

# CRIME RATE INCREASED IN FIRST HALF OF 2019, LARGELY DUE TO RISE IN SCAMS



MID-YEAR OVERALL CRIME:

**↑ 7%**

2018 15,649  
2019 16,745  
JANUARY-JUNE

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES INCREASED BY **1096**

MID-YEAR OVERALL CRIME INCREASED BY JUST **0.5%**, IF CASES RELATED TO TOP 10 SCAMS ARE EXCLUDED.

## CRIMES OF CONCERN

### 1 SCAMS

TOTAL AMOUNT CHEATED IN TOP 10 SCAMS: **↑ 40.3%**

2018 S\$59.2 mil  
2019 S\$83.1 mil  
JANUARY-JUNE

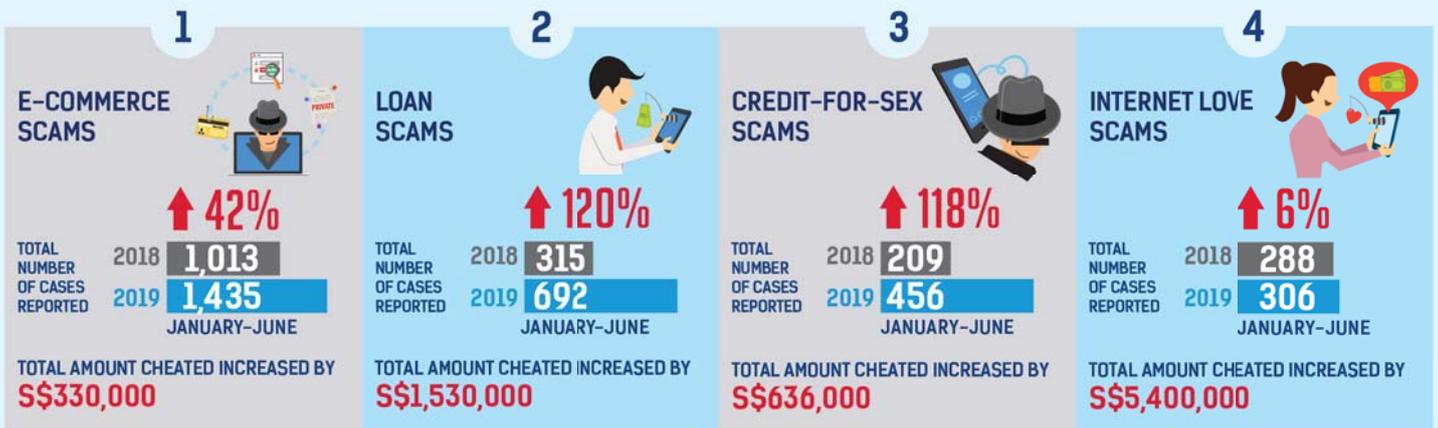
TOTAL AMOUNT CHEATED INCREASED BY **S\$23.9mil**

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES REPORTED FOR TOP 10 SCAMS: **↑ 40.3%**

2018 2,560  
2019 3,591  
JANUARY-JUNE

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES INCREASED BY **1,031**

### TOP 4 SCAMS OF CONCERN



### 2 OUTRAGE OF MODESTY



**SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE**  
SAFEGUARDING EVERY DAY



## POLICE NEWS RELEASE

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### MID-YEAR CRIME STATISTICS FOR JANUARY TO JUNE 2019

#### Overall Crime Situation for January to June 2019

##### *Overall Crime increased due to a rise in scam cases*

In the first half of 2019, the total number of reported crimes increased by 7% to 16,745 cases, from 15,649 cases in the same period in 2018.

2. This increase was largely due to a rise in scam cases. If cases related to the top ten types of scams are excluded, the increase in the total number of reported crimes for the first half of 2019 from the same period in 2018 was just 0.5% (from 13,089 to 13,154)<sup>1</sup>. Refer to [Annex A](#) for statistics on the top ten scams in Singapore.

#### Scam situation in Singapore

3. Among the top ten types of scams, e-commerce scams, loan scams, credit-for-sex scams and internet love scams remain the key concerns to the Police. These four types of scams made up 80% of the top ten scam types reported in the first half of 2019, and the total number of reported cases for these four types of scams also increased significantly, by almost 60%, compared to the same period in 2018.

##### *E-commerce scams remain the top scam in Singapore*

4. E-commerce scams remain the top type of scam in Singapore, with the highest number of reported cases amongst all types of scams in the first half of the year.

- a) The number of e-commerce scam cases increased by 42% to 1,435 in the first half of 2019, from 1,013 in the same period in 2018.
- b) The total amount cheated increased to S\$1.2 million in the first half of 2019, from S\$870,000 in the same period in 2018.
- c) The largest sum cheated in a single case in the first half of 2019 was S\$43,000.
- d) The percentage of all e-commerce scams that took place on Carousell decreased from 74% in the first half of 2018, to 53% in the first half of 2019. Common transactions involved sales of electronic items, tickets, hotel room

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<sup>1</sup> The top ten types of scams are e-commerce scams, loan scams, internet love scams, credit-for-sex scams, investment ruse scams, business email impersonation scams, China Officials impersonation scams, lucky draw scams, Facebook impersonation scams and ICA impersonation scams.

bookings and vehicle rentals. The drop could be attributed to the anti-scam initiatives that Carousell has worked closely with the Police to push out on its platform.

- e) However, there was a rise in e-commerce scams on other digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Shopee and Lazada. Refer to Annex B for the breakdown of e-commerce scams on the various digital platforms.

### *Significant increase in loan scams and credit-for-sex scams*

5. Loan scams and credit-for-sex scams recorded the second and third highest number of reported cases respectively amongst all scam types. Both also registered significant increases in the first half of 2019 as compared to the same period in 2018.

a) Loan scams

- The number of cases increased by 120% to 692 in the first half of 2019, from 315 in the same period in 2018.
- The total amount cheated increased to S\$2.2 million in the first half of 2019, from S\$670,000 in the same period in 2018.
- The largest sum cheated in a single case in the first half of 2019 was S\$82,120.

b) Credit-for-sex scams

- The number of cases increased by 118% to 456 in the first half of 2019, from 209 in the same period in 2018.
- The total amount cheated increased to S\$1.1 million in the first half of 2019, from S\$464,000 in the same period in 2018.
- The largest sum cheated in a single case in the first half of 2019 was S\$80,000.
- iTunes cards and Alipay remain the most common platforms used for money transfers in this type of scam.

6. Loan scams and credit-for-sex scams are associated with unlawful activities such as unlicensed moneylending and vice. The public must not engage in such illegal activities.

### *Total amount cheated in Internet love scams rose sharply*

7. Internet love scams continue to be a concern as the total amount cheated increased in the first half of 2019 when compared to the same period in 2018.

- a) The number of cases increased by 6% to 306 in the first half of 2019, from 288 in the same period in 2018.

- b) The total amount cheated increased by S\$5.4 million (46%) to S\$17.1 million in the first half of 2019, from S\$11.7 million in the same period in 2018.
- c) The largest sum cheated in a single case in the first half of 2019 was S\$2,417,681.

## Measures to Better Fight Scams

### *New Anti-Scam Centre to disrupt scammers' operations*

8. With the proliferation of the Internet, scam crimes are largely perpetrated by foreign syndicates based overseas, who leverage digital platforms for their operations. This makes scams particularly challenging for the Police to solve.

9. To better fight scams, the Police set up the Anti-Scam Centre (ASC) on 18 June 2019 under the Commercial Affairs Department. The ASC focuses on disrupting scammers' operations and mitigating victims' monetary losses. The ASC targets the following three actions to disrupt scammers' operations:

a) Freeze bank accounts swiftly

- The Police work closely with the three major local banks – DBS Bank, OCBC Bank and UOB, to swiftly freeze suspicious bank accounts which are detected to be involved in scammers' operations, and impede fund transfers involving such accounts.
- Such bank accounts can be frozen within days of notification.

b) Enhance anti-scam measures on digital platforms

- The Police continue to engage and work closely with digital platform owners to introduce scam prevention measures and disrupt scammers' activities.
- One such example was the introduction of scam prevention measures by Carousell on its platform, which include:
  - Scam advisories to raise awareness of scams and preventive measures;
  - CarouPay, a form of escrow payment which holds money paid by buyers until the sale is acknowledged by both buyers and sellers, so as to mitigate the risk of buyers falling prey to scams; and
  - Allowing Carousell users to tap on 'My Info', a platform developed by the Government Technology Agency to verify the identities of users, as scammers can create multiple fake accounts under various monikers.

c) Terminate mobile lines

- The Police work with telecommunications companies to swiftly terminate mobile lines used by scammers, and will continue to engage such companies, and relevant agencies, to develop effective measures to disrupt scammers' operations.

10. In the first two months of operations, ASC focused on combating the top two scam types in Singapore – e-commerce scams and loan scams. 1,047 reports involving total losses of S\$2.4 million were referred to the ASC. The ASC managed to freeze 815 bank accounts and recovered 35% of the amount scammed, around S\$840,000.

11. The Police will also continue to work with foreign law enforcement counterparts to crack down on foreign syndicates targeting Singaporeans, and work through its Transnational Commercial Crime Task Force (TCTF) to impede transnational scams. The TCTF was set up in October 2017 under the Commercial Affairs Department to investigate transnational scams, including Internet love scams. Since its set-up, the TCTF has worked with the Royal Malaysia Police and the Hong Kong Police in six joint operations on Internet love scams reported in the three jurisdictions, and solved at least 270 cases involving S\$27.6 million. The Police made its first overseas-based internet love scammers arrest in April 2019. It involved a pair of Nigerian scammers who operated Internet love scams from Malaysia in April 2019. They were deported to Singapore to face charges in May 2019.

12. The Police, together with the National Crime Prevention Council, have issued many scam prevention advisories to warn the public about scams, and will continue our public education efforts. It is often difficult to recover the monies that have already been paid or transferred to the scammers. Hence, the Police continue to urge the public to exercise caution when making any online transactions, and exercise due diligence to protect themselves from falling victim to scams.

### **Outrage of Modesty Remains a Key Concern**

13. The number of Outrage of Modesty (OM) cases increased by 5% to 837 in the first half of 2019, from 797 in the same period in 2018.

#### *Outrage of modesty on public transport remains a concern*

14. OM cases on the public transport system, including public transportation nodes and on public transport, have decreased but remain a concern due to the high number of cases reported.

- a) The number of OM cases on the public transport system decreased by 9.8% to 119 in the first half of 2019, from 132 in the same period in 2018.
- b) The total number of OM cases on public buses and LRT/MRT trains decreased by 20.6% to 81 in the first half of 2019, from 102 in the same period in 2018. The decrease could be attributed to the increase in public

awareness and vigilance, Police's stepped-up patrols and the presence of advisories on buses and trains.

- c) However, the total number of OM cases reported at bus interchanges and LRT/MRT stations increased by 26.7% to 38 in the first half of 2019, from 30 in the same period in 2018.

15. The Public Transport Security Command launched the Riders-on-Watch (ROW) scheme on 2 July 2019. The ROW scheme augments the policing of Singapore's public transport network, and aims to tap on the collective effort of public transport commuters to keep Singapore's public transport network safe and secure. Within one and a half months, more than 12,000 members of the public signed up as ROW volunteers. The Police would like to thank the community for the strong support, and encourage more commuters to join us in keeping our public transport safe by signing up as ROW volunteers.

### *Increase in outrage of modesty cases in shopping malls*

16. The number of OM cases that occurred in shopping malls increased by 31.4% to 67 in the first half of 2019, from 51 in the same period in 2018.

17. The Police will step up patrols in shopping malls and work with stakeholders to deter OM. Members of the public are reminded to stay vigilant against OM whilst out in crowded places. Victims of molestation are advised to make a police report as soon as possible. Reporting such crimes early is crucial in helping the Police identify and arrest perpetrators.

### **Business Operators and the Community Can Play a Key Role in Fighting Crime**

18. Everyone can play their part in keeping Singapore safe and secure. Business operators such as banks, digital platform owners and telecommunications companies have a social responsibility to prevent, deter and detect crimes at their business premises or platforms. Putting in place the necessary anti-scam measures and precautions against crimes will also help such business operators maintain a positive relationship with their customers.

19. Family members and friends can play their part too. They can prevent someone they know from falling victim to crimes and prevent losses. Members of the public are urged to stay vigilant against crimes and report perpetrators to the Police.

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT  
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE  
30 AUGUST 2019 @ 9.30AM**

**TOP 10 SCAM TYPES IN SINGAPORE (BASED ON NUMBER OF REPORTED CASES)**

Top 10 Types of Scams	Jan-Jun 2018	Jan-Jun 2019	Total Amount Cheated (2018)	Total Amount Cheated (2019)	Largest Sum Cheated in a Single Case (2019)
E-Commerce Scam	1,013	1,435	\$870,000	\$1.2 Mil	\$43,000
Loan Scam	315	692	\$670,000	\$2.2 Mil	\$82,120
Credit-For-Sex Scam	209	456	\$464,000	\$1.1 Mil	\$80,000
Internet Love Scam	288	306	\$11.7 Mil	\$17.1 Mil	\$2,417,681
Investment Ruse	179	211	\$15.6 Mil	\$27.3 Mil	\$4,300,000
Business Email Impersonation Scam	178	178	\$22.5 Mil	\$25.8 Mil	\$4,080,888
China Officials Impersonation Scam	177	122	\$6.0 Mil	\$7.1 Mil	\$1,360,000
Lucky Draw Scam	82	84	\$501,000	\$486,000	\$155,000
Facebook Impersonation Scam	45	65	\$641,000	\$751,000	\$330,000
ICA Impersonation Scam	74	42	\$285,000	\$139,000	\$37,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,560</b>	<b>3,591</b>	<b>\$59.2 Mil</b>	<b>\$83.1 Mil</b>	<b>-</b>

**TOP 5 DIGITAL PLATFORMS USED IN E-COMMERCE SCAMS**

Top 5 Digital Platforms Used in E-Commerce Scams	Cases Reported		% of Total E-Commerce Scams		
	Jan - Jun 2018	Jan - Jun 2019	Jan - Jun 2018	Jan - Jun 2019	+/-
Carousell	751	765	74%	53%	-21%
Facebook	58	270	6%	19%	+13%
Instagram	8	77	1%	5%	+4%
Shopee	27	75	3%	5%	+2%
Lazada	14	63	1%	4%	+3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>858</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>-</b>