

Antonio Novas / Legally Modified Cars
010098761





The Straits Times tagged along with the Traffic Police during one of their operations to catch illegal racers and illegally modified cars in Singapore. The police officers checked several modified vehicles, but no racers were caught. ST PHOTO: TERENCE TAN

Most 'mod-car' culprits are also speedsters

FROM PAGE A1

ior Staff Sgt Haminnuddin.

He added that illegally modified vehicles were also often caught speeding.

A police spokesman said speeding, a common cause of accidents, was one of the main traffic offences that they focused on during night patrols.

In the first six months of this year, 26,976 speeding summonses were issued. The figure was 64,983 for the whole of last year, up from 61,661 in 2008.

Motoring enthusiasts, though, told The Straits Times that the police presence and the development of the Changi Motorsports Hub, which is expected to be

ready by 2012, will curb illegal racing activities here.

Many racers now go across the Causeway to race.

Mr Peter Tan, vice-president for motorcycles at the Singapore Motor Sports Association, said the Republic's strict laws have driven some illegal racers to Malaysia's highways.

"If caught for racing in Singapore, your licence can be (suspended) and your car confiscated. You also get booked for illegal modifications, so the risks are too high."

Those caught for illegal racing can be jailed for up to six months and fined up to \$2,000. Those who modify vehicles illegally can be fined \$1,000 or jailed for

three months.

Mr Tan felt that the Changi Motorsports Hub would help bring down the number of illegal street racers by up to 80 per cent. "When we have a track, professionals and amateurs alike can do some serious racing there."

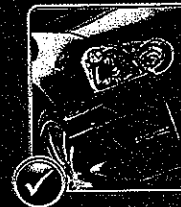
However, apart from the usual racing hot spots in Lim Chu Kang and Tuas South, Singaporeans have heard and seen races in heartland areas like Sengkang, Tampines, Sin Ming and Loyang.

In June, Tampines resident Poh Soon Leong wrote to The Sunday Times' forum page, to complain that drivers of illegally modified sports cars often race along a stretch of road in Loyang Avenue, without regard for the safety of other road us-

COMMON CHECKLIST

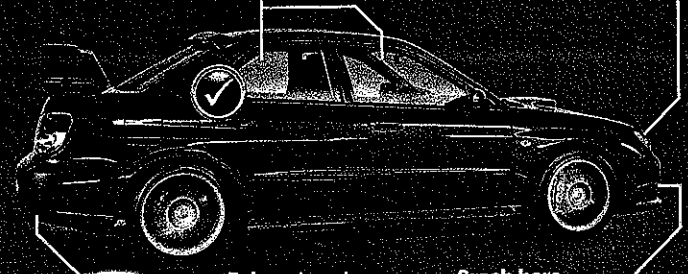
Windows

- Reflective window tints are not allowed.
- Light transmittance must be at least 70% for the front windscreen and two front side windows, and at least 25% for rear windscreen and passenger windows.



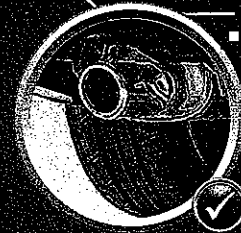
Head lamps

- Replacement lamps must meet internationally recognised standards.
- Decorative lamps like wiper washer LEDs are banned.



Exhaust system

- The exhaust system consists of exhaust manifolds, catalytic converters and mufflers. Any modification requires LTA approval.



Crash bars

- Not allowed in any form.



Source: LAND TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

PHOTOS: SUBARU AND LTA GRAPHICS: TANG WEE CHEOW AND LEE XIN EN

ers.

A police spokesman later said they do regular enforcement in the area, including speed checks and special operations to check illegal racing and careless, inconsiderate and dangerous driving.

A 22-year-old student, who wanted to be known only as Wilson, is a regular racer who drives along Orchard Road almost every Friday and Saturday night, looking for a street race.

When enough cars show up, these

speed demons dash from Orchard Road to Marina Square, make a right turn towards the Esplanade, make another right turn and race up Stamford Road, through the Fort Canning Tunnel to Orchard Boulevard, and back to where they started.

"But now there are traffic policemen every week so we have to start our races even later, around 3am or 4am," he said, adding that, increasingly, they were also racing on expressways as Orchard was being closely watched.

TOPIC: Local Motoring News / Illegally Modified Cars

THE STRAITS TIMES p18/2000