

SPEECH BY MR DESMOND LEE, MINISTER, PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND SECOND MINISTER, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS & MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SINGAPORE RED CROSS' WORLD FIRST AID DAY CELEBRATIONS, 9 SEPTEMBER 2017, 10.30AM AT TAMAN JURONG CC

Mr Benjamin William, Secretary
General/ CEO, Singapore Red Cross

Friends of the Singapore Red Cross

Residents

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

It is my pleasure to join you today to
celebrate World First Aid Day.

Let me begin by thanking all you - our first aiders, volunteers and trainers - for your service to the mission of the Singapore Red Cross, which is to save lives.

Singapore Red Cross

The Singapore Red Cross started promoting first aid in Singapore since 1949. This was 68 years ago.

But you continue to improve, innovate and customise how first aid is taught to Singaporeans.

- For example, you were the first in Singapore to offer “Citizen First Responder” training, so ordinary people can be trained in first aid, CPR and AED.
- And you were the first in South-East Asia to offer public training in psychological first aid. Psychological

first aid helps people who suffer shock and psychological trauma after a crisis.

- You have also been actively reaching out to young Singaporeans to equip them with skills such as life-saving first aid and casualty management, so they can apply these in the community.
- Impressively, your Red Cross Youth leaders have, in turn, taken the

initiative to plan and organise events to promote first aid and other lifesaving skills to other people.

- o Ong Sin Wee is one of them.
 - He was trained by the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.
 - He then developed the disaster management training programme for Red Cross Youth in our secondary schools.

- He and his team also prepared and pushed out emergency preparedness boxes to 77 schools.
- He went even further: he worked with 200 volunteers, who reached out to 300 families to share with these families the importance of first aid.

- <Can I invite Sin Wee to stand up and be acknowledged? Well done!>
- I am sure there are many passionate and civic-conscious young people like Sin Wee among us here today. Continue to inspire others with your strong spirit of community service!

Supporting SGSecure

We all saw a skit and a video just now about SGSecure.

SGSecure is about how all of us, and the whole of Singapore, can come together in response to the terror threat, and safeguard our way of life.

The threat of terrorism is real. Every few days, you hear news of attacks taking place around the world.

Singapore is also a target. In fact, we are facing the highest terror threat level in recent years.

What are we doing to prepare for the day when a terror attack does happen?

- We continue to strengthen regional and international counter-terrorism cooperation;

- We are tightening our vigilance and checks at our borders;

- We are rolling out plans to strengthen security for soft targets, such as large events and certain buildings; and
- We are also stepping up the readiness and coordination of our police and security forces.

However, beyond all these measures, we ultimately need every Singaporean to play our part. We must be able to:

- Stay Alert to security threats;
- Stay United to respond to a terror attack as one people; and
- Stay Strong to be resilient and bounce back quickly from an attack.

When our Civil Defence and Police are alerted about an incident, they will respond immediately. But, no matter how fast they are, they can never be as

fast as ordinary Singaporeans who are already at the scene.

So it is important that we train as many Singaporeans as possible so we can keep ourselves and those around us safe, and help victims whom we come across.

This is because, as all of you know, in an emergency, every second counts. For example, chances of survival for a person suffering from cardiac attack decreases by 7% to 10% for every

minute that passes by without applying CPR-AED.

Apart from preparing for a terrorist attack, having as many of us in the community trained in emergency skills can make a difference in 'peacetime', and actually save lives.

So we have a number of initiatives to make all of us better prepared.

Let me share a few of them. I hope you will come onboard after hearing about them.

We have a programme called **“Save-A-Life”**.

Under “Save-A-Life”, our Civil Defence will teach you first aid and CPR.

We will also install more Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in public spaces.

In fact, by 2019, we would have installed one AED at the void deck of every other HDB block. Which means - for every two blocks, we will have one AED installed.

Some of you may have heard about a Smartphone app called **“myResponder”**.

If you download this app, and you are one of our Civil Defence trained community responders, the app will alert you when there are people nearby who

are suffering heart attack / cardiac arrest, and show you where the nearest AED is. This allows volunteers who are nearby to give immediate help, as the ambulance rushes over.

Our Civil Defence and Ministry of Health have also worked together to introduce the “Dispatcher Assisted first REsponder” programme, or DARE, for short.

- This is a short, 40-minute training programme, which teaches you how to perform CPR and use the AED, to revive cardiac arrest victims.

Later this year, we will implement a modified programme, known as DARE Plus. You can sign up for this programme at your nearest community centre (CC).

What is the difference?

It still teaches CPR and AED.

But it also teaches you how to “Run-Hide-Tell”, if you are caught in the middle of a terror attack.

In addition, you can learn improvised first-aid, and how to properly handle a fire extinguisher.

Civil Defence hopes to train at least 300 residents from each constituency by 2019.

And this is on top of the 40,000 over people who are trained each year in CPR and AED skills under other Civil Defence outreach programmes.

So I encourage you to sign up today with your family and friends.

The Singapore Red Cross' goal of having a first aider in every home is aligned with the SGSecure movement's goal of having prepared citizens in each household.

I am glad to hear that Red Cross Youth movement has also incorporated

SGSecure elements in your programmes.

Conclusion

As qualified first aiders, you play an important role in advocating emergency preparedness among your circle of family and friends. Your skills can help to save lives, and help us stay strong to bounce back quickly from a crisis.

Together, we can be a community of prepared citizens who are vigilant, cohesive and resilient in the face of adversity.

I wish you a happy World First Aid Day.
