

bizSAFE CONVENTION 2019

Progressive Builders' comprehensive and holistic safety culture balances quality, good safety records and cost efficiency

Safe and sound



PHOTO: TED CHEN

BY RACHEL TAN

Does lower costs necessarily mean having to cut corners, thus compromising safety standards? Construction company Progressive Builders proves otherwise.

Its prefabricated caisson — a watertight structure that keeps the underground working environment dry — was awarded the Workplace Safety and Health Innovation Bronze Award last year. It not only cuts costs, but also improves workplace safety and health for its workforce.

“Having the caisson fabricated off-site allows us to install it on-site in a shorter period and greatly reduce the workers' risk exposures while saving labour costs,” says Mr Ng Yek Meng (above), 55, managing director of Progressive Builders.

Prefabricating the caisson reduces the risk of welding electrocution and working at height for the beams and joints that hold it together. Fatigue and heat stress is also reduced by about 60 per cent.

“For us, safety is the number

one priority for all deliverables. All projects should be completed with good safety records, good quality and in a timely manner for our clients,” explains Mr Ng.

Progressive Builders won its first bizSAFE Enterprise Exemplary Award this year.

First incorporated in 1973, the company has maintained good safety records for over 40 years. Its main business activities are to provide project management and construction services for both public and private construction projects.

Progressive Builders' three-tower housing project at Sky Parc (Dawson C5) and park connector project Round Island Route Phase 1A were both awarded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents Health and Safety Gold Achievement Award in 2018.

Progressive Builders' Safety Management System comprises daily risk assessments and on-site briefings, in-house training and regular internal safety audits, as well as independent audits conducted once every six months by external

safety consultants to improve existing safety management system and practices.

The company's safety culture also involves digital transformation. For example, its engineers will conduct computer simulations of the construction sequences using Building Information Modelling and Virtual Design and Construction to identify potential major hazards before the project and either eradicate them or take extra safety precautions on-site to minimise the risk.

Another example is the use of mobile CCTVs mounted on robotic cars during the park connector project to inspect confined spaces in the sewer pipe lines. This eliminates their workers' exposure to harmful sewer gases.

Since 2018, the company has also signed up for SME Health+, a workplace health programme initiative by the Health Promotion Board.

Says Mr Ng: “We don't compromise safety for work progress. If our workforce is healthy, it also creates a safe and healthy work environment.”