

Outdated utility maps reason for water cuts, says MRT Corp

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) has refuted a Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor's (Syabas) claim that water disruptions are caused by MRT works, saying some utility companies do not have updated utility maps.

Taking utility companies to task over unmapped public utility services, MRT Corp said it had become a major issue in construction work, resulting in rising costs.

"It is unfair of Syabas to place the blame entirely on the MRT project. While it is true there are many cases of disruption in all types of public utilities, some are due to the presence of unmapped services.

"This means an area that isn't supposed to have utility lines running through them actually does, and this must be addressed by utility companies," MRT Corp chief executive officer Datuk Azhar Abdul Hamid said recently.

Public utility services are mapped by utility owners, and all construction work that requires temporary or permanent removal or relocation of these services are based on maps provided by the utility owners themselves.

Up to Sept 27, there were 97 reported cases of utility damage across the various MRT project sites. Syabas and Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) lead the list with 51 and 27 cases respectively, while Telekom Malaysia (TM)

has 11 reported cases.

"There are obviously costs associated with such incidents. Up to August, it cost us some RM22mil for repairs and additional work.

"We estimate that if things don't improve, MRT Corp will incur an additional RM150mil due to unmapped utilities," he said.

Azhar added that MRT Corp double-checked the data it received from owners through scans and physical checks during the "piloting works" stage. However, some utilities made of plastic may not be detected by the scanner.

This underlines the need to have updated and current maps issued out to contractors.

Azhar was also concerned over the intangible cost to the end-user of the utility, saying over and above the cost escalation, it could cause a lot of inconvenience to the public.

Azhar suggested that a body be formed by the appropriate agency to serve as a one-stop centre for such data.

"Perhaps it is time a body be set up to have a central repository of such information.

"Projects that require utility relocation must be compelled to submit their re-routed utility maps before the Certificate of Completion and Compliance is issued.

A one-stop centre for the location of all utility services can be a boon to the construction industry," he said