

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY MR. TANO SEE CHIM, MINISTER OF STATE FOR
FINANCE AT THE FINALS OF THE 11TH ANNUAL INTER-SCHOOL
SAFETY-FIRST QUIZ AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE ON 22.7.71 AT 5.00 P.M.

I am indeed pleased to be here this afternoon for the Finals of the 11th Annual Inter-School Safety-First Quiz. It is heartening to see so many of you present here this afternoon to discuss and to answer questions on safety-first. Safety-first is very important. Our life and limb, literally speaking, depend upon the observance of the rules of safety-first. We ignore this rule, so to speak, at our own peril.

2. We should observe safety-first rules everywhere - at home, in the schools and especially on the road. And for those who work, at their place of work.

3. Although safety-first should cover every field of human activity, we normally think of safety-first as our endeavour to prevent accidents on the roads. This may be because more people are killed and very many more are injured on our roads than anywhere else. Hardly a day now passes without our reading in the papers of someone killed or someone injured on our roads. Last year, there were 287 persons killed on the roads and 9,932 persons injured. The year before that, 302 persons killed and 9,918 persons injured. In 1968, 302 persons killed and 9,271 persons injured on our roads. The figures for casualties in factories are as follows:-

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>Total</u>
Killed	22	29	36	87
Injured	801	1,188	1,489	3,478

Data on casualties in homes and in schools are not available. These incomplete data, however, show the magnitude of the problem.

4. Accidents not only bring pain and suffering to the affected families but also have their repercussions on society. On the average, the Government spends about \$350 per year on every school-going child, and this does not include what the family itself spends on the child nor does it include the cost of building schools and buying equipment. So when a child gets killed, his death not only brings pain and suffering to his family, but it is also a cost on society. If he were only injured, medical expenses would have to be spent on him, and even if the medical expenses are paid by his

parents, there is still a social cost because hospitals have to be built and special equipment - e.g. X-ray equipment - has to be bought. Now if he were disabled permanently for life, he would be a liability not only to his family but on society. Because after bringing him up and educating him, instead of being able to contribute to society, he has now to be nursed and looked after permanently.

5. Most accidents can be prevented - by the observance of safety-first rules: Don't run across the roads; do not play with electric wires; do not lean far out of the window if you stay in high-rise flats.

6. Safety must come first. Safety-first rules must be inculcated in our young, so that these rules become a part of them. It is hoped that with the introduction of lessons and talks on safety-first in schools, the importance of safety-first is appreciated, and the number of accidents, at home, in school and on our roads, can be reduced.

7. The interest of the individual and society in safety is vital in Singapore in the context of our city's fast urbanisation. As there will be more cars, more factories and more constructions, hazards will multiply. Unless the importance of safety-first is realised, old problems will be intensified and new hazards will appear, as urban development progresses. We have to take action today to make sure that safety comes first, to ensure a more progressive and happy tomorrow. Thank you.