

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Supplementary Information **Measures to enhance the safety of bus operations**

Purpose

This paper provides Members with the following information:

- (a) overseas experience on installation of seat belts on all seats in a bus; and
- (b) number of different levels of warnings issued and the number of dismissals made by the franchised bus operators in the past five years.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport on 28 November 2003, Transport Department (“TD”) mentioned that according to TD’s research on overseas experience, the additional safety benefit of installing seat belts on all seats might not be as great as envisaged. TD agreed to provide relevant information for Members’ reference. The information is at Annex A.

Annex A

3. Members also requested the Administration to provide information on the number of different levels of warnings issued and the number of dismissals made by the franchised bus operators in the past five years. The requested information is provided at Annex B.

Annex B

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
May 2004

**Overseas experience on
installation of seat belts on franchised buses**

Transport Department has collected information on requirements of installation of seat belts on buses in some overseas countries including Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, European Union, New York State of U.S.A., Canada and Singapore. It is observed that most countries examined require the installation of seat belts on driver's seat but do not require the installation of seat belts on all other seats of buses. For countries where the seat belt requirement applies, urban bus routes and urban bus with standing passengers are exempted. The requirements are summarised below –

Countries	Remarks
Australia	Seat belt shall be installed on driver's seat on all buses. As regards other seats, installation of seat belts is required for exposed seats but urban routes are exempted from the requirement.
United Kingdom	Installation of seat belts on all seats is required for buses first used on or after 1.10.2001. However, such requirement does <u>not</u> apply to buses designed for urban use with standing passengers.
New Zealand	All light motor vehicles manufactured on or after 1.10.2003 shall have seat belts installed on all seats. However, this requirement does not apply to buses with over 12 seats and exceeding 3.5 tonnes.
European Union	The requirements to install seat belts on all seats will apply to all new vehicles including buses on the market from July 2004 onwards. The new requirements are expected to be implemented across member states in 2006. However, requirements for seat belts on urban buses will be left to member state governments to decide.
New York State of U.S.A.	Large school buses manufactured after 1 July 1987 shall have seat belts installed on all seats.

Countries	Remarks
Canada	A bus with a gross vehicular weight greater than 4,536 kg shall have seat belt installed for the driver seat but seat belts for the other passenger seats are not required.
Singapore	Installation of seat belts is required for the driver's seat and the specified passenger seats* .

2. Studies on fitting of seat belts on buses conducted in Australia and Canada indicated that the additional safety benefit of installing seat belt on all seats in a bus might not be as great as envisaged due to the following reasons:

- (a) unrestrained passengers can cause injury to other passengers who have fastened the seat belts. Hence, installation of seat belts might not be an effective safety measure if standees are allowed on buses; and
- (b) overall effectiveness of seat belts also depends on whether the belts are used by all passengers. It is difficult to ensure that all passenger use seat belts on buses, e.g. passengers carrying large bags and parcels may find fastening seat belt inconvenient and may not bother to do so. Passengers sitting on aisle seats may also find it inconvenient to unbuckle seat belts to allow passengers in and out of window seats.

Transport Department
May 2004

* "Specified passenger's seat" means:

- (a) a forward-facing front seat alongside the driver's seat; and in the case of a vehicle which has more than one such seat, the one furthest from the driver's seat; or
- (b) if the vehicle has no such seat as mentioned in (a) above, the forward-facing front seat for a passenger which is foremost in the vehicle and furthest from the driver's seat, unless there is a fixed partition separating such seat from the space in front of it alongside the driver's seat.

**Number of different levels of warnings issued and
number of dismissals made by franchised bus operators in the past 5 years**

In general, bus companies have established guidelines on disciplinary procedures. According to bus companies, all drivers, irrespective of their years of services, are subject to the same guidelines and disciplinary procedures. Any drivers who are not satisfied with disciplinary action may appeal. Details of different levels of warnings issued and number of dismissals made by the franchised bus operators in the past 5 years are set out in the tables below. Some operators have issued a large number of warnings because they employ a large number of drivers and they adopt the practice of giving repeated verbal and written warnings to the same drivers before dismissing drivers who persisted in committing misconduct.

Kowloon Motor Bus Co. (1933) Ltd.

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	3,028	508	3,536	52
2000	2,407	473	2,880	81
2001	2,403	454	2,857	79
2002	2,059	384	2,443	81
2003	2,067	551	2,618	73

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 8,229

Long Win Bus Company Limited

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	13	10	23	0
2000	105	17	122	0
2001	70	17	87	0
2002	149	29	178	1
2003	106	24	130	0

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 304

Citybus Limited (Hong Kong Island and cross-habour services)

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Final Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	692	293	66	1,051	36
2000	469	301	74	844	21
2001	416	262	58	736	16
2002	654	311	58	1,023	18
2003	984	340	66	1,390	10

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 1,724

Citybus Limited (Airport and North Lantau bus services)

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Final Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	165	57	12	234	10
2000	113	59	19	191	7
2001	148	81	21	250	8
2002	135	68	30	233	6
2003	223	51	18	292	5

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 387

New World First Bus Services Limited

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	603	194	797	31
2000	356	808	1,164	26
2001	329	664	993	44
2002	465	552	1017	25
2003	484	375	859	15

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 1,752

New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited

Year	Verbal Warning	Written Warning	Total	Dismissal
1999	12	5	17	4
2000	18	6	24	3
2001	11	6	17	4
2002	11	8	19	2
2003	13	9	22	3

Strength of drivers as at 31.12.2003: 106

Transport Department
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