Efforts to Gain Understanding and Cooperation to plumbing

-Communication with Neighborhood toward Smooth plumbing –

O. MATSUBA*

* Bureau of Waterworks, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2-15-16 Misuji, Taito-Ku, Tokyo,
matsuba-osamu@waterworks.metro.tokyo.jp

Introduction

In Japan, it is only natural that if you turn the faucet, clean water pours out. Because modern Japanese are able to use tap water 24 hours per day at their convenience, it can be difficult to earn their understanding or cooperation regarding construction on waterworks infrastructure.

Japan in recent years has been struck by large-scale earthquakes like the Great East Japan Earthquake (2011) and the Kumamoto Earthquakes (2016), and there is an impending risk of an M7-class earthquake striking directly under Tokyo.

For this reason, we are working to actively replace pipelines with those equipped with earthquake-resistant joint pipes (Figure 1), so as to minimize damage to water pipelines and continue supplying water to the greatest extent possible even in the event of an earthquake or other disaster.

Just under half of the complaints received by the Waterworks Bureau pertain to construction. The understanding and cooperation of nearby residents is essential to the smooth execution of construction work, and how to obtain such understanding and cooperation is one of the tasks before us. For that reason, we will introduce some of the Waterworks Bureau's initiatives below.

Figure 1: Responds to movements in the ground such that the joints do not come loose.

Methods of smoothly conducting waterworks construction

In the interest of smoothly conducting construction work, the Tokyo Waterworks Bureau works with the construction company in charge of the work itself to use a variety of innovative communication tools and to adequately understand the surrounding environment.

1. Installing easy-to-understand construction signs （Figure 2, 3, 4）

・Visual PR for the mechanisms of the water pipes being installed underground.

Figure 2: Displayed an actual-size shielding machine on a noise-suppression panel to convey a sense of the size of the construction work underway.

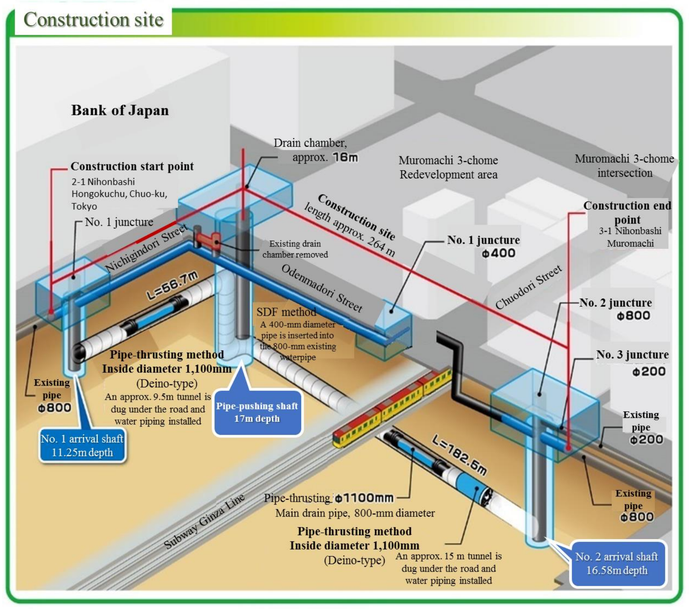

Figure 3: Notification sign with a 3D illustration.

Figure 4: Installed construction signs decorated with an anime character and marked in four languages in the Akihabara area, which draws sightseers from inside Japan and around the world seeking anime-themed products.

2. Understanding residents' opinions（Figure 5, 5-1）

・The opinions of residents living nearby construction sites serve as important hints regarding ways to improve construction.

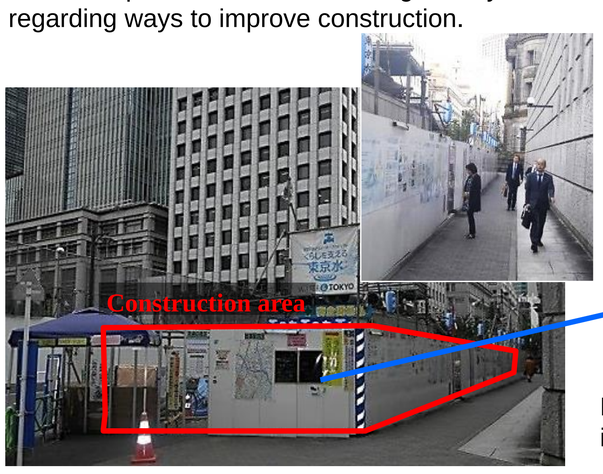

Figure 5: Install PR signage for waterworks along pedestrian walkways.

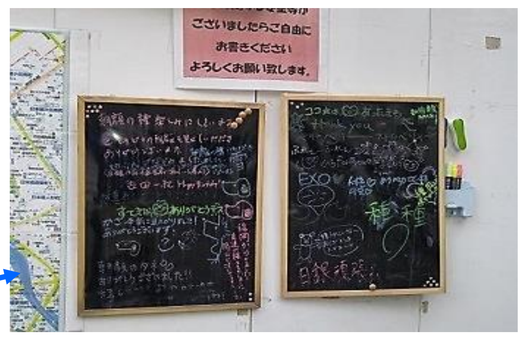

Figure 5-1: Build mutual communication by writing in responses to written opinions and comments.

3. Tours of waterworks construction sites（Figure 6, 7）

・Cultivate a feeling of familiarity with waterworks construction by enabling guests to see and interact with equipment and mechanisms on site.

Figure 6: Primary school students painting a water pipe before its installation.

Figure 7: Primary school students walking through a water pipe.

Holding competitions

Annual competitions held since 2005 with the aim of propagating initiatives that improve the image of waterworks construction throughout the bureau.

・Construction projects that implemented especially remarkable initiatives are rewarded at a separate awards ceremony (Figure 8) and published to the website.

・The high quality of remarkable initiatives is reflected in the construction project's performance rating, providing incentives in moving toward the next contract.

・Initiatives included in the competition are published in a booklet that is distributed to vendors and used on-site (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Awards ceremony for a competition.

Figure 9: Booklets published every other year to showcase case studies that boost the public image of waterworks construction.

Conclusion

Homes and infrastructure in Tokyo are densely concentrated, and construction will unavoidably have an impact on surrounding communities. Construction sites that actively work to improve their image can proceed with construction in a smooth manner with few complaints.

・Satisfaction with handling of waterworks construction has roughly tripled in the last decade (Figure 10).

・Waterworks construction sites are great at communicating with customers.

At Tokyo Waterworks, we will continue these initiatives and aim to achieve even more stable water supply services in order to smoothly proceed with all waterworks construction.

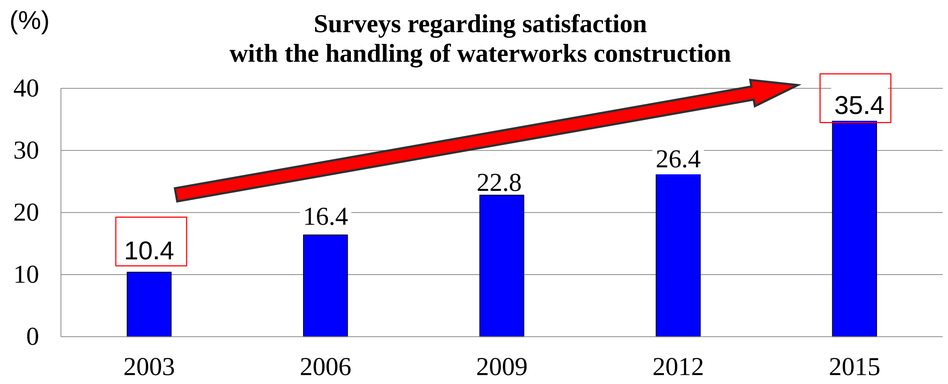

Figure 10: Tokyo Waterworks Diagnostic Customer Questionnaire (Tokyo Waterworks Bureau) Excerpt

References : 2016 *Tokyo Waterworks Management Plan 2016*. Bureau of Waterworks, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo.
2017 *Image Enhancement Cases in Waterworks*. Bureau of Waterworks, Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo.