

PRESS RELEASE

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SPEECH BY MR CHIN HARN TONG, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY,
(HOME AFFAIRS), AT THE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION YOUTH MOVEMENT
CIVIL DEFENCE CAMP AT THE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION EAST COAST
CAMPSITE ON SATURDAY, 23 MAY 1987 AT 5.00 PM

I am pleased to see so many of you taking part in the Civil Defence Camp jointly organised by the People's Association Youth Movement and the Singapore Civil Defence Force. The purpose of this Camp is to train you in basic Civil Defence (CD) skills. The training you are about to receive will be useful to yourselves and your fellow citizens in a war as well as in peacetime emergencies. Instead of being merely a passive bystander, you will be able, after this Camp, to apply your knowledge and skills to help others in distress. When more people are trained in Civil Defence, there will be a larger pool of trained volunteers to respond to any emergencies. At present, we have trained over 16,000 volunteers under the volunteer training scheme. Another 15,000 volunteers, consisting of housewives, senior citizens and youths, have also been trained under various other schemes which are designed to impart CD skills as widely as possible to our community.

Although a large number of people have already attended CD training, we have still a long way to go to achieve our final objective of making every able-bodied man, woman or youth who has no National Service or reserve liability, to be a trained CD volunteer, a CD leader or a trained resident. Why is it important to involve the majority of the population in Civil Defence? Firstly, early Civil Defence preparations will help to minimise panic,

disorder and confusion and the resultant loss of lives in an emergency. Secondly, the population will be psychologically geared to cope with the shock and suffering that will ensue in a disaster. Thirdly, with proper training, volunteers and others will be able to take part in rescue work, render first-aid to the injured, help evacuate people to the safety of shelters and assist in the many civil defence tasks. Above all, a trained person will be able to take care of himself first and thus not become a liability when all resources are stretched.

Civil Defence training for volunteers and others was started four years ago. Today, this training is available in all 79 Constituencies with classes regularly conducted in Civil Defence Centres, Residents' Committee Centres or Community Centres. Since classes are within easy reach of residents living in the respective Constituencies, residents should find time out of their daily routine to acquire the CD skills taught in these classes which will prove to be valuable to them throughout their life. Many of the CD skills are not only designed to help you cope with life in time of war but will also help you handle any daily emergency situation.

To facilitate training further, the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) has been persuading organisations and associations with a large membership, such as the People's Association, to organise training for their members. The response has been encouraging and many people have been trained as a result. The SCDF will continue to tap this source for more people to attend its Civil Defence training. Another source is the workplace. With the co-operation of the management, the SCDF has been conducting training for

workers at their places of work. The employees find it very convenient to attend classes in their companies' premises. As a result, many workers have successfully completed the Civil Defence training held at their companies' premises. With this encouraging result, the SCDF will continue to provide CD training at workplaces.

I wish to commend all of you for attending this camp and also for enrolling as Civil Defence Volunteers. After this training camp, you will be appointed as volunteers in your respective Constituencies. There will be follow-up training and exercises conducted by your Constituencies from time to time. You should try to acquire as much training and attend as many exercises as possible, to increase your knowledge and skills on Civil Defence. The more active amongst you should also opt later, to become Commanders to lead other volunteers. The Civil Defence Co-ordinating Committee in your Constituency also needs fresh members to replace those who leave after serving several years. If you have the time, you may also serve as a Member of the Committee. Whether you are a Volunteer, Commander or Member of the Civil Defence Co-ordinating Committee, you will be doing a great service to your community and country.

I am confident you will make the best use of this two-day camp and learn as much as possible.

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