaurant with their luggage together and a worker from the restaurant recognising the pair.

Accomplices Discovered

With this development, Insp Ho and his team continued to trawl through more CCTV footage, but this time round focusing on City Square Mall, which is located opposite the restaurant that both of them visited. From the footage, they discovered that David Weidmann visited the basement toilet with one luggage but exited empty-handed. The footage also revealed another unknown man entering the toilet with one suitcase but left with two, before joining up with another woman.

With this new information, Insp Ho and his team conducted extensive ground investigations and discovered that the couple had taken a taxi and alighted near Marina Bay Sands (MBS). But MBS was actually a decoy. After trawling through more CCTV footage, they finally uncovered that their actual destination was the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel.

Justice is Served

On 5 September 2017, Nikolic Predrag and Nikolic Dalida were arrested at the hotel when Insp Ho and his team raided their room and seized about S\$740,000. The pair also confessed that the rest of the money had been remitted.

On 25 June 2018, after pleading guilty to dealing with the benefits of criminal conduct, Nikolic Predrag and Nikolic Dalida were each jailed for two years and six months. Two months later, Iosif Kiss and David Weidmann were each jailed for three years and eight months after pleading guilty to engaging in a conspiracy that facilitated criminal conduct. As for the unrecovered amount, a man who had received the remaining money from one of them is currently under investigation.

The 'Magic Drawer'

By now, readers may be wondering, what actually happened in France? It was later revealed that each time Mr Chui counted a stack of notes and verified its authenticity, the buyer's representative would instruct Mr Ishak to put the stash of money in a drawer. As Mr Chui and Mr Ishak were dealing with a stranger in a foreign country, it was advisable to follow all instructions given to prevent themselves from getting into trouble with the other party or the law there.

Suspicions were that either the drawer had been rigged with a mechanism to replace the real notes with fake ones or the duffel bag have somehow been switched in the process. Insp Ho added: "We won't know what happened in France. Only the French authorities can do that."

A Big Win for the Team

For Insp Ho, this is one of his most memorable case for him and his team due to its transnational nature and the large sum involved. When asked if he would go through sleepless days and nights again to crack similar cases, Insp Ho said: "To recover every cent lost is to prove there is absolute truth in every deception".

Jail for scam pair who tried to flee with \$400,000 in underpants

Source: The Straits Times © Singapore Press Holdings Limited. Reproduced with permission.

Pair jailed for role in boat purchase scam

SPF VOLUNTEERS: ALL ABOUT US

By Elliot Wong
(Photos: Ministry of Home Affairs &
Public Affairs Department)

Beyond the regular officers most are familiar with, there are also those who work with the Singapore Police Force (SPF) on a voluntary basis, assisting in a variety of roles, from patrolling to engaging members of the public on crime prevention. In this edition of Police Life, we find out more about the lives of several of these volunteers, and why they have chosen to commit their time to the SPF.

The Citizens On Patrol (COP) Volunteers

Launched in 1999, the COP scheme was started for members of the community to participate in crime prevention efforts in a more approachable way, donning a vest bearing the emblem of the SPF. COP volunteers report on suspicious persons or crime in progress and disseminate crime prevention advisories to their fellow members of the public, working together with frontline police officers in the community.

To join the COP scheme, members must undergo a one and a half day modular training on basic crime prevention, SGSecure, and Community Emergency Preparedness. Once completed, they will be attached to a Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC), where they are required to serve a minimum of two hours of patrol a month.

We spoke to a COP volunteer, Alex Lim Zong Wei, aged 35, about his journey as a COP volunteer and why he decided to dedicate his time to the scheme.

"I was a National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC) officer in secondary school and continued to be an adult volunteer in the co-curricular activity after graduating. I am currently an Honorary Officer holding the rank of Inspector. My time in NPCC instilled a longing to be a part of the SPF, but I was never able to commit to the full-time job.

As a grassroots volunteer, I was introduced to the COP scheme at an outreach session where an NPC officer came to publicise this new initiative. After hearing the talk, I decided that this would be the opportunity to experience what being a police officer would be like.

I felt excited and privileged to be a COP volunteer, a feeling that has stayed with me since I started volunteering. Wearing the vest with the SPF logo on it makes me feel proud to represent the organisation on my patrols. This is also a very meaningful role in my life as it allows me to give back to society by helping those in need, making a difference in someone's life, be it directly or indirectly.

If you are thinking about joining the SPF as a COP volunteer, don't hold yourself back! You will only know if the experience is worth it once you try."

To sign up to be a COP volunteer, scan the QR code to head over to the SPF website to find out more!



The Volunteer Special Constabulary (VSC)

Immediately after World War II, the SPF was facing a manpower shortage in its efforts to restore law and order in Singapore. Thus, the VSC was formed in 1946 to support the regular officers on the frontlines. An estimate of 150 men responded to public appeals and became the pioneers of this scheme.

VSC officers are vested with the powers of a police officer and work alongside our regular frontline officers, contributing significantly to maintaining law and order in Singapore.

VSC officers undergo six months of non-residential training on basic legal knowledge, policing procedures, police defence tactics, first aid and use of firearms. The training is conducted twice on every two weekdays and Saturdays. Thereafter, they will be posted to one of the seven Police Land Divisions or a specialist unit, namely the Airport Police Division, Police Coast Guard, Public Transport Security Command or Traffic Police and be required to serve a minimum of 16 hours of duty per month.

Nur Hana Marlina, a 26-year-old VSC officer, spoke about her experience serving under the VSC scheme and how it all started.

"When I was undertaking my bachelors' degree, my professor often encouraged us students to take up volunteering in the field of our interest to gain some prior experience. As I wanted a career in the security sector, I decided to volunteer with the SPF as it would allow me to learn useful skills related to my career aspirations, and providing me with the opportunity to protect the community and my loved ones.

I did some research online and went to a police roadshow to find out more about the VSC scheme. After gathering enough information, I made the decision to sign up online via the SPF website. Initially, I had some concerns that the amount of work needed to pass the Police Officer Basic Course would be overwhelming. As it turned out, my worries were unfounded. Learning about policing and gaining the skills needed to be a VSC officer kept me focussed on my initial goals, giving me a renewed sense of confidence.

Juggling between work, personal life, and volunteering can be tough. So it is important to have the right attitude and discipline in time management. As long as you possess these two key qualities, you would be able to balance your schedule without feeling overwhelmed.

Amidst these challenges, knowing that my effort does not go unappreciated can make the difference. An occasional "thank you" from members of the public reminds me of the small part that I play in keeping the community safe and secure, and this is what makes everything worthwhile.

I recall attending to a case in which a property owner reported a break-in at his house. A drunk man had pushed over his potted plants and urinated on his property, but due to his drunk state, he had absolutely no recollection of where he was and what he had done. This case reminded me of the influence of alcohol, and how it might pose a danger for not only the person drinking, but the people around him. This also made me appreciate the Police's role in the community, intervening in situations that would otherwise have escalated. It is all the little experiences that I have gained as a VSC that motivate me to do my best for the community."

To sign up for the VSC scheme, scan the QR code to head over to the SPF website to find out more!



The Volunteer Special Constabulary (Community) (VSCC)

The VSCC scheme was launched in 2018 as another way for the public to volunteer with the SPF should they be unable to meet the training and patrol requirements of the armed VSC. VSCC officers patrol in areas with high footfall, facilitate crowd control and traffic management, carry out engagement at events and roadshows, and assist with evacuation during an incident.

VSCC officers are required to undergo nine weeks of non-residential training on basic legal knowledge, police reporting procedures, Police Defence Tactics, and first-aid. The training is conducted on every two weekdays and on Saturdays. After the training, officers will be posted to one of the seven Police Land Divisions and will be required to serve a minimum of eight hours of duty per month.

One such VSCC officer, Rickson Lim, aged 53, shared with us his experiences under the scheme, reminiscing his journey with the SPF.

"I served my National Service (NS) with the SPF as a Special Operations Command (SOC) Police Tactical Unit (PTU) officer. After completing my reservist cycles, I still wanted to contribute to society as a part of the SPF in some other way. Around March 2018, I learnt about the VSCC scheme from a friend and I immediately decided to sign up as I thought it suited me, given my background in policing. My children are all grown up and that would allow me time to continue serving the community."

"Even though I am only required to patrol eight hours a month as a VSCC officer, I would often contribute more than the minimum requirements, as I feel that my work as a VSCC officer is meaningful. When I wear the police uniform, I am instilled with a sense of pride knowing that what I do helps to project police presence in the community, contributing to a safer and more secure environment for us to live in."

"One particular incident that left an impression on me is a covert operation that I was involved in. Unlike my usual duties, this operation was a much more vigorous crime-fighting assignment, which allowed me to experience policing differently. I am glad to be in the thick of the action with my fellow officers, doing my part to safeguard Singapore's streets."

"Being a VSCC officer has also refreshed my knowledge in Police Defence Tactics and first aid. These are very useful life skills even when I am off duty – as a member of the public. The experience of being a police volunteer is unlike any other. If you have the passion to contribute to the peace and harmony of our home and nation, do not hesitate to sign up!"

To sign up for the VSCC scheme, scan the QR code below to head over to the SPF website to find out more!



Rickson Lim (third from right)

The Victim Care Cadre (VCC)

Established in 2017, the SPF's VCC programme serves as a support system for victims of crime, especially of sexual offences, as part of police investigations. Unlike the other three schemes, VCC volunteers do not patrol the streets, but rather, are linked up by the VCC programme with victims to provide them with emotional and informational support.



Applicants have to be Singaporeans or Permanent Residents aged 21 or above, who are studying or have graduated from psychology, counselling or social work degree courses and have the aptitude to care for victims. They will have to undergo a selection process which includes taking a series of psychological tests, a group interview, and a week-long training-cum-selection process on topics like knowledge of court processes, counselling techniques, and suicide risk awareness.

Low Giok Khim, a 26-year-old volunteer with the VCC, documented her journey to volunteering and the opportunities it has given her to make a difference in people's lives.

"I first learned of the VCC through a circular from my university where I was an undergraduate psychology student. I was very motivated by the meaningful work of the VCC programme, especially for the victims of crime and the valuable opportunity to stand against victim-blaming. I hope to be able to empower and support survivors of crime through my work with VCC and SPF."

"When I first signed up, I was a little apprehensive due to the rigorous selection process. Even though I was stressed out by the amount of things we were expected to know and things that could go wrong, it was precisely the rigorous effort spent to groom us volunteers that

left me confident in my skills, growing my respect and appreciation for the programme. I was quite nervous during my first few activations as I was afraid of causing more harm by saying something inappropriate or being unable to provide information to the people I was supporting. However, that feeling quickly dissipated as there was always strong support from the team behind VCC in the Police Psychological Services Division, with a more experienced second Victim Care Officer (VCO) always accompanying me for the sessions. Over time, I became more comfortable and confident in the work that I did, and now, I look forward to every activation, knowing that each encounter is an opportunity to make a difference."

"My time in VCC has not been without its own set of challenges. There was a period of time where I was clocking more than 12 hours of emotional support work a day. This left me with little space and time to unwind, and I found myself emotionally drained during that period. However, such challenges have allowed me to gain an understanding of my limits and realise the importance of better time management. It also helped me appreciate the love and support I received from the people around me."

"Even with all the challenges and difficulties I might face, the fruits of labour that come with being a VCC make this job so enriching and worthwhile. Through my time in VCC, I have witnessed many powerful stories that have helped me grow as a person. I once attended to a survivor of sexual assault giving her testimony in court, who, at multiple times throughout the court session, was shaking and crying so much that she could not even stand up, much less respond coherently to the relentless questions directed at her. Yet, in the midst of her distress, the victim displayed incredible courage and resilience by continuing with the trial and bravely recounting the traumatic experience she went through. Her unwavering expression throughout the rest of the trial was the most memorable thing for me in this assignment. The camaraderie in the team, consisting of the VCOs, the legal team, the Investigation Officer in charge, and the survivor herself, also lifted my spirits greatly. By working closely together, we were able to support this survivor in bringing the perpetrator to justice."

"The time I have spent in the VCC has been extremely fulfilling and worthwhile, as I have been part of a wonderful community of experienced and dedicated people who are prepared to put in the effort to make our society safer and fairer. To anyone who wishes to join, this is a great chance to be part of a cause that is essential to making Singapore a safer place to live in, and an opportunity to discover things you never knew about yourself."

If you are interested in joining the VCC volunteer scheme, you may email yap_hui_lin@spf.gov.sg, or look out for the various Home Team volunteer schemes making their way to volunteer.sg sometime soon!

TAKE THE ROAD TO RESPONSIBILITY

By Syam Roslan and Jeric Ng
(Photos: Traffic Police's Road Safety Branch)

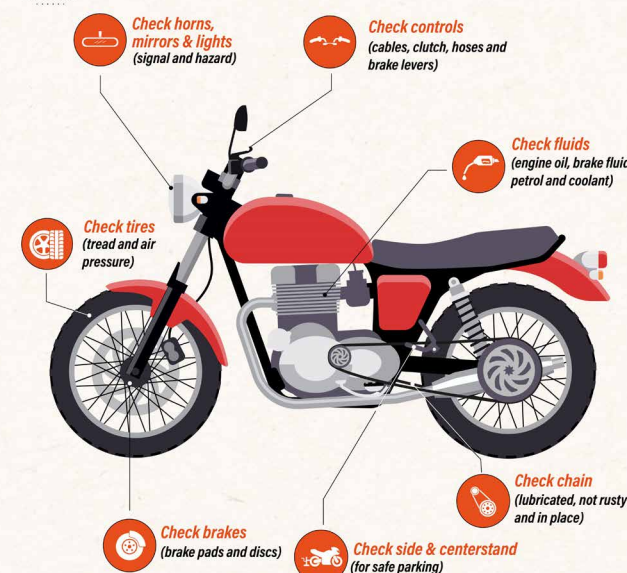
An initiative by the Traffic Police (TP), the 'Use Your RoadSense' campaign was first introduced in 2015 to encourage the instinctive and habitual practice of safe and courteous road use in Singapore. In the latest campaign named 'Take the Road to Responsibility', TP launched 'The Responsibles', a set of eight characters designed to represent the various road user groups to educate and encourage road users to exercise good road safety practices. In this issue, we zoom in on two characters, Cautious Chong and Gracious Joseph, who share with motorcyclists and motorists the do's and don'ts on the road.

Gear up before you ride:



Cautious Chong urges motorcyclists, to gear up before riding.

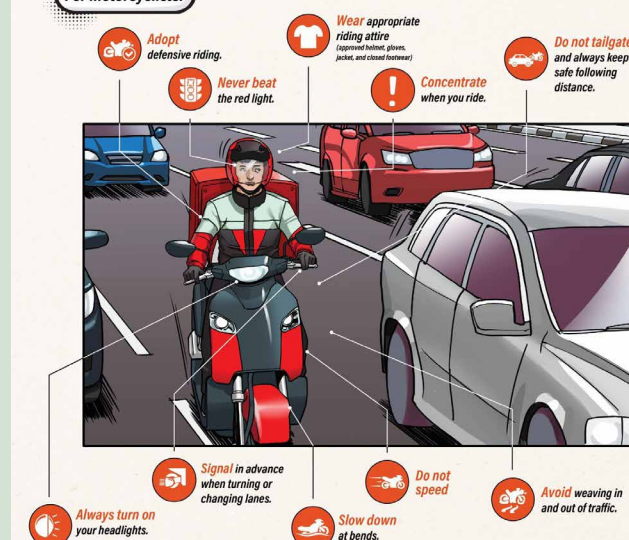
Check before you ride:



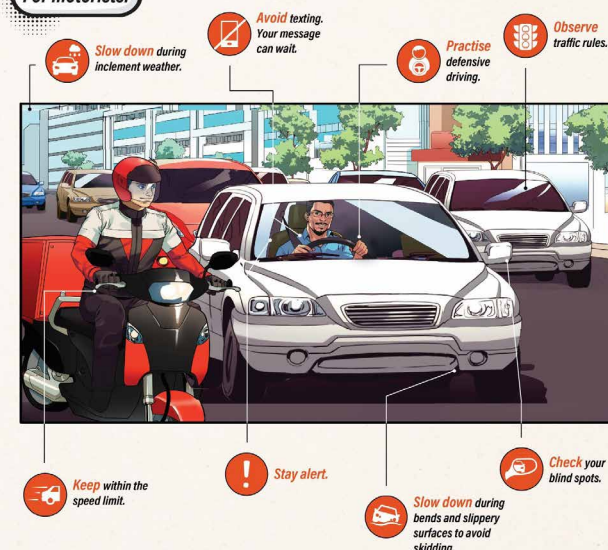
Cautious Chong reminds motorcyclists to check your motorbike before you hit the road!

Once you are on the road, always practise defensive riding. Being reckless or careless such as failing to keep a proper look out, impatient, overconfidence and distracted could lead to an accident and endanger your own life and other motorists.

For motorcyclists:

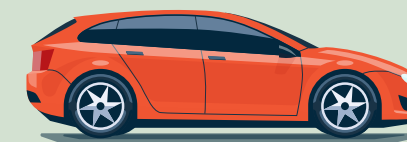


For motorists:



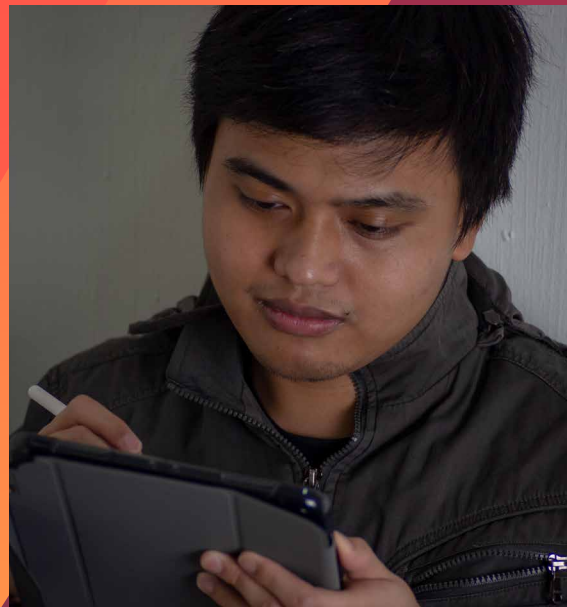
Gracious Joseph encourages all motorists to exercise graciousness on the road as it could go a long way to safeguard themselves and others on the road.

Be cautious, be gracious and be a responsible road user!



Illustrating Passion

By Elliot Wong
(Photos: Special Constable
Mohamad Zhafran bin Sazali)



As more of our communication and daily lives move to the online realm, digital art and graphic design has never been more important than ever. As the Singapore Police Force (SPF) progress with its efforts to connect with Singaporeans on the digital frontier, read on to learn how Special Constable (SC) Mohamad Zhafran bin Sazali, a staff assistant in the Ops-Tech Department, use his passion and talent for digital illustrations to contribute to the SPF as a Full-time Police National Serviceman (PNSF).

Everyone Starts Somewhere

From Disney to Cartoon Network, animation has long been a source of entertainment for children and adults alike. SC Zhafran was one such kid, who was inspired by the shows that he used to watch when he was 10 years old.

"It was how I discovered my love for drawing," he said. "I used to watch shows like Adventure Time and Teen Titans, marvelling at how expressive cartoons can be in each frame. These cartoons continue to be a huge source of inspiration for me till this day."

There is a saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words," and indeed, this rings true for SC Zhafran. As he continued to experiment with the medium, he realised that drawing allowed him to express himself in ways in which words simply would not suffice.

"The art I create is not bound by the limitations of language, and this freedom that I have in self-expression is what drives me to continue drawing and designing new things."

His love for drawing only continued to grow, leading him to pursue a Diploma in Animation in Lasalle College of the Arts, a place that gave him the opportunity to hone his skills through peer-to-peer collaboration and a free-flow exchange of ideas. Being able to work with like-minded people with similar interests inspired him further and fuelled his passion for the arts. It is also the place in which he picked up graphic design proper.

The Creative Process

"I usually start by browsing through platforms like DeviantArt and ArtStation," SC Zhafran shared, "to check out other people's works online, be it professional or amateur artists alike. Seeing their works gives me the motivation and helps me generate ideas for my own works."

Now that he is serving National Service (NS), he tends to draw on his iPad in whatever free time he has, be it after he has finished his assignments at work, or when he travels to and fro work on the bus. The challenge to remain creative is still there though, as there are times when work can become too overwhelming, and he feels too tired to practise. *"Nothing that cannot be solved without a bit of discipline and time management,"* he said optimistically.

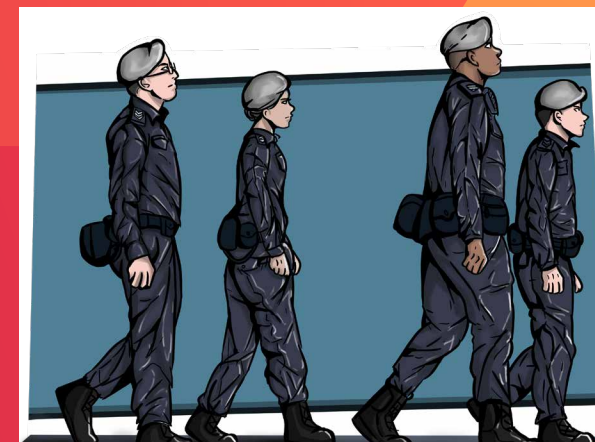
He shared one artwork of his that he is proud of, a piece from his days in Lasalle in which he learnt the technique of photobashing. *"I had to take a real-life photo of a tank and blend it into a part of the landscape I had drawn. It was interesting to learn about this new technique and incorporate it into the art that I create. Not only was it more efficient, but it also added a sense of realism to the photo that would be difficult to completely replicate."*

SC Zhafran enjoys trying new things, and through his time with the SPF, this would prove to be true as he rises to the occasion, contributing his skills to one of the SPF's celebratory events.

When Work and Hobby Comes Together

When he is not busy drawing or designing, SC Zhafran is a staff assistant of the Ops-Tech Department (OTD). His job consists of assisting in the department's day to day operations, which includes evaluating requests filed for the use of tech equipment.

"I also try to help my colleagues out wherever I can, such as organising data frequently used by the OTD, in order to ease their workload."



What he did not expect, however, was to be asked to design an illustration for the Police Headquarters' Chinese New Year 2020 celebration, his most challenging task thus far.

"Initially, I was a bit nervous because my experience with graphic design in Lasalle was quite brief. My course focussed predominantly on animation, so graphic design was just something we learnt on the side."

But SC Zhafran is not one to back down from challenges. He took up the job and produced a design that would come to be used in the SPF's Chinese New Year Electronic Direct Mail. Despite his limited experience, he was able to put his artistic skills to use, and the result was worth it.



"I was happy to be able to produce something that looked

aesthetically appealing and appropriate for the occasion, while also giving me an opportunity to exercise my creative instincts during NS," SC Zhafran shared.

However, that is not the only area of his workflow that has improved. Even though his job in the OTD may not be directly related to illustrating, the way in which SC Zhafran operates has changed since entering NS. As someone who is used to working alone, working in the OTD has been quite the change for him.

"My illustration work seldom required me to work with many people at once, so working in the OTD has taught me the importance of communication," SC Zhafran explained. *"I am also grateful for the opportunities the SPF has given me to illustrate and design digital art for the SPF, as it provides a platform for me to build my portfolio and will be useful once I complete my NS."*

Looking into the Future

Beyond his NS stint, SC Zhafran hopes to hone his craft by furthering his studies, returning to Lasalle to pursue a degree in animation. He hopes to better his illustration skills to work in the film industry, specialising in storyboarding or character design. But while he is here in the SPF, he is happy to be able to contribute with his skills, and looks forward to more opportunities to exercise his creativity in the days to come.





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