

25 May 2005

Ms Miranda HON  
Clerk, Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council

Dear Ms HON,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the  
results of value for money audits (Report No. 44)  
Chapter 2 : Diesel vehicle emission controls**

With reference to your letter dated 17 May 2005 asking for additional information on the above subject, I would like to provide the required information as follows for the consideration of the PAC members :-

- (a) What was the actual situation of staff shortage in those years and the reason for that; whether the problem of staff shortage has been resolved; if so, how; if not, how the problem can be tackled ?*

Each chassis dynamometer requires 1 Motor Vehicle Examiner (MVE) and 2 Vehicle Testers (VT) to carry out the tests. In the past couple of years, 3 Motor Vehicle Examiners (MVEs) have retired from the service, leaving 26 MVEs dealing with the vehicle inspection work as against 29 MVEs in 2002. We have a further 22 MVEs working in other areas. We can redeploy VT's to this task by reorganizing our work.

Since the beginning of the year, we have implemented some interim measures to enable more dynamometer tests to be conducted. We have redeployed 1 MVE from other team to carry out the dynamometer test.

This is not a satisfactory long-term solution as it would affect other areas of work such as the updating of tester manuals. Thus we are exploring the feasibility of including further work in our current management contract for vehicle inspection at New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre which is to expire by November 2005. This will help relieve some staff for the dynamometer smoke tests.

***(b) What actions will be taken by TD to ensure that both dynamometers will be fully utilized ?***

Under (a) above, we have deployed staff to operate the first dynamometer. We will closely monitor utilization rates. Since January we have achieved our target 10% inspection rate on operational days (the dynamometer is suspended from time to time for repairs).

The second dynamometer will be completed in end 2005. Taking the chance of the expiry of the current management contract for New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre in November 2005, TD is now exploring the feasibility of including further inspection activities in the contract to relieve staff to perform the smoke test using the second dynamometer. We will closely monitor utilization.

***(c) What are the progress and the implementation timetable on the uniform set of smoke test procedures and a common smoke test standard be adopted for the TD and the EPD ?***

TD's current practice of using a combination of FAT and dynamometer check for diesel vehicle annual examination is a cost effective means to regulate smoke emission during annual inspections of vehicles. We have no plan to cease the FAT tests. EPD test centers only use the dynamometer check, but for vehicles which have been identified as emitting smoke. The smoke test procedures for the TD and EPD dynamometers are the same.

EPD and TD plan to consult the trade in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2005 on the common smoke test standard with an aim to initiate actions on the legislative amendment by end 2005.

I hope the above information meets with your requirements. Please contact me or Ms Carolina Yip (Deputy Commissioner for Transport) at 2829 5202 if you require more information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Footman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "R".

( Robert Footman )  
Commissioner for Transport

cc Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works  
Director of Environmental Protection  
Director of Audit