



# SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE

## POLICE NEWS RELEASE

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### ANNUAL CRIME BRIEF 2015

(UPDATED IN SEPTEMBER 2016)

#### Increase in Online Crime Raises Overall Crime in 2015

Overall crime in 2015 increased by 4.7%, from 32,315 cases in 2014 to 33,839 cases in 2015. This was largely due to an increase in the following online commercial crimes - Cheating involving E-Commerce, Credit-for-Sex and Internet Love Scam, which rose from 1,929 cases in 2014 to 3,801 cases in 2015.

2. Almost all other crime classes registered a decrease compared to 2014 – Crimes Against Persons, Violent/Serious Property Crimes, Housebreaking and Related Crimes, and Theft and Related Crimes. (See Annexes A-1 and A-2). Among these crime classes, the following trends are noteworthy:

- a. Violent/Serious Property Crimes and Housebreaking and Related Crimes registered a 20-year low in 2015.
- b. Theft and Related Crimes registered a 10-year low in 2015.

#### ***Increase in Online Commercial Crime Remains a Concern***

3. Commercial Crimes increased by 2,739 (+48.2%) cases in 2015 to 8,426 cases, compared to 5,687 cases in 2014. Within this crime class, the following online crimes – Cheating involving E-Commerce and scams such as Credit-for-Sex and Internet Love – saw the largest increase.

- a. Cheating involving E-Commerce
  - There was an increase of 574 cases (+34.5%), from 1,665 cases in 2014 to 2,239 cases in 2015. The total sum cheated was approximately \$1.9 million, with the largest amount at approximately \$154,000.
  - Online scams targeting buyers increased by 461 cases (+31.8%), from 1,450 cases in 2014 to 1,911 cases in 2015. The total sum cheated was approximately \$1.3 million.
  - Online scams targeting sellers also increased by 32 cases (+26.2%), from 122 cases in 2014 to 154 cases in 2015. The total sum cheated was approximately \$120,000.
- b. Credit-for-Sex Scam (for CPAD updates)
  - There was an increase of 1,111 cases (+1,683.3%), from 66 cases in 2014 to 1,177 cases in 2015.
  - The total sum cheated was approximately \$3 million, with the largest amount at approximately \$74,000.

c. Internet Love Scam

- There was an increase of 187 cases (+94.4%), from 198 cases in 2014 to 385 cases in 2015.
- The total sum cheated was approximately \$12 million, with the largest amount at approximately \$528,000.

***Be Aware of Online Scams to Avoid Falling Prey***

4. Criminals will hide behind the anonymity of the Internet to prey on victims across national borders. Many perpetrators operate from overseas and use social media platforms to cheat victims in Singapore. Members of the public are advised to exercise caution and vigilance in the virtual world to avoid falling victim to online crimes.

5. The Police will intensify its public education efforts to raise awareness on the evolving modus operandi of online scammers. The Police will also take tough enforcement action against Singapore residents who allow their bank accounts to be used for transferring criminal proceeds of online crimes. The Police will also work closely with our foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on overseas syndicates targeting Singaporeans for online fraud. Please refer to Annex B for more details of anti-scam public education initiatives and crime prevention measures.

*“As online fraud transcends national boundaries, the Police have been working closely with foreign law enforcement agencies to take action against overseas syndicates. Similarly, the Police will also investigate and prosecute local residents who are found to be either perpetrating an online scam or facilitating foreign syndicates in their criminal activities. Singaporeans should also take steps to protect themselves against online crimes. The Police will continue with our public education and outreach efforts to create awareness on the evolving scam tactics.”*

*– Mr David Chew  
Director, Commercial Affairs Department*

**Improvements in Other Crime Areas in 2015**

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

6. UML-related harassment cases registered a 10-year low in 2015 through concerted efforts by the Police and our partners. There were 4,242 cases reported in 2015, a decrease of 1,521 cases (-26.4%) from 5,763 in 2014. Compared to 2009 when the UML situation was at its peak, this represented a decrease of 13,641 cases (-76.3%).

7. The number of harassment cases with property damage also decreased significantly by 979 cases (-35.3%), from 2,772 cases in 2014 to 1,793 cases in 2015.

8. The reduction in UML cases is the result of Police’s multi-pronged approach of tough enforcement action, community partnerships, public education and strict laws. In particular, two significant measures contributed to the decline.

9. First, the extensive network of Police Cameras (PoICams) in HDB blocks has increased Police presence on the ground and deterred would-be criminals. Since

PolCams were first installed in 2012, HDB blocks which are installed with PolCams have seen a steady decline in the number of UML harassment cases with property damage. The number of UML harassment cases with property damage reported at 2,152 blocks<sup>1</sup> with PolCams decreased by 1,191 cases in 2015 (-73.7%) to 426 cases, from the pre-PolCams period of 1,617 cases in 2013. Compared to 2014, this was a decrease of 925 cases (-68.5%), from 1,351 cases.

10. Second, the community's active participation in the neighbourhood watch groups also played an important role. For example, the Citizens on Patrol (COP) scheme has steadily grown over the years to over 700 COP groups with more than 14,000 members island-wide. These COP groups help augment Police presence by being the 'eyes and ears' for the Police during their patrols.

*"The 10-year-low in the number of UML-related harassment cases is the result of the Police's multi-pronged approach of tough enforcement action, community partnerships, public education and strict laws. The installation of PolCams at HDB void decks and multi-storey carparks has also helped to deter and provide investigative leads for UML cases. Footage from these PolCams has led to the arrests of UML harassers in 360 cases since 2012. While the Police are encouraged by the steady decline of harassment cases over the years, we will persevere with our enforcement actions and continue to work with our partners to tackle the UML problem decisively."*

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

### **Motor-Vehicle Thefts Registered a 20-year Low in 2015**

11. Theft cases involving motor vehicles, namely Motor Vehicle Theft, Theft of Motor Vehicle Component Parts and Theft from Motor Vehicles, saw a decrease of 109 cases (-6.6%), from 1,642 cases in 2014 to 1,533 in 2015 (See [Annex A-3](#)). This can be attributed to the growing popularity of in-vehicle cameras in motor vehicles. In-vehicle cameras are a strong deterrence against would-be criminals and provide crucial leads for investigation. Recognising the effectiveness of in-vehicle cameras, the Police introduced the Vehicle-on-Watch (VOW) initiative in 2015. The VOW initiative encourages greater community involvement in keeping neighbourhoods safe. Please refer to [Annex C](#) on the breakdown of statistics and details of the VOW initiative.

### **Decrease in Cyber Extortion Cases<sup>2</sup>**

12. Cyber extortion cases decreased by 170 cases (-66.1%), from 257 cases in 2014 to 87 cases in 2015. The total sum extorted decreased from approximately \$158,000 in 2014 to approximately \$117,000 in 2015.

## **Partnering the Community and Leveraging Technology in the Fight Against Crime**

<sup>1</sup> These 2,152 HDB blocks across Singapore had high UML harassment cases and were chosen as a control group to measure the effectiveness of PolCams.

<sup>2</sup> Cyber extortion cases fall under the Violent/Serious Property crime class.

13. Singapore remains a safe place to live and work in, but this should not be taken for granted. In addition to the Police's tough enforcement efforts, public education and community partnerships are also part of the overall strategy to combat crime.

14. The community remains the Police's most important partner in fighting crime. The Police thank residents and community partners for the strong support in keeping our neighbourhoods safe and secure. To enhance our engagement with the community, Police will be setting up the Community Partnership Department (CPD) to further deepen Police-Community partnership and build vigilant and safe neighbourhoods.

15. The Police will continue to leverage technology to enhance our frontline policing resources and augment our crime-solving capabilities. For instance, PolCams installed at HDB blocks and multi-storey carparks since 2012 have helped reduce crime in our neighbourhoods. The Police are on track to installing PolCams at all HDB blocks and multi-storey car parks by this year. All newly-built HDB blocks will also be installed with PolCams. Police will study the feasibility of installing more Police cameras in public areas in our HDB estates to further enhance security.

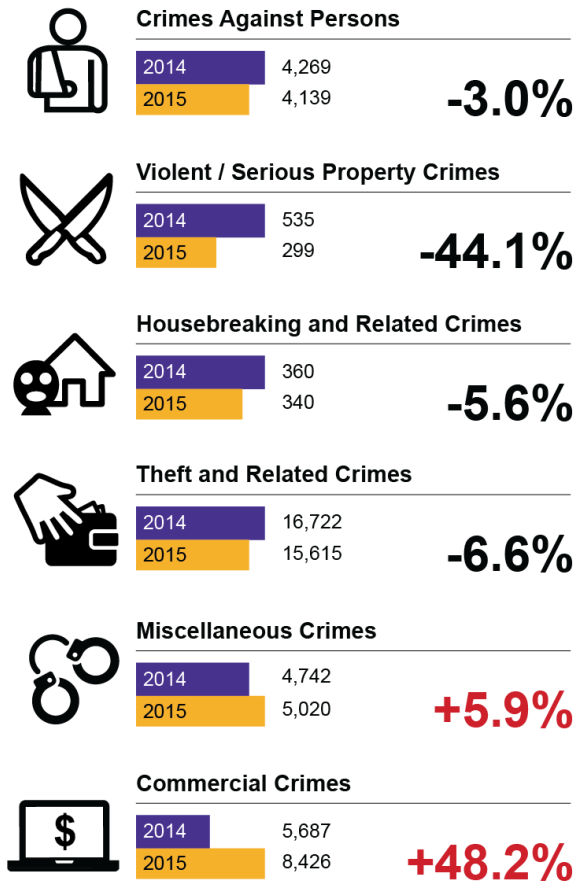
*"The Police would like to thank the community for their strong involvement and support in our fight against crime. The community is the Police's most important partner against criminals and terrorists. We will continue to involve the public in our programmes and continue to build on this strong Police-Community partnership as we keep Singapore safe and secure together."*

*– Assistant Commissioner of Police Wilson Lim  
Director of Public Affairs Department*

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT  
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE  
12 FEBRUARY 2016 @ 12.00 PM**

**UPDATED IN SEPTEMBER 2016**

**CRIME STATISTICS**

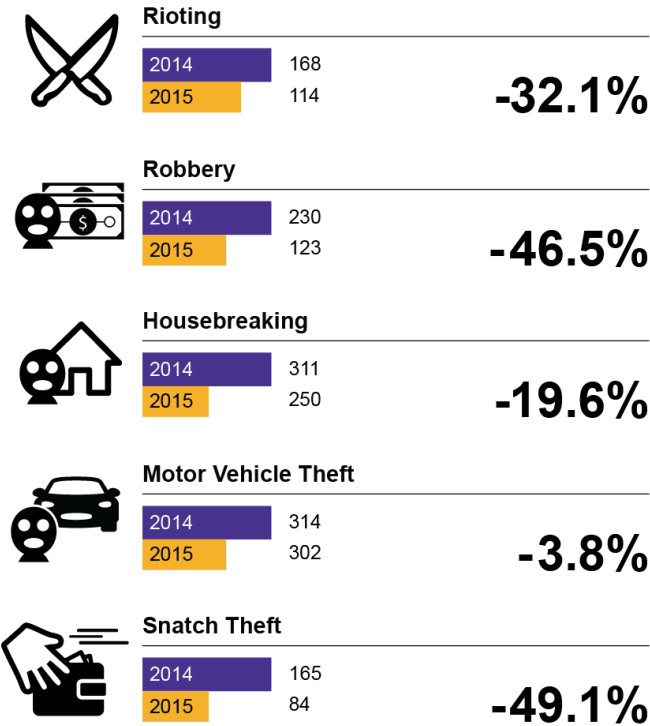


**OVERALL  
CRIME  
+4.7%**

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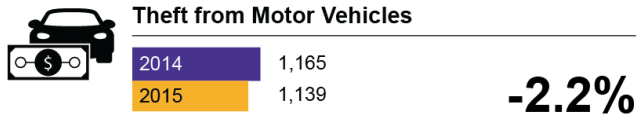
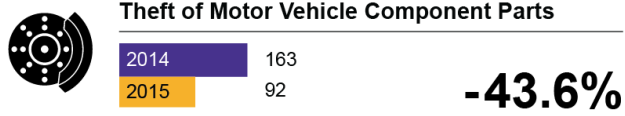
**FIVE CRIMES THAT REGISTERED 20-YEAR LOWS IN 2015**



Icons designed by Freepik & Vecteezy



**CRIME STATISTICS ON THEFT CASES INVOLVING MOTOR VEHICLES**



Icons designed by Freepik & Vecteezy



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

While the Internet is a convenient platform for the public to carry out everyday tasks such as online shopping and social networking, criminals are also using the global reach and anonymity of the Internet to commit crimes. These criminals often prey on people's feelings for loved ones or other personal motivations.

2. Over the years, the Police have implemented the following public education and outreach initiatives:

- In November 2014, the Police, in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), launched a nationwide Anti-Scam Public Education Campaign. The campaign leveraged on digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and conventional advertising platforms such as print and broadcast media, outdoor advertorials at bus-stops, MRT stations and trains to raise awareness of the common scams in Singapore.
- The Police and NCPC also educated the public on scams at its roadshows and other community programmes. For example, in 2015, more than 80 roadshows were conducted island-wide, with 180 Crime Prevention Ambassadors sharing anti-scam messages with the public.
- Three TV commercials were launched in May, July and November 2015, featuring top scams in Singapore. These TV commercials showed how scammers preyed on victims' emotions, desires and weaknesses to entice them to make payment. Apart from TV commercials, the Police also used its resident television programme, Crimewatch, to raise the public's awareness on scams.
- In addition, a series of scam prevention animation videos was rolled out on Facebook and YouTube as educational resources. To date, the videos have received over 320,000 views on both Facebook and YouTube.
- Since November 2014, a website ([www.scamalert.sg](http://www.scamalert.sg)) has also been created to feature the latest scams and allow members of the public to share their experiences with others.
- The Get Real! feature with Channel NewsAsia, where scam victims, the Police, a psychologist and a scammer based in Philippines were interviewed, was aired in January 2016. The victims shared their experiences on why they fell prey to the scammers.

3. In addition, the Police conducted enforcement operations locally and in partnership with foreign Police forces to bring the scammers to justice:



- The Police conducted four island wide enforcement operations targeting scams in 2015. 139 individuals relating to more than 440 Police reports were arrested, involving a total amount of about \$550, 000.
- In 2015, the Police also conducted a joint investigation with the Criminal Investigation Department of the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China (MPS) into a fraud syndicate that targeted Singaporean victims. The Police had received 627 Police reports on credit-for-sex scams, involving a total amount of about \$1.6 million. Investigations revealed that the culprits behind the scams operated from call centres in China and used social media platforms to deceive victims into paying money for non-existent sexual services. Following simultaneous raids conducted by the Chinese Police at various locations in China, 43 members of a syndicate responsible for such scams were detained. Several computers, telecommunication devices and modems were seized.

## **B. CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES**

### **Cheating involving E-Commerce:**

- Exercise caution when you come across unrealistic bargains for concert tickets, apparel, hotel stays as well as electronic products.
- Always check the buyer's / seller's track record and buy only from reputable sellers.

### **Credit-for-Sex & Internet Love Scams:**

- Be wary of strangers who befriend you online. They may not be who they claim to be.
- Be wary of offers for escort, massage or sexual services on social media. Think twice before making payment using online credits.
- Do not send money to or buy anything for anyone you have never met before.

## **THE VEHICLE-ON-WATCH PROJECT**

The Vehicle-on-Watch (VOW) project was launched by Bedok Division on 17 May 2015. Recognising the effectiveness of in-vehicle camera technology in deterring and solving crimes like motor vehicle theft and theft from vehicles, the Police initiated the VOW project as part of the Community Safety and Security Programme.

2. The VOW project leverages residents with in-vehicle cameras to help enhance neighbourhood safety. These in-vehicle cameras act as additional "eyes" against neighbourhood crime and provide crucial leads for investigations. The VOW project also enables the community to be more involved in keeping neighbourhoods safe.

3. Participating vehicle owners may be approached by the Police for footage from their in-vehicle cameras for the purpose of investigations. To date, more than 1,500 vehicle owners with in-vehicle cameras have signed on to the VOW project covering more than 100 car parks in Bedok, Marine Parade, Serangoon, Punggol and Choa Chu Kang. There are signages at the entrances of these car parks indicating that it is part of the VOW project.

4. The initiative has helped the Police solve a series of Theft from Vehicle cases. Between 4 and 21 September 2015, Jurong and Ang Mo Kio Divisions received several reports of cash and valuables being stolen from parked vehicles in the Choa Chu Kang and Punggol public housing estates. With the aid of the victim's in-vehicle camera, the identity of a 39-year-old male suspect was established and he was subsequently arrested along Rivervale Drive on 25 September 2015.