FACTSHEET ON ENHANCING PUBLIC CLEANLINESS

Update

- The state of public cleanliness continues to be of concern. Besides the Government efforts, it is also critical that Singaporeans take ownership of the cleanliness of our environment.

- NEA’s enforcement officers will be equipped with body-worn cameras to deter abusive behaviour from offenders and protect our officers against allegations of unfair or unprofessional enforcement actions from uncooperative offenders.

- NEA will work with organisers of major events to remind participants and spectators to bag their own litter and clean up after themselves. For example, at events like the NDP shows and fringe events.

- Town Councils will set aside a day to show their appreciation of their cleaners and mobilise the community to clean up their neighbourhoods.

- NEA will extend the community volunteers scheme to welcome residents who wish to do more for their environment, such as advocacy, public education and enforcement.

Towards a Cleaner Singapore

1. A 2010 study found that 36.2 per cent of respondents may litter if they believe they would not be caught.

2. To tackle the littering problem in Singapore, the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) has: (a) uplifted the cleaning industry; (b) increased enforcement against litterbugs; (c) encouraged socially gracious and considerate values and norms; and (d) encouraged ground-up movements against littering.

Uplifting the Cleaning Industry - Mandatory Licensing Regime for Cleaning Industry

3. The Environmental Public Health Act was amended last year to introduce a mandatory licensing regime to regulate and upgrade the standards and productivity of the cleaning industry in Singapore. The licensing requirements included the training and payment of progressive wages for cleaners to ensure a more engaged cleaning workforce and the retention of a core of resident cleaners.

4. As of 31 December 2014, the National Environment Agency (NEA) has licensed 1,129 cleaning businesses which employed around 52,500 workers, including about 38,500 resident (Singapore Citizens or PR) cleaners. Over 33,000 cleaners have been trained and over 26,500 resident cleaners have been paid wages according to the Progressive Wage Model.
Increased Enforcement Against Litterbugs - Littering Enforcement and Regulations

5   To tackle the problem of high-rise littering, the Environmental Public Health Act (EPHA) was amended in April 2014 to double maximum court fines to $2,000 for the first conviction, $4,000 for the second conviction, and $10,000 for the third and subsequent convictions. In addition, it requires owners and occupiers of apartment units to cooperate with investigations into high-rise littering incidents by providing the necessary information.

6   We have stepped up our enforcement efforts against littering to increase the likelihood of catching litterbugs. The number of tickets issued for littering in 2014 is about 19,000, which is almost double the number in 2013. About 70% of these tickets were issued to residents.

7   We have deployed surveillance cameras to catch high-rise litterbugs. All offenders were sent to Court, and as at 5 March 2015, NEA has investigated and taken 541 enforcement actions against persons caught for high-rise littering in 2014. In September 2014, an offender was fined $19,800 and ordered to perform 5 hours of corrective work for throwing cigarette butts including lit ones out of his window on 34 occasions.

8   To enhance the enforcement officers' effectiveness, NEA will equip them with body-worn cameras from January 2015. These cameras aim to deter abusive behaviour from offenders and protect our officers against allegations of unfair or unprofessional enforcement actions from uncooperative offenders. Offenders will be informed that video recording is in progress and strict safeguards are in place to ensure that video footages will be confidential and accessed only by authorised officers to aid investigations.

Encouraged Socially Gracious and Considerate Norms and Values

9   Singapore has worked hard to gain a reputation of a clean and green city. As the nation celebrates its 50th anniversary, it is timely to remind ourselves that public cleanliness requires the continued effort from everyone.

10  This year, we will encourage organisers of major events to involve their participants in cleaning up after themselves. Among them will be the National Day Parade (NDP) which comprises both the main parade as well as many fringe events. It is hoped that all event organisers and participants will reinforce and continue this social norm of being responsible for keeping their event sites clean.

Encouraged Ground-Up Movements Against Anti-Social Behaviour - Active Citizenry and Community Efforts

11  Complementing the efforts of the Keep Singapore Clean Movement (KSCM) and the Public Hygiene Council (PHC) in the neighbourhoods, the Town Councils will set aside a day to organise litter-picking exercises to mobilise the community to take ownership of and to clean up their neighbourhoods, and show appreciation for their cleaners for their daily efforts in ensuring a clean environment.
12 In 2013, NEA established the Community Volunteer Scheme for interested volunteers from the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) who wish to educate and encourage litterbugs to pick up their litter. To date, there are over 250 individuals from 5 NGOs - PHC, Waterways Watch Society, Singapore Kindness Movement (SKM), Singapore Environment Council and Cat Welfare Society - and public service officers who are authorised to engage the public on the importance of keeping the environment litter-free. So far, these volunteers have engaged over 800 litterbugs and taken enforcement action against 10 uncooperative litterbugs.

13 To encourage more members of the community who wish to do more to keep Singapore clean, NEA will extend the scheme to individuals who are passionate about public cleanliness but who may not be affiliated with any NGO to join the Community Volunteers. They can be involved in advocacy, public education and enforcement. NEA will provide all volunteers with the same training that regular NEA officers undergo.

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