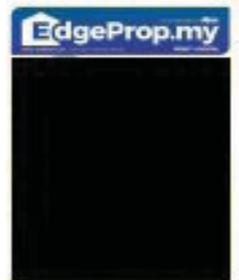


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# UP IN SMOKE!

Did you know fire incidents resulted in some RM2.4 billion of losses and claimed 107 lives last year? Five experts at a recent EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 offer their views on how you can keep your property safe from fires.



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(From left) Chong, EdgeProp.my contributing editor Sharon Kam, Hamdan, Lee, Nur Faidarina, Gamuda Land branding and communications general manager Nicola Tiong, Nippon Paint (M) Sdn Bhd project division sales manager Sean Tan, Au, EdgeProp.my editor Lam Jian Wyn and Low.

# Urgent need to spread fire-safety knowledge

BY SHAWN NG

In 1976, Malaysia had its first high-rise fire incident. An inferno raged for nearly 30 hours at the Campbell Shopping Complex along Jalan Campbell (now Jalan Dang Wangi). A short circuit had sparked the flames that razed the 4-storey retail podium and adjoining 15-storey office tower, claiming a life. Fast forward to nearly 40 years later, and fires continue to make headlines — such as the one at the unfortunately named 86-storey Torch Towers in Dubai, and the 24-storey Grenfell Tower blaze that resulted in an estimated death toll of about 80.

These incidents show that fires continue to destroy property and — more tragically — lives.

According to a recent report, 107 people were killed in fires while 477 were injured in fire incidents in Malaysia last year. The year

before that, 153 died while 467 were hurt. The figures highlight the need to improve public awareness and knowledge on fire safety and preventive measures.

"We all know that apathy, ignorance and arrogance can lead to tragic results. Yet, many times, we choose to dwell in a false sense of assurance and security until it gets too late, which can be fatal," said EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 "Is your home a fire hazard?" on Oct 14.

"For instance, is it good enough to have a fire extinguisher at home? Do you know if you have bought something that is meant for all types of fire? Is it still in good working condition?"

"If you are living in a high-rise building, was it designed, built and managed with fire safety in mind?" asked Au, adding that communal living also demands for specific fire-safety practices.

To spread awareness on fire safety, EdgeProp.my had gathered five experts from various industries to share their advice.

The half-day symposium, which saw more than 350 participants turning up, was held at Hilton Kuala Lumpur. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor while the supporting sponsor was Nippon Paint Malaysia. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*. Attendees also took the opportunity to visit the booths set up by EdgeProp.my, Gamuda Land, Nippon Paint Malaysia and The Edge at the event.

One of the attendees of the symposium is Tan Hai Khoon, a property investor and a committee member of the joint management committee at his condo. He was delighted to learn more about fire hazards in communal living from the speakers.

"I want to know, when we come across any



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Au: Apathy, ignorance and arrogance can lead to tragic results.

Camuda Land showcased its latest projects at its booth.

Attendees reading EdgeProp.my pullout while waiting for the session to begin.



An attendee asking a question.



Registration began at 8am.



Nippon Paint Malaysia representatives answering participants' queries on different types of paint products.

Participants visited EdgeProp.my's booth to find out more about the portal's analytic tools and the latest market trend.



issues and fire hazards in a building, how we should address it and which party we should look for to deal with it?" he told EdgeProp.my.

He added that he is concerned about the issues in communal living, which can lead to fire incidents, such as illegal renovations, fire equipment that are in poor condition, and misuse and crowding of common areas.

"For example, some of them [owners] will replace their fire-proof door with a non-fire-proof one, so if a fire occurs, it will spread to the corridor and burn other units," he explained.

The symposium featured five speakers — LeeSiong Architect Sdn Bhd principal architect Chong Lee Siong, Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd executive director Low Hon Keong, Fire and Rescue Department Fire Safety Division assistant commissioner Hamdan Ali, Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited architect and trainer Anthony

Lee Tee, and Energy Commission Malaysia's department of regulatory electrical safety's equipment unit regulatory officer Nur Faidarina Alias.

Chong, who was the first speaker at the event, highlighted in his session titled "So, your home was built with fire safety in mind?" the importance of owners complying with the relevant fire-safety requirements when renovating their properties.

He said the Uniform Building By-laws 1984 — which was amended in 2007 and 2012 — has clear guidelines and legal requirements on building safety that architects, developers and homeowners must comply with.

Meanwhile, Low noted that the level of awareness of fire safety among strata residents is still a cause of concern.

"The most common complaints lodged by homeowners are water leakage, cleanliness, security and problems with common facilities, but none of them are related to

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fire safety," he said during his session titled "Fire safety in communal living".

The subsequent speaker, Hamdan, stressed that Malaysia's fire-safety laws are up to date, but there is a need to adopt a performance-based building regulatory system rather than just following the prescriptive laws in a building. He was presenting on the topic "Fire safety and building regulations — is Malaysia outdated?"

Lee, who was next, urged the audience to take action with just three simple steps to raise fire-safety levels in the country — identify the unsafe aspects and areas that are in dire need of improvement in buildings; start to address the most urgent and important issues; and then continue to maintain the building. He was sharing during his talk entitled "Burning facts you cannot ignore!"

The last speaker of the day was Nur Faidarina, who shared simple steps that the public can take to avoid electrical fires in her session titled "Ensuring electrical safety at home".

The steps include never plugging in or operating appliances with wet hands, selecting the appropriate cable size for an electrical appliance, and getting rid of and replacing electrical cords and cables that are already frayed, exposed and cracked.

Hamdan, Lee and Nur Faidarina then took part in a panel discussion entitled "Myths vs reality", which was moderated by Au.

One of the key takeaways from the panel discussion is that joint management bodies and management corporations of strata residential buildings should consider extending their annual audit process to include building safety.