



MEDIA RELEASE

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NEA WILL STEP UP EFFORTS ACROSS FIVE KEY AREAS IN DESIGNATION OF 2024 AS THE YEAR OF PUBLIC HYGIENE

Collective responsibility to upkeep Singapore's hygiene standards

XX March 2024 – The Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE) has designated 2024 as the Year of Public Hygiene, to galvanise all residents to reinforce good hygiene practices for our collective well-being. Maintaining high levels of public hygiene is the foundation of a Clean, Green, and Resilient shared Singapore.

2 Singapore has come a long way in our public hygiene journey, and the collective efforts of the Government, our people, the industry and other stakeholders have been pivotal in transforming Singapore into a city boasting high levels of public hygiene. Maintaining high levels of public hygiene requires all stakeholders to continue to do their parts, in line with the spirit of the Forward SG exercise.

3 The National Environment Agency (NEA) will spearhead the Year of Public Hygiene and reinforce high standards of public hygiene through various programmes and initiatives. This year, NEA will give added emphasis to five key focus areas:

1. Tackling cleanliness hotspots (*refer to **Annex A***)
2. Tackling unhygienic public toilets (*refer to **Annex B***)
3. Enhancing vector control (*refer to **Annex C***)
4. Enhancing industry capability and leveraging technology (*refer to **Annex D***)
5. Rallying the community (*refer to **Annex E***)

4 To give heightened emphasis to the Year of Public Hygiene and to rally businesses, the community and individuals to take action, the movement will be integrated with signature events including Keep Singapore Clean, Go Green SG and Clean & Green Singapore.

5 A clean environment is necessary so that Singapore is well-prepared to tackle future public health threats.

6 To strengthen our community and foster a renewed social compact, the Government, businesses, communities, and individuals must all work together to reinforce our collective efforts to maintain a clean environment, with safe food, clean air, and clean water for all. Collectively, all facets of public hygiene must come together to protect our health and create a thriving urban environment, forming the bedrock of our ongoing journey towards a cleaner, greener and more resilient Singapore.

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About the National Environment Agency

The National Environment Agency (NEA) is the leading public organisation responsible for ensuring a clean and sustainable environment for Singapore. Its key roles are to improve and sustain a clean environment, promote sustainability and resource efficiency, maintain high public health standards, provide timely and reliable meteorological information, and encourage a vibrant hawker culture. NEA works closely with its partners and the community to develop and spearhead environmental and public health initiatives and programmes. It is committed to motivating every individual to care for the environment as a way of life, in order to build a liveable and sustainable Singapore for present and future generations.

For more information, visit www.nea.gov.sg

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Tackling Cleanliness Hotspots

To maintain clean public spaces, the Government shoulders a critical responsibility in setting clear cleanliness standards and enforcing them diligently. However, enforcement alone is not enough. NEA will adopt a more targeted approach with stepped up enforcement, greater use of technology and community involvement.

- a) To tackle cleanliness hotspots, NEA will adopt a more targeted approach and strengthen enforcement presence at hotspots

NEA will conduct more blitzes at cleanliness hotspots, which are of larger scale and higher visibility. NEA will deploy both uniformed and non-uniformed officers in these blitzes. To enhance deterrence after each blitz, standees will be placed to remind members of the public of the enforcement actions taken and that the area is under active surveillance. NEA conducted 21 blitzes in 2023. NEA plans to conduct more than 100 blitzes in 2024.

Corrective Work Orders (CWO) will also be conducted at these hotspots. From 2021 to 2023, the total number of CWOs issued by the Courts to repeat littering offenders was about 1,600.

For table littering, the average Tray and Crockery Return Rate at hawker centres has increased from 65 per cent in August 2021 to around 93 per cent currently. We thank everyone who has contributed to this movement and displayed social graciousness. NEA will continue to carry out targeted enforcement at hawker centres with lower return rates.

- b) To enhance surveillance, NEA will increase CCTV deployment by four times

The number of CCTV deployments will be increased four times from around 250 per year, to 1,000 per year. These additional CCTV deployments will improve NEA's remote surveillance capabilities, facilitate efficient deployment of resources by enabling investigations into public health offences, as well as deter would-be offenders.

- c) NEA will partner community stakeholders and seek the public's assistance in identifying offenders.

With support from community partners and grassroots, NEA will explore putting up images of unresolved acts of littering in community spaces in the areas where the act of littering was committed, and seek the community's assistance with identifying offenders.

Identified offenders may be charged in accordance with existing laws, including being fined or charged in court. Care will be exercised in investigating cases committed by young children, the elderly, and vulnerable groups

ANNEX B

Tackling Unhygienic Public Toilets

Cleanliness of public toilets remains challenging, and we can collectively do more to enhance levels of cleanliness and hygiene, to provide a safe and healthy environment for all.

- a) MSE will set up a Public Toilets Taskforce to review ways to improve cleanliness of poorer performing public toilets, in particular toilets at coffeeshops and hawker centres

The Taskforce will be co-Chaired by Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Sustainability and the Environment, Mr Baey Yam Keng, and Chairman of the Public Hygiene Council, Mr Andrew Khng. It will comprise representatives from the public sector agencies, town councils, trade associations, non-governmental organisations, academia, professionals, premises managers, and industry associations.

- b) The Taskforce will develop measures to improve hygiene standards for all public toilets, including infrastructure, cleaning and public education

The taskforce will:

- i. Examine measures targeted at the adoption of good public toilet designs;
- ii. Promote responsible use of public toilets;
- iii. Advocate responsibility amongst premises owners for toilet cleanliness and maintenance; and
- iv. Foster community partnership to promote the cleanliness of public toilets.

- c) NEA and SFA will step up enforcement on toilet cleanliness and ensure that operators take responsibility and maintain toilets properly

NEA and SFA have been conducting enforcement blitzes on public toilet operators since mid-2023, and will continue to do so. In 2023, NEA and SFA took close to 240 public toilet-related enforcement actions against premises owners/ managers. Enforcement on coffeeshop toilets will also be publicised on NEA's and SFA's websites.

Enhancing Vector Control

Keeping the incidence of vector-borne diseases low remains a priority for NEA. This year, NEA will focus on tackling rat issues at source and combating dengue by expanding Project *Wolbachia*.

a) NEA and SFA will step up enforcement of waste management at food premises and bin centres

Tackling rat issues at source by cutting access to food sources is important to providing clean and pest-free environments. Trade premises owners are responsible for ensuring that any waste generated is properly bagged and disposed of.

NEA and SFA have been conducting checks to ensure that licensees adopt proper waste disposal measures, such as ensuring that food waste is properly bagged and not left uncovered overnight. Targeted ops will also be conducted on poor-performing food establishments.

Enforcement actions are taken against food establishments who do not properly manage their food waste.

Apart from preventing rats from accessing food sources, NEA and SFA also advocate that premises managers maintain their premises in good condition to deter rat habitation and prevent entry points for rats. This involves actions such as treating and sealing rat burrows (when no longer active), as well as ensuring there are no gaps in building structures or false ceilings that rats could use to enter or find shelter in their premises.

b) NEA and Enterprise Singapore are working with the Singapore Pest Management Association (SPMA) to develop a new Singapore Standard (SS) on performance measurement for pest management services

The performance benchmarks are aimed at enabling a shift towards outcome-based contracting (OBC) for the pest management sector. In particular, this will encourage pest management companies to focus on and invest in upstream prevention and mitigation in relation to the management of rats and other pests.

c) NEA will trial the deployment of surveillance cameras with thermal detection capabilities

The trial will enable better rat surveillance at outdoor and back-lane areas. Camera data will help premises operators and stakeholders to better coordinate cleaning, waste management and rat control measures, and could aid in investigations and enforcement against culprits of improper disposal of waste.

d) NEA has expanded Project *Wolbachia* – Singapore to cover five additional sites

This increases Project *Wolbachia*'s coverage from 350,000 households in 2023 to 480,000 households by the first quarter of 2024 – an increase from 26 per cent to 35 per cent of households in Singapore. The five sites are Bukit Merah-Telok Blangah, Clementi-West Coast, Commonwealth, Holland, Marine Parade-Mountbatten.

NEA is also working closely with stakeholders to step up community awareness and vector control efforts amidst a rise in dengue cases this year.

Enhancing Industry Capability and Leveraging Technology

Innovation and technology remain at the forefront of driving transformation and capability development in the cleaning industry.

a) Singapore's first Enviro Tech Innovation Hub ("ETIH@TP") will open its doors in April 2024

The facility is an industry-led collaboration between Temasek Polytechnic, EMAS, and several cleaning companies.¹ The industry partners have committed more than \$1 million and six projects, to advance sustainable environmental cleaning and integrated facilities management and support the cleaning workforce.

b) NEA will extend the use of autonomous cleaning machines to more regions

In 2023, NEA partnered our cleaning service provider 800 Super, and technology provider Weston Robot, to trial an autonomous waterway cleaning machine to remove flotsam and keep our waterways clean.

The boat, currently deployed at Sungei Seletar, is fully charged by solar power and has improved productivity by 80 per cent. By end-2024, NEA will work with another service provider (M/s Chye Thiam Maintenance) to extend the initiative to the Central and North-East regions, when the new contracts for these regions commence.

c) NEA is exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Video Analytics

NEA is also exploring the use of AI to detect cleaning gaps and lapses in public roads and parks. Currently, lapses are detected via routine inspections, which is a manual process. The use of technologies will allow us to monitor bigger areas and improve productivity.²

d) Deployment of drain sensors

NEA will also be deploying sensors to monitor and alert cleaners of the condition/fullness level of drains and drop inlet chambers in certain parts of Singapore. This will allow for better deployment of cleaning manpower.

e) Supporting the cleaning workforce

NEA continues to work with the Tripartite Cluster for Cleaners (TCC) to encourage continuous learning and upskilling, to ensure that the cleaning workforce can keep pace with industry transformation. NEA has been partnering Workforce Singapore and SkillsFuture Singapore to assist companies in their workforce transformation journey, through existing job redesign schemes.

¹ Temasek Polytechnic, together with the Environmental Management Association of Singapore, and industry partners LS 2 Holdings Limited, Republic Power Pte Ltd, Cleantools Pte Ltd, Karcher Singapore Pte Ltd, and Nilfisk Pte Ltd, signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 7 June 2023 for development of the facility.

² NEA strives to maintain a high standard of cleanliness at public areas including expressways, excluding areas under the management of Town Councils. To augment our efforts in upholding these high standards, NEA uses mobile devices for audits and inspections, and cameras, sensors and systems that enable NEA officers to track cleaning vehicles' routes and monitor their cleaning performance remotely.

Rallying the Community

Environmental cleanliness is a shared responsibility. Although enforcement can deter anti-social behaviour, community involvement remains key to sustaining public health and cleanliness standards. Over the years, we have recognised the importance and value of engaging the community to ensure better cleaning performances and cleanliness levels of public areas.

a) Alternate roadside parking at private estates

In 2019, NEA conducted an alternate roadside parking trial at private estates to facilitate scheduled cleaning by mechanical road sweepers. Doing so enabled us to achieve savings in the time required for cleaning the roads. As at December 2023, 21 private estates have participated in the trial. Residents have also provided positive feedback that cleanliness levels at their estates have improved. NEA plans to double the number of participating private estates within the next two years.

b) Community Auditor (CA) Programme

In 2020, NEA piloted the CA programme, where residents from private estates volunteer as auditors to check on the performance of cleaning service providers and monitor cleanliness issues, enabling NEA to provide timely interventions. To date, NEA has recruited 86 CAs from more than 50 estates. NEA plans to reach out to more estates to get more CAs on board.

NEA will continue to work with our partners to empower all Singaporeans to upkeep good hygiene practices for the betterment of our society. The Public Hygiene Council will also launch the latest edition of the annual Keep Singapore Clean Campaign on 28 April this year. In this Year of Public Hygiene, the second edition of Go Green SG held across June and July will also focus on rallying the community to collectively keep Singapore clean and green. Towards the end of the year, in November, these efforts and contributions will be celebrated at the annual Clean & Green Singapore Day.

Chinese Translation of Key Terms

Term	Translation
Community Auditor Programme	社区审计师计划
Enviro Tech Innovation Hub	环境科技创新中心
Public Toilets Taskforce	公厕工作小组
Public Hygiene Council	公共卫生理事会
Year of Public Hygiene	公共卫生之年