The Anti-Scam Command and retail fraud

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Scale

The great majority of crypto-related police reports in Singapore are retail scams. They include investment scams promising returns on crypto trading, job scams paid in USDT, impersonation scams in which victims are directed to buy crypto at a kiosk and send it to the fraudster, and romance scams. The Singapore Police Force reported scam losses exceeding S$ 1 billion in 2024, with investment scams the largest category and a substantial share involving cryptocurrency as the payment rail.[1] The Anti-Scam Command, established within the Criminal Investigation Department in 2022, consolidates the Anti-Scam Centre, the police's scam-strike teams and liaison officers embedded with banks and, since 2023, with digital payment token licensees.

Tools

The Anti-Scam Centre's effectiveness rests on speed. Bank liaison officers freeze accounts within hours of a report. The same model has been extended to the larger exchanges, which have agreed to freeze accounts and preserve records on police

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request. The Online Criminal Harms Act 2023 allows the police to issue directions to online services, including app stores and messaging platforms, to remove scam content and to disable accounts. Its codes of practice impose duties on designated platforms.[2] From 2024 MAS and the police have also required digital payment token licensees to participate in shared fraud-surveillance arrangements, mirroring the duties imposed on banks under the Shared Responsibility Framework for phishing scams.

Client question

"A client of my family office sent 200,000 USDT to a 'trading platform' that has disappeared. What can the Singapore police do?" File a report immediately, with transaction hashes, wallet addresses and all communications. The Anti-Scam Centre will ask Singapore-licensed exchanges to freeze any accounts the USDT reached and may request freezes from foreign exchanges through police channels. Tether itself has frozen addresses on law-enforcement request. In parallel, start the civil tracing route described in Chapter III, because the police will not recover the funds for your client. Their task is prosecution. Recovery follows only if the assets are seized and the court orders their return.

Notes

1. Singapore Police Force, Annual Scams and Cybercrime Brief 2024, published February 2025. ↩
2. Online Criminal Harms Act 2023, Parts 2 and 3, Singapore Statutes Online. ↩

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