



NEWS RELEASE

Annual Crime Brief 2011

Introduction

Overall crime reported in 2011 fell by 5.3% as compared to 2010. Four of the six crime classes¹ registered significant percentage decreases, with improvements seen in the crime classes of Violent Property Crimes, Housebreaking and Related Crimes, Theft and Related Crimes, and Crimes Against Persons.

Overall Crime Down

2 The overall crime in 2011 fell by 5.3% (down by 1,748 cases) to 31,404 cases from 33,152 cases in 2010. The overall crime rate² for 2011 also fell from 653 cases in 2010 to 606 cases in 2011 (or -47 cases). This is the lowest crime rate registered for the past 20 years. **Annex A** shows the breakdown of overall crime in 2011 as compared to 2010, as well as the overall crime rate for the past 20 years.

3 Four of the six crime classes registered decreases in 2011 as compared to 2010, with significant decreases seen in Violent Property Crimes (down by 124 cases) and Housebreaking and Related Crimes (down by 191 cases). Theft and Related Crimes also saw a drop of 1,270 cases and Crimes Against Persons declined by 238 cases.

4 The elaboration is as follows:

- a. **Violent Property Crimes, which refer to crimes which involve taking of money or property by force or threat of force against the victims, recorded a 20-year low of 443 cases from 567 cases in 2010 (or a drop of 22%).** In particular, the total number of robbery cases within this crime class fell significantly from 518 cases to a 20-year low of 393 cases (or a drop of 24%). In

¹ Crime classes refer to the six classes of Crimes Against Persons, Violent Property Crimes, Housebreaking and Related Crimes, Theft and Related Crimes, Commercial Crimes and Miscellaneous Crimes.

² Crime rate refers to overall crime reported per 100,000 total population.

2011, Police also arrested seven serial offenders who accounted for 37 cases of robbery.

b. **Housebreaking and Related Crimes dropped to a 20-year low – with 705 cases as compared to 896 cases in 2010 (or a drop of 21%).** The offence of housebreaking within this crime class also recorded the lowest number of cases for the last 20 years, with 635 cases registered in 2011. This sharp reduction can be largely attributed to two reasons: (i) a sharp decrease in the number of cases of housebreaking at private housing estates (-53% or 103 cases) and (ii) Police's arrest of a total of 271 housebreakers in 2011, amongst which comprise 21 serial housebreakers believed to be responsible for more than 380 cases of housebreaking island-wide.

c. **Theft and Related Crimes decreased by 1,270 cases (or a drop of 6%) to register 18,290 cases, as compared to the 19,560 cases registered in 2010.** Police's crime prevention efforts to educate members of public to take care of their valuables and properties through various mediums have borne fruit, as significant decreases were noted in several offences under this crime class, such as: (i) shop theft which fell by 815 cases (or -17%) to 3,954 cases; (ii) cases of theft which fell by 489 cases (or -10%) to 4,548 cases; (iii) cases of theft from motor vehicles which fell by 172 cases (or -14%) to 1,055 cases; and (iv) cases of snatch theft which fell by 73 cases (or -17%) to a 10-year low of 349 cases.

d. **Crimes Against Persons, which refer to crimes where the victim suffers bodily harm as a result of the crime, registered a decrease of 6% (or -238 cases), from 4,177 cases in 2010 to 3,939 cases.** The decrease in Crimes Against Persons is largely attributable to: (i) a sharp fall in rioting cases, from 262 cases in 2010 to a 10-year low of 172 cases (a drop of 90 cases or -34%); as well as (ii) a 5% decrease (or a drop of 23 cases) in the number of serious hurt cases, which fell from 429 cases in 2010 to 406 cases. The number of murder cases also registered a 20-year low in 2011, with 16 cases as compared to 19 cases last year (a drop of three cases or -16%).

5 Miscellaneous Crimes, which comprise various offences such as vandalism, trespassing and disorderly behavior, registered the same number of cases (4,148 cases) in both periods.

6 Commercial Crimes, comprising mainly cheating and related offences, registered an increase of 2%, from 3,804 cases in 2010 to 3,879 cases. This increase can be mainly attributed to increases in cheating and related offences, which rose from 3,501 cases in 2010 to 3,578 cases (+77 cases or +2%).

Crimes Of Concern Register Improvements In 2011

7 In recent years, Police have highlighted unlicensed moneylending (UML) and harassment; outrage of modesty (OM); and youth³ involvement in crime as the key crime concerns. These crimes have registered notable improvement in the year 2011.

Overall UML and Harassment situation

8 The continual war waged against loansharking activities has reaped further positive results in 2011.

a. Total UML and harassment cases⁴ continue to fall with more arrested

There was a reduction of 3,492 cases (or -21%) of UML and harassment in 2011 where 13,342 cases were reported, as compared to 2010 where 16,834 cases were reported. While the number of cases have fallen, continual community partnership coupled with Police's resolute crackdown on all levels of the loansharking syndicates and on all persons involved in loansharking activities of any nature have resulted in a 31% increase in arrests – from 1,508 persons in 2010 to 1,981 persons in 2011 (or +473 persons).

b. Total Loanshark harassment cases⁵ fall significantly with more arrested

In 2011, 11,776 cases of loanshark harassment were recorded, a significant 24% drop (or -3,749 cases) from the 15,525 loanshark harassment cases recorded in 2010. Correspondingly, 373 persons have been arrested for loanshark harassment in 2011. This is an almost 50% increase (or +120 persons) from the 253 persons arrested for loanshark harassment in 2010.

9 Director of Criminal Investigation Department, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, Hoong Wee Teck said, "We are determined to smash the entire networks of all loansharking syndicates and bring all their members to task. This applies not only to those who conduct harassment by splashing paint or scribbling graffiti, but also to those who provide their bank accounts, handphone lines or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) cards to the syndicates; and to those who assist the syndicates to distribute fliers/pamphlets, to keep a lookout while others conduct harassment, or even to verify that acts of harassment have been conducted. Those who brazenly resort to violent harassment tactics such as using fire will also be hunted down and be sure to face the maximum punishment possible."

10 Apart from persistent enforcement efforts and strengthening partnership with the community in combating loansharking activities, Police are also exploring new methods

³ Youths refer to persons aged 7-19 years. They include juveniles aged 7-15 years and young persons aged 16-19 years.

⁴ These cases are classified under the Moneylenders Act (Revised Edition 2010).

⁵ Cases of loanshark harassment refer to harassment specific cases classified under Section 28 of the Moneylenders Act (Revised Edition 2010). They form part of the overall UML and harassment cases stated in paragraph 8a.

to reach out to the public to rally them in support of our anti-loansharking campaign. For example, Police have recently launched a dedicated anti-loansharking webpage⁶ where members of the public can visit to obtain Police's most updated news as well as advisories relating to UML and harassment. In addition, a dedicated tab containing information on UML and harassment was also recently created on the SPF Facebook Page⁷ which also allows fans to post queries, comments, feedback and provide tip-offs on loanshark-related activities. This is on top of the existing National Crime Prevention Council's 1800-X-Ah-Long (1800-9-24-5664) Hotline which allows callers to provide information on loansharking activities with anonymity. In addition, a 'live chat' – 'Ah Long Chat' – feature will soon be launched on SPF Facebook Page to allow fans to directly pose queries and discuss loanshark-related matters real-time with SPF officers during designated time periods.

11 Director of Public Affairs, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ng Guat Ting said, "With the Internet and 3G mobile technology increasingly becoming regular features in our daily lives, Police have also expanded the use of social media as a strategic tool to reach out to more members of the public to engage them in the fight against loansharking activities and crime. We hope that the 'live chat' would help Police garner ideas and information to fight the UML problem in Singapore.

Fall in OM cases

12 OM cases fell by 19 cases (or -1%) to 1,396 cases from 1,415 cases in 2010. The culprits in majority of these cases are unknown to the victims, with cases mostly committed at common areas of HDB blocks and at crowded areas such as on MRT trains and buses.

13 Police have at the same time, arrested a total of 802 persons for OM in 2011. The decrease in OM cases can be attributed to a slew of Police measures. They include stepping up uniformed presence, tracking down the offenders, and public education efforts.

14 However, prevention remains the best protection. While Police will continue to track down perpetrators of OM, Police would like to remind members of the public to remain vigilant and to protect themselves and their loved ones by adopting the appropriate preventive measures listed out in **Annex B**.

Fewer youths arrested for crime

15 The multi-pronged approach adopted to combat youth crime has improved the youth crime situation further in 2011. The number of youths arrested for crime decreased by 724 persons, from 4,174 persons in 2010 to 3,450 persons last year (or -17%).

⁶ www.spf.gov.sg/ahlong

⁷ https://www.facebook.com/singaporepoliceforce?sk=app_10531514314

16 Director of Operations, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Lim Kok Thai said, "Though it is heartening that less of our youths have been picked-up for flouting the law, Police will continue to monitor the youth crime situation closely and work with relevant stakeholders on measures to reduce youth crime. This involves working with other agencies such as MCYS and MOE to help youths-at-risk, deter youths from crime, and identify them for suitable intervention programmes. The recent formalisation of the Police-Schools-MCYS Liaison Framework will enable better information sharing and inter-agency co-ordination in identifying at-risk youths for the appropriate intervention programmes, such that intervention efforts and follow-up actions may be carried out for this group in a timely manner."

Key Crime Concerns Of 2011

17 The slight increase in Commercial Crimes in 2011 was mainly attributed to increases in cheating and related offences, which rose from 3,501 cases in 2010 to 3,578 cases. In particular, Police have observed a rising trend in cheating and related offences using the following modus operandi:

- a. Failure to deliver goods and services;
- b. Inducing victims to purchase counterfeit/worthless goods;
- c. Continued prevalence of 'Kidnap', 'Lottery' Phone and 'Internet Love' Scams

Failure to deliver goods and services/Inducing victims to purchase counterfeit/worthless goods

18 Cases of failure to deliver goods and services rose by 169 cases (or +52%), from 324 cases in 2010 to 493 cases. These cases mainly involved victims who made purchases after responding to advertisements from culprits – often over the Internet, but eventually did not receive the items or services paid for. Some examples include holiday packages offered with attractive discounts, car rental offers, and hotel accommodation packages. One other notable trend is that most of these 'failure to deliver goods and services' cases usually involved more than one victim as the medium chosen by the perpetrators enabled them to easily reach out to mass audiences.

19 Cases of inducing victims to purchase counterfeit/worthless goods saw a rise of 50 cases (or +135%), from 37 cases in 2010 to 87 cases. In these cases, the perpetrators would offer to sell items like gold, luxury watches or electronic products to victims, when the items were in fact counterfeits or worthless. In all, about S\$345,760/- was cheated in 2011 through such cases.

20 Given today's high Internet penetration rate with consumers increasingly conducting monetary transactions over the Internet, the increase in cheating and relating offences involving the above modus operandi is not unexpected. Over the Internet, consumers should make purchases through licensed, reputed and accredited

companies. They should be cautious and conduct checks especially so when the deal appears too good to be true. They should ideally carry out their transactions face-to-face when dealing with the other party for the first time. Consumers who suspect that they have fallen prey to scams should call the Police immediately. Please see our advice for these two crimes at **Annex C**.

Continued prevalence in the 'Kidnap', 'Lottery' Phone and 'Internet Love' Scams

21 The total number of reported phone scam cases (comprising both successful and unsuccessful cases) has increased from 652 cases in 2010 to 828 cases in 2011. Amongst these cases, 188 were successful in 2010, as compared to 227 successful cases in 2011. The amount of money scammed has also gone up from about S\$4million in 2010 to about S\$6.6million in 2011.

'Kidnap Phone Scams'

22 In particular, there continues to be an increase in the number of successful 'kidnap phone scams'. Generally in such cases, the conmen would call the victim and claim that one of their family members had been kidnapped. The conmen would then demand that the victim transfer a sum of ransom money to them, failing which the "kidnapped" family member would be harmed. In 2011, there were 44 successful 'kidnap phone scams' where victims were cheated a total of about S\$250,000/-, as compared to nine successful cases in 2010, where about S\$98,000/- was cheated.

'Lottery Phone Scams'

23 Police have also observed that more have fell for the 'lottery phone scam', with the total amount cheated using such a ruse rising to about S\$6.4million in 2011, as compared to about S\$3.8million in 2010. There were 183 successful 'lottery phone scams' in 2011, as compared to 175 successful cases in 2010.

'Internet Love Scam'

24 Cases where victims were cheated of their money through the 'Internet Love Scam' increased by 41 cases (or +195%), from 21 cases in 2010 to 62 cases in 2011. The total amount cheated also increased from about \$824,000/- in 2010 to about S\$2.3million in 2011.

25 The 'Internet Love Scam' first surfaced in 2008 and Police have noted several variations to it. Typically, the culprits would befriend their victims through online dating or social networking sites. The culprits, who are believed to be foreigners, would then develop a rapport or a 'love relationship' with their victims. This rapport building may be carried out over a prolonged period.

26 In some cases, the culprit would claim to be coming to Singapore to seek the victim's hand in marriage but would later call the victim claiming to be detained by Customs for some reason, and ask the victim to remit money to secure his release. In another variation, the culprit would claim to have mailed a present or parcel to the victim; and request for the victim to make payment to secure the release of the parcel which was purportedly detained by Customs. In yet another variation, the perpetrator would request for a loan due to financial difficulties, or ask the victim to invest in some venture, or invite the victim to be a director in a company.

27 In other situations, culprits may request the victims to perform sexual acts in front of their webcams, record these acts without the victims' knowledge and subsequently threaten to circulate compromising photos and videos of the victims to extort money from them.

28 In all these cases, the culprits would cease all contact with the victims once the requested money was transferred to the designated overseas accounts.

Advisory

29 Police will continue to actively engage the remittance houses and banks to remain vigilant to assist the Police to look out for tell-tale signs (see **Annex C**) of possible scam victims and prevent them from remitting or transferring their hard earned monies to the scammers.

30 The public is advised to exercise caution when befriending unknown persons through the Internet. Police would also like to urge members of the public to call '999' immediately should they suspect they have been targeted by scammers and to adopt the respective crime prevention measures against the various types of phone scams appended in **Annex C**. Similarly, anyone who believes that he/she have fallen prey to such a scam should also report the matter to the Police immediately. More details on the modus operandi of the different types of phone scams are appended in **Annex D**.

31 With regard to the increase in cheating and related offences using the above modus operandi, Director of Commercial Affairs Department, Mr Tan Boon Gin said, "Criminals have cheated millions of dollars from victims by exploiting the advancement of technology and financial services to their advantage. We can expect criminals to conjure up even more innovative ploys in the future. The Police will intensify its efforts to educate the public on how to identify the latest scams. At the same time, members of the public should be cautious when they receive requests for money in unusual circumstances or deal with unknown persons."

Holistic Approach In Crime Control

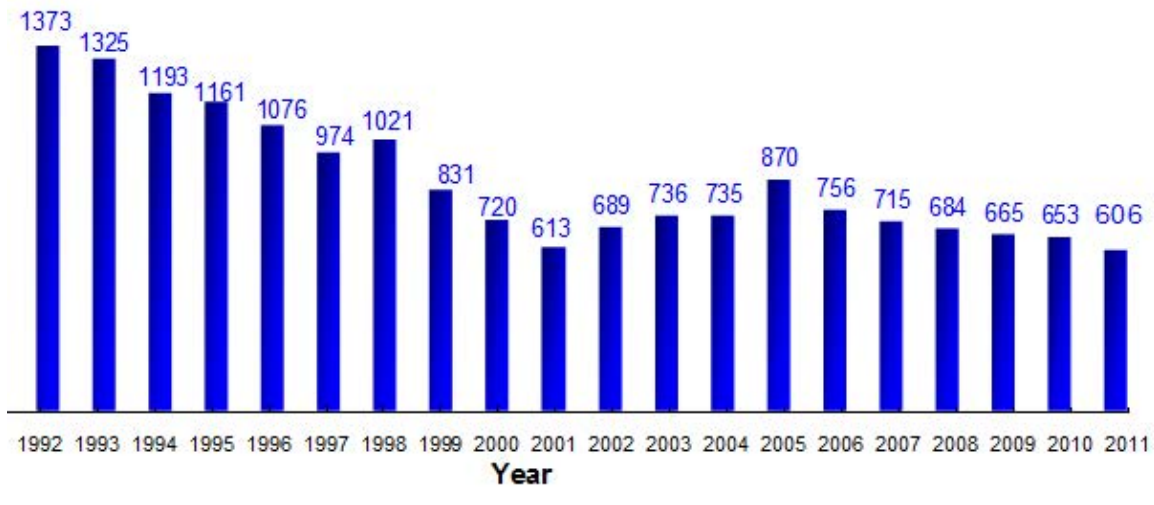
32 While the overall crime situation has improved in 2011, Police will press on with its holistic strategy of keeping crime down, and criminals at bay. Director of Operations, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Lim Kok Thai elaborated, "While we are encouraged by the good results harvested from our enforcement and public education efforts, Police will not rest on our laurels in stamping out crime. However, we cannot do this alone and would need the community to continue playing its part in maintaining their guard against criminal elements at all times, as a vigilant community is the best weapon against crime."

**SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE
PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
7 FEBRUARY 2012 @ 10.30AM**

BREAKDOWN OF OVERALL CRIME IN 2010/2011

	2010	2011	+ / -	%
Violent Property Crimes	567	443	-124	-21.9%
Housebreaking and Related Crimes	896	705	-191	-21.3%
Theft and Related Crimes	19,560	18,290	-1,270	-6.5%
Crimes Against Persons	4,177	3,939	-238	-5.7%
Miscellaneous Crimes	4,148	4,148	0	0.0%
Commercial Crimes	3,804	3,879	75	2.0%
OVERALL CRIME	33,152	31,404	-1,748	-5.3%

OVERALL CRIME RATE FROM 1992 TO 2011



**CRIME PREVENTION ADVISORY AGAINST
OUTRAGE OF MODESTY**

General advisory

- a. Avoid walking through dimly lit, quiet and secluded places;
- b. When returning home alone or late at night, arrange for a family member; or trusted friend to accompany you home;
- c. Be alert to your surroundings. If you suspect that you are being followed, remain calm. Proceed to a crowded area or call the Police for assistance.

If you are taking the lift

- a. Avoid taking the lift with a stranger. Let the stranger take the lift and wait for the next one; and
- b. When entering the lift alone, stay close to the lift button panel. If a stranger rushes into the lift as the lift doors are closing, press "Door Open" and step out immediately.

If you are taking the public transport

- a. Be alert and attentive to your surroundings. When possible, move away if someone stands or sits exceptionally close to you;
- b. If you are molested, shout for help immediately, seek help from people nearby or activate a shrill alarm to increase the chances of apprehending the culprit early. Call Police immediately at '999'; and
- c. Approach the station manager or bus captain, or contact Police for assistance if you see any suspicious looking passenger.

For young children

- a. Young children should be accompanied home at all times. Ensure that your young ones do not wander in public places alone without adult supervision; and
- b. Remind your young ones not to talk to strangers.

What to Do if Confronted

Should you be confronted, remain calm. Take note of his/her appearance, attire, height, or any other distinctive physical features. Also note the direction taken by the culprit and his mode of escape. Contact the Police as soon as it is safe to do so, so that officers can reach the location quickly to assist you.

**CRIME PREVENTION ADVISORY AGAINST
CHEATING AND RELATED OFFENCES**

Failure to deliver goods and services

- a. Be wary of cheap deals especially those not offered by licensed, reputed and accredited dealers or agencies;
- b. Never engage in any forms of transactions with anyone you do not know and trust, especially if you have not met him/her before;
- c. Never send money, or give credit card or online account details to anyone you do not know and trust, especially if you have not met him/her before.

Inducing victims to purchase counterfeit/worthless goods

- a. Be wary of cheap deals especially those not offered by licensed, reputed and accredited dealers or agencies;
- b. Never engage in any forms of transactions with anyone you do not know and trust, especially if you have not met him/her before;
- c. Always verify the authenticity of the item if unsure.

Tell-tale signs of Victims of Kidnap Phone Scam

- a. Constantly on the phone;
- b. Appearing anxious/nervous;
- c. Likely to remit money overseas for the first time.

Kidnap phone scam

- a. Call Police immediately at '999' to report the case;
- b. Remain calm and contact your loved-one immediately to confirm his or her safety; and
- c. Do not transfer any money via remittance agencies, banks or any other means to the caller.

Lottery phone scam

- a. Call Police immediately at '999' to report the case;

- b. Do not make any advanced payment to claim any prize money. Winning a lucky draw or lottery does not require you to make any advance payment; and
- c. Ignore such notifications especially when you did not purchase any ticket or participate in any such draws.

Internet Love Scam

- a. Inform the Police immediately if anyone attempts to extort money from you;
- b. Be wary of messages from unknown people who want to befriend you;
- c. Exercise caution when dealing with unknown persons “befriended” through the Internet;
- d. Do not remit or transfer money to people whom you do not know well enough. The criminal may spend months building rapport with you online before asking for money;
- e. Do not accede to any request that may put you in a vulnerable positions, such as performing compromising acts in front of the webcam, or give personal details about yourself when interacting with other internet users; and
- f. If you receive any message or call from anyone claiming he/she is in some kind of trouble overseas and need you to urgently send money over, you should report the matter to Police and not transfer the money.

TYPES OF PHONE SCAMS

The “Kidnap Scam”

The “Kidnap Scam” first surfaced in Aug 2007. Generally, the conmen would call the victim and claim that one of their family members had been kidnapped. In reality, the kidnapping did not take place. The conmen would demand the victim to transfer a sum of ransom money to various local and overseas accounts, failing which the “kidnapped” family member would be harmed. Another trend has been observed where the culprits would ask the victim to personally handover or leave the “ransom” at a pre-arranged location locally, usually near an MRT station or park. Also in some instances, the conmen claimed that the alleged kidnapped family member failed to service illegal loan repayments or acted as a guarantor for these loans.

The following are details of some evolved tactics Police have detected which were adopted by conmen in recent cases:

- a. In many cases, the culprits would instruct the victim not to put down the line from the time the call was received, until the ‘ransom money’ had been transferred, if not the ‘hostage’ would be hurt. Fearing the safety of their loved ones, the victim would usually comply;
- b. Culprits would claim that the ‘hostage’ is being beaten up and is bleeding, and will threaten to kill the ‘hostage’. The victim, upon receipt of such a call, would usually panic and lose their ability to think rationally;
- c. In instances where the culprit had called the victim’s residential phoneline, he/she would demand for victims’ handphone number and call them up on their handphones in order to facilitate the victim’s travel arrangements to proceed to transfer the money while still holding the line;
- d. Calls were made via unknown numbers or private numbers and for victims with caller-ID, the numbers reflected showed +301;
- e. Culprits would instruct victims to proceed to remittance centres or use other money transfer services to pay the ‘ransom’. After the transfer has been made, victims would be told to proceed to another location to wait while the culprit checks the money, or to pick-up the ‘hostage’;
- f. In some cases, victims were told to go to specified locations to dispose off the remittance receipt;
- g. In one particular case when the victim became suspicious as the ‘hostage’ did not sound like her son, the culprits immediately claimed that they had kidnapped many children and had mixed up their identities;
- h. In another peculiar case, the culprit was able to reveal the name of the person purportedly being kidnapped and held ‘hostage’.

The “Lottery Phone Scam”

In these cases, fraudsters would make unsolicited calls or short message service (SMS) to handphones, claiming that the recipients have won prize money in an overseas lottery. On other occasions, they would send the same notifications to recipients via postal mail, facsimile or the Internet. The recipients would then be directed to liaise with the lottery’s agent or representative. Sometimes, recipients would be asked to provide their personal particulars and bank account numbers to facilitate the transfer of the prize money.

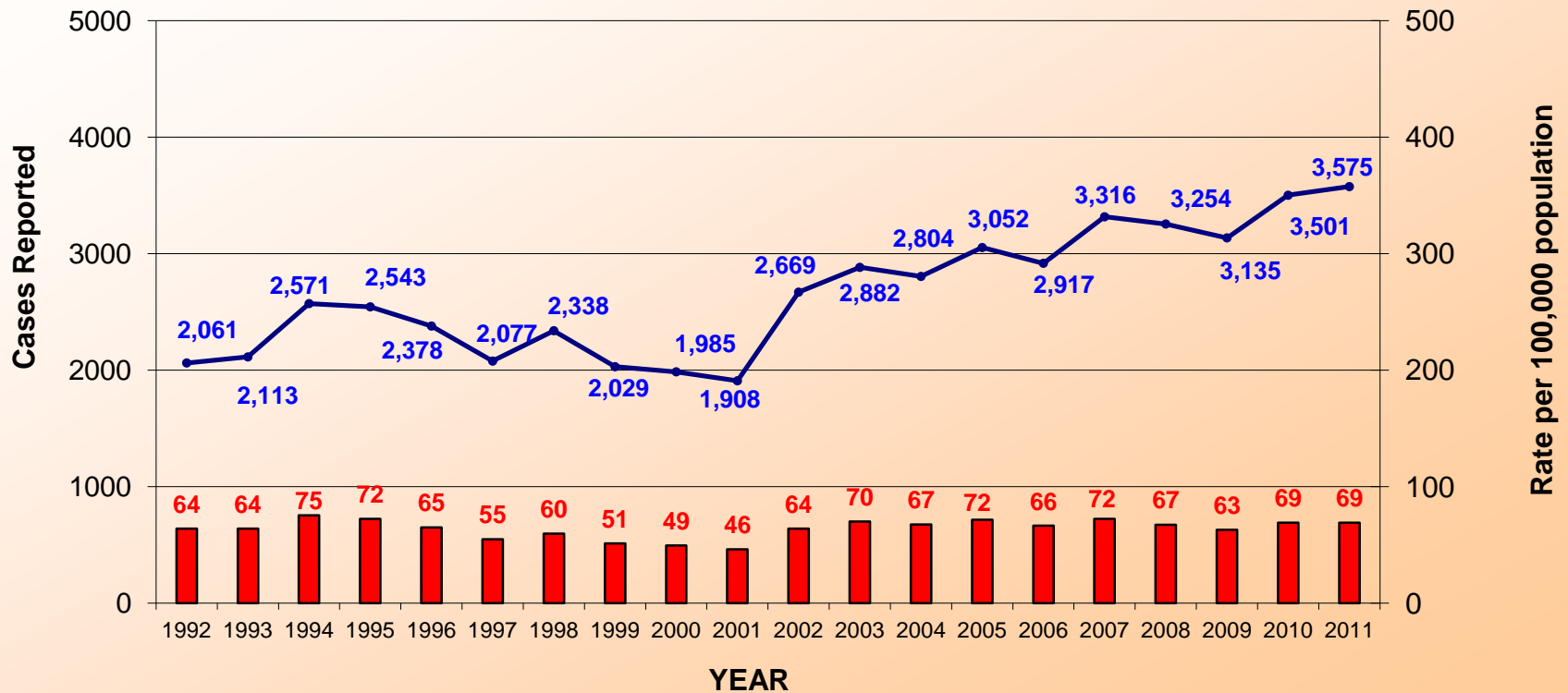
Such lottery winnings do not exist. This “Lottery Scam” is designed to convince and dupe the victims into parting with their money. After deceiving the victims into believing that they have won a lottery, the fraudsters convince the victims to pay a tax or other forms of administrative payments to secure the release of the “prize money”. The fraudsters abscond after receiving the money or they may conjure up more excuses to induce further payments from their victims.

Phone Scams involving impersonation of Supreme Court Officials

Phone scams involving impersonation of Supreme Court Officials were first noted in Sep 2007. Generally, the conmen would falsely claim to be a Supreme Court or Police representative and accuse victims of being involved in criminal offences when in reality, the victims were innocent. The conmen would then ask the victims to make money transfers via remittance houses to close the investigations into their offences. In some cases, the culprits were known to leverage on technology to replicate numbers of local authorities on victims’ caller IDs.



CHEATING AND RELATED OFFENCES (1992 - 2011)



Figures for 2011 are based on Annual Statistical Report on Crime in Singapore.