



JOINT NEWS RELEASE

PLEDGE OF COMMITMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SCAMS BY THE REAL ESTATE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) and Singapore Estate Agents Association (SEAA) have pledged their commitment to fight scams, in partnership with the Singapore Police Force (SPF) and the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) during the SEAA's Key Executive Officers (KEOs) and Leaders Conference 2023. The event was held on 14 November 2023 at the Lifelong Learning Institute.

2. The event was attended by Guest-of-Honour, Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Minister of State, Ministry of Home Affairs & Ministry of National Development. Close to 200 members from the real estate community attended the event. During the event, Superintendent of Police Michelle Foo, Head of Anti-Scam Investigation Branch of the Anti-Scam Command, shared about how the prevalence of scams could impact the property industry, with potentially severe consequences to affect public trust and confidence in property agents.

3. Since February 2022, rental scams involving impersonation of property agents have emerged in Singapore. In such cases, scammers would post fake property listings on various advertisement sites and online platforms (e.g., Facebook, Carousell, etc). Victims would initiate a conversation with the scammer through WhatsApp using the contact number listed on the fake listing. The scammer, impersonating as a registered property agent, would pressure the victims for early downpayment to secure the rental property before viewing. The scammers would then convince victims of their credentials as a registered property agents by sending pictures of their CEA registration number, business card and pictures/videos of virtual tours of the property to be leased. Between January and June 2023, at least 616 victims have fallen prey, with total losses amounting to at least \$3.7 million.

4. The SPF and NCPC have been working closely with CEA on anti-scam initiatives. CEA has been actively sharing relevant scam and crime prevention

advisories through CEA's social media platforms and has also developed an anti-property rental scam webpage, supported by Central Police Division, to educate the public on how to stay safe from such scams (<https://www.cea.gov.sg/consumers/rental-scams>).

5. The SPF, supported by CEA, developed an e-brochure (<https://go.gov.sg/safeguarding-you-and-your-home>) to share tips on how to safeguard homes against property related offences, and how to Add, Check, Tell (ACT) against scams. The brochure will be distributed widely across networks and communities through the real estate agency industry stakeholders, further strengthening the collective effort to safeguard the industry and their clients.

6. The pledge of commitment signifies the strong intent of the real estate agency industry stakeholders to fight scams, in partnership with the SPF and NCPC. The SPF and NCPC are pleased to have SEAA onboard to combat scams. SEAA will also reach out to its 6500 real estate agent members, through sharing of important scam-related information with them. The SPF and NCPC will continue to work with CEA, SEAA and community partners to raise awareness and equip our community with the knowledge to ACT against scams effectively.

- a. ADD the ScamShield app and security features such as two-factor (2FA) or multi-factor authentication for your banking and social media accounts.
- b. CHECK for scam signs and with official sources, such as checking if the property agent's phone number is legitimate and registered with CEA, and calling back your property agent to verify his identity, especially if there are suspicious requests for money transfers.
- c. TELL the authorities about your scam encounters and share with your family and friends the latest scam trends and signs, including SPF's weekly scam bulletin.