

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Supplementary Information on Regulation of Traffic During Road Openings

Purpose

This note informs members of our considered response to the suggestions raised at the Transport Panel meeting on 15 March 2002 regarding –

- (a) installation of Red Light Cameras (RLC) together with portable traffic signals in Hong Kong;
- (b) logging of offending vehicles by roadworks agents for prosecution by Police; and
- (c) stepping up of enforcement actions and publicity campaign to arouse the awareness of motorists in complying with the red light of portable signals.

Red Light Cameras

2. At the request of members, we have sought the advice of the expert group formed under the Intelligent Transport System on the installation of RLC together with portable traffic signals at roadworks sites. The advice concurs with our earlier view that the suggestion is infeasible, owing to the technical and operational constraints detailed in LC Paper No. CB(1)1266/01-02(04).

3. Notwithstanding the above, we will continue to look for new technology development in installing enforcement cameras and in this regard, we are encouraging contractors to employ a newly-approved infra-red type of vehicle sensor for use with portable traffic signals. The infra-red vehicle sensor is capable of adjusting automatically the red/green timing according to the presence or absence of waiting vehicles detected. Motorists would have less incentive to disobey the red light as the new sensor is able to minimise the waiting time.

Roadworks Agents to Log Offending Vehicles

4. Roadworks agents are categorized into two groups, namely utility operators and contractors commissioned by Government to reconstruct or repair existing roads. Highways Department has examined members' suggestion of asking roadworks agents to deploy assistants to log the registration plates of offending vehicles jumping red lights at sites where portable traffic lights are used for onward transmission to Police for prosecution. The idea is considered not feasible for the following reasons –

- (a) Road opening activities carried out by the first group of roadworks agents are regulated through conditions stipulated in road excavation permits. We have consulted legal opinion which considers it inappropriate for Government to include a condition in the permit forcing the permittee to provide an assistant for the purpose of facilitating prosecution of traffic offences. Such a condition is irrelevant to the excavation works in general. Given that there are over 25,000 excavation permits issued each year, the cost implication will be enormous if each site is attended to for such specific purpose.
- (b) For the second group of roadworks agents, we may include a specification into the roadworks contract requiring the contractor to provide a traffic control attendant to log offending vehicles when the need arises and to pass on the information to Police for prosecution. Given the low occurrence rate of such offence, potential risk to the attendants, substantial cost involved and administrative implications of monitoring the performance of the attendants, it is however considered not cost-effective to include this requirement in roadworks contracts.

Stepping Up Enforcement Action and Launching a Publicity Campaign

5. There were only six convicted cases of disobeying portable traffic signals in the year 2001 and no prosecution case has been recorded for the current year. Notwithstanding the low occurrence rate of such offences, district traffic teams of Police pay frequent visits to the sites of major roadworks where temporary traffic signals are placed. Police will also launch publicity programmes, including carnivals and competitions, exhibitions and multi-media services on board public transport, street

education projects, talks and seminars, to arouse the awareness of motorists of the need to observe traffic regulations and to spread the road safety and “smart driving” message to the general public.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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