

Please check against delivery. Embargoed till delivery.

**SPEECH FOR GUEST-OF-HONOUR MR TEO CHEE HEAN, DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER AND COORDINATING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY, LAUNCH OF LAW AWARENESS WEEK @CDC 2016
ON SATURDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10AM, WATERWAY POINT**

*“Raising Law Awareness – Knowing our rights, knowing where to seek
help”*

Mayors Mr Teo Ser Luck, Dr Teo Ho Pin, Dr Mohamed Maliki,
Grassroots Advisers Mr Darryl David, Mr Zaqy Mohamed, Mr Victor Lye,
Mr Lee Hong Chuang, Mr Chua Eng Leong,

Mr Thio Shen Yi, President of the Law Society of Singapore,

Residents,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning to everyone.

2. I am very happy that our Five Community Development Councils, or CDCs in short, and People’s Association are partnering The Law Society, the volunteer lawyers and law students to raise the awareness of law and provide pro-bono legal services for our residents.

Raising Legal Awareness

3. Very often, law can be daunting for us, especially faced with legal jargon, long contractual agreements and fine print which are not easy to understand. Our legal community is making efforts to simplify legal writing. At the same time, it is important that the community do our part to continue to bring law closer to the ground, raise the understanding of legal issues, and simplify it for the man in the street. This year's Law Awareness Week @CDC has two key objectives.

4. First, knowing our legal rights and responsibilities. Law Awareness is more than community education. It is about empowering residents to recognise that they have legal rights and responsibilities, and knowing how and where to find information on legal issues.

5. The talks and presentations during Law Awareness Week are tailored for those who are not legally trained, with the intention of breaking down legal technicalities so that they become easy to understand. Individuals can then weigh their legal options when faced with personal issues. While dealing with legal issues is a trying and lengthy process that should be avoided as far as possible, it is our hope that by equipping individuals with the knowledge of potential legal

Please check against delivery. Embargoed till delivery.

consequences of their actions as soon as possible, they can avoid getting embroiled in legal problems.

6. I am happy that for this year, the Law Society and CDCs will double the number of topics covered, which will include frequently asked questions concerning estate and employment-related legal issues, and also emerging ones in the cyber domain.

7. Second, knowing where to seek help. The efforts that you have made in the Community Legal Clinics and the Law Week are very important. These Community Legal Clinics assist needy Singaporeans and PRs by providing basic legal advice and information on personal issues, on matters where our residents are not already represented by a lawyer. While the Clinics do not provide pro-bono legal representation, residents will be referred if necessary to agencies such as the Legal Aid Bureau and the Small Claims Tribunal for assistance.

8. Since this partnership to setup Community Legal Clinics two years ago, these clinics have received close to 6,400 applications for pro-bono legal advice. This works out to be about 9 applications per day. As more lawyers, law firms and law students come forward to volunteer their services, we now have a sizeable community of about 130 law firms and over 1,800 lawyers to serve all Singaporeans.

Please check against delivery. Embargoed till delivery.

9. With more than 70 legal talks and activities, the Law Awareness Week @CDC will be hosted at 42 community venues in September. This is expected to benefit more than 3000 residents, double the number assisted last year. Beyond this month of activities, residents can also check the Directory of Community Legal Clinics at the CDCs' and The Law Society's website for the nearest Legal Clinic and their opening hours. These 18 Community Legal Clinics are setup at accessible locations such as the CDCs and community clubs, and the volunteer lawyers will be available to take your questions.

Conclusion

10. The Community Legal Clinics and Law Awareness Week @CDC are possible through the collaboration of many partners. I congratulate the Law Society, the five CDCs and People's Association in bringing legal services closer to the ground and developing programmes for our residents.

11. I would like to thank the volunteer lawyers who have contributed their time, and also our law students who are paying it forward to contribute to society.

Please check against delivery. Embargoed till delivery.

12. By knowing our rights and knowing where we can seek help, our residents can find useful information on the law, and know when and how to obtain suitable legal assistance.

13. I look forward to a successful Law Awareness Week, and many more in the years to come. Thank you.