

**For discussion
on 29 October 2001**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Proposed Tightening of Motor Vehicle Noise Standards under the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on a proposal to tighten the noise emission standards for motor vehicles under the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation.

BACKGROUND

2. The current noise emission standards for motor vehicles were introduced through the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation ("the Regulation") in 1996. The Regulation requires all motor vehicles, upon first registration in Hong Kong, to meet the European or Japanese noise standards stipulated in the Schedule to the Regulation.

3. In recent years, vehicle noise standards have been progressively tightened in both Europe and Japan. To keep vehicle noise standards in Hong Kong in line with the latest standards recognized internationally, it is proposed that the Schedule to the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation be amended to incorporate the latest noise standards adopted in Europe and Japan, from where most of our vehicles are imported.

THE PROPOSAL

4. We propose to tighten the vehicle noise standards contained in the Schedule to the Noise Control (Motor Vehicles) Regulation to conform to the latest European or Japanese noise standards indicated in the Appendix.

ENFORCEMENT

5. The vehicle noise emission control currently forms part of the “Motor Vehicle Type Approval” process, which also covers other matters including road worthiness and tailpipe emission requirements. Under existing procedures for new motor vehicles, the vehicle supplier has to submit a noise certification report for each vehicle type or model to the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Commissioner for Transport will grant approval for first registration only if DEP is satisfied with the report. Used motor vehicles need to be individually tested for noise compliance for the purpose of first registration as they may have been modified. The proposed tightening of the noise emission standards will not cause any change to the existing vehicle registration process.

CONSULTATION

6. We have consulted the trades concerned, including major transport operators, the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association and local motors associations which represent dealers of both new and used motor vehicles. They are generally supportive.

7. The Motor Traders Association of Hong Kong and the franchised bus companies expressed that the manufacturers would need some time to incorporate the proposed noise standards into certain categories of goods vehicles and buses that are specially designed for Hong Kong. They indicated that they would not object to the proposal provided that adequate lead time would be allowed for these vehicles.

8. We have carefully considered these views and have reached consensus with the trades concerned on the timing of implementation of the proposal. An appropriate grace period will be granted to allow sufficient lead time for manufacturers to incorporate the new standards into certain categories of goods vehicles and buses which are specially designed for Hong Kong. This should duly address the concerns of the trades.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The proposal will keep Hong Kong’s noise emission standards of motor vehicles in line with the latest standards recognized internationally. In

the long run, this will bring about a reduction in the overall traffic noise level in Hong Kong as the existing fleet is gradually replaced by vehicles which comply with the tightened standards.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

10. Vehicle manufacturers in Europe and Japan, from whom most of our vehicles are imported, already have to comply with these standards. The proposal is not expected to cause significant economic implications to vehicle imports to Hong Kong.

PUBLIC REACTION

11. As the proposed amendment will tighten the noise standards of motor vehicles, and help to reduce the overall traffic noise, it is anticipated that the general public will welcome the amendment.

IMPLEMENTATION

12. We aim to introduce the proposed amendment to the Legislative Council in December 2001. The proposed implementation date is 1 March 2002.

ADVICE SOUGHT

13. Members' views on the proposal are sought.

Environment and Food Bureau
October 2001

Proposed Prescribed Standards for Noise Emitted by Vehicles

For Motor Vehicles other than Motor Cycles

1. Council Directive 70/157/EEC of 6 February 1970 made by the Council of the European Communities on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles, as amended by Council Directive 92/97/EEC of 10 November 1992 and Commission Directive 96/20/EC of 27 March 1996.

2. Article 30 of the Safety Regulations for Road Vehicles made by the Ministry of Transport of Japan, as last amended by Ministry of Transport Ordinance No. 5 of 21 February 2000.

For Motor Cycles

1. Directive 97/24/EC of 17 June 1997 made by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union on certain components and characteristics of two or three-wheel motor vehicles.

2. Article 30 of the Safety Regulations for Road Vehicles made by the Ministry of Transport of Japan, as last amended by Ministry of Transport Ordinance No. 5 of 21 February 2000 and Article 65 of the Safety Regulations for Road Vehicles made by the Ministry of Transport of Japan, as last amended by Ministry of Transport Ordinance No. 66 of 20 December 1996.