

## **PUB keeps an eye on waterways as construction sites mushroom**

05:55 AM Mar 04, 2011

by **Ong Dai Lin**

SINGAPORE - With more construction sites sprouting around Singapore, national water agency PUB has been busy working with contractors in the past five years to protect the waterways.

As a result, closed-circuit television cameras, water treatment plants at construction sites and silt curtains have been introduced at these sites to prevent silt from polluting the country's waters.

Contractors have also been taught how erosion occurs and how sediments behave to make them aware of the impact of their work on the environment.

Mr V Rajandran, manager of the catchment and waterways department at PUB, said the move to get contractors to put in place an earth control management plan was prompted by the advancement of technology and the need to keep Singapore's waterways clean with the growing number of construction projects on the island.

Since implementing these measures, Singapore's waterways are now clear 95 per cent of the time - a "big" improvement from the past, he added.

Some of the technology in place at constructions sites: Erosion control blankets made with coconut fibre, which are used to cover exposed soil surfaces, and water treatment plants.

PUB uses closed-circuit television cameras at a site's discharge points to monitor the colour of the water.

Companies that release silt into waterways can be fined up to S\$5,000. If the offence continues after the company has been convicted, it will be fined S\$500 for each day of the offence.

So far, five to 10 per cent of construction companies in Singapore have been fined by PUB since the measures were introduced, said Mr Rajandran.

But it is not just the punitive measures that are spurring contractors to implement earth control management measures.

For instance, the companies can re-use the recycled water for their work and save on water costs, said Mr Rajandran.

Mr Alan Lim, senior project manager at Swee Hong Engineering Construction, told MediaCorp that the company used the recycled water to wash its vehicles onsite - which translates into about 10 per cent savings on the project's water costs.

Mr Ng Boon Gee, assistant director of development at Gardens by the Bay, said that, given the size of the project, it is challenging to keep silt from seeping into the waterways.

But by stipulating earth control management measures into the tenders of the five contractors working on the project - and working closely with them - silt discharge is controlled tightly.

Mr Ng added that, as the project faces the Marina Channel, it is important to make sure the water discharged from the site is of good quality.

Copyright 2011 MediaCorp Pte Ltd | All Rights Reserved

**Print**