

**Report on follow up of the Motion on
Safety of Franchised Bus Service Operations**

Legislative Council Panel on Transport Meeting on 29 October 2004

PURPOSE

This paper reports the results of the review of the Guidelines on the working schedule of franchised bus drivers (“the Guidelines”), and provides the information requested by Members at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport (“the Panel”) on 29 October 2004.

BACKGROUND

2. On 29 October 2004, the Panel carried a motion asking the Administration to study revising the Guidelines such that -

- (a) maximum duty (including all breaks) should be reduced from not exceeding 14 hours to not exceeding 10 hours;
- (b) driving duty (i.e. maximum duty minus all breaks of 30 minutes or more) should be reduced from not exceeding 11 hours to not exceeding 8 hours;
- (c) meal time schedule for drivers should not deviate from normal human biological clocks; and
- (d) schedules for driving routes should be given to bus drivers seven days in advance,

to enhance safety of franchised bus service operations.

3. At the same meeting, Members also requested the Administration to provide statistics on bus accident rates against the number of bus trips operated, bus accident rates of bus routes operated by Kowloon Motor Bus Co. (1933) Ltd. (“KMB”) and New World First Bus Services Limited

("NWFB") in different environments, and the compliance rate of the Guidelines over the past three years.

4. On 24 November 2004, the Administration submitted a report to the Panel on the progress of the review of the Guidelines. This report summarises the review findings and recommendations, and provides the requested information in respect of accident rates and compliance rates of the Guidelines.

REVIEW ON THE GUIDELINES

Shortening of maximum duty and driving duties

5. The Transport Department ("TD") and the franchised bus operators have jointly reviewed the maximum duty and driving duty of franchised bus drivers. The major findings are as follows -

- (a) in the past five years, there was in general a downward trend in the number of bus accidents per km operated, per bus trip and per passenger carried. Moreover, most of the accidents were minor;
- (b) there was no direct correlation between bus accident rates and the number of hours that the drivers had been on duty before the accidents. A summary of the accident rates and the number of driving hours before accidents for KMB, Citybus (Franchise 1) ("CTB(F1)"), Citybus (Franchise 2) ("CTB(F2)"), NWFB, Long Win Bus Company Limited ("LW") and New Lantao Bus company (1973) Limited ("NLB") is at Annex A;

- (c) the average duty hour¹ and driving hour² of a franchised bus driver in a day are 10.3 and 8.5 hours respectively, which are way below the maximum of 14 and 11 hours specified in the Guidelines respectively;
- (d) most of the franchised bus drivers working long duties of 12 to 14 hours in a day are on split duties. They have a long mid-day rest of about 3 hours; and
- (e) according to TD's research on overseas practices on the working hours of bus drivers (Annex B), the length of maximum duty of bus drivers ranges from 9 to 16 hours per day in various cities; and the maximum driving duty ranges from 7 to 13 hours per day. TD's current Guidelines lie within the aforesaid ranges.

Annex B

6. The franchised bus companies have consulted their driver unions or Joint Consultative Committee ("JCC") on the revisions proposed in paragraph 2 above. The driver unions or JCC do not support a shortening of maximum duty or driving hours. While some of them have not offered reasons to support their view, others have given one or more of the following reasons -

- (a) the current working or driving hours in the Guidelines are acceptable from the safety point of view;
- (b) the proposed shortening of the working and driving hours will reduce the income of the drivers and will have an adverse impact on staff morale; and/or

¹ The time period between a driver reports and finishes duty on a working day. The working hours include all rest time of the driver during this period.

² The time period a driver works a day after deducting breaks lasting for 30 minutes or more, but includes short breaks which are less than 30 minutes.

(c) drivers are generally satisfied with their driving duties, and swapping of duties are allowed for those who are not satisfied with their own duty arrangements.

7. In addition to the aforesaid reasons, all franchised bus operators do not support changing the existing maximum duty or driving hour arrangement because of the cost implication arising from the requirement of additional drivers for some 30% of extra duties, which will have a consequential impact on the fare level and the competitiveness of franchised bus service.

Meal time schedule

8. Due to the need to provide adequate bus service to meet passenger demand, it is necessary to schedule drivers' meal breaks during different hours. The franchised bus driver unions consider that most of the existing meal break arrangements are acceptable. They would continue to work with their managements for improvement and do not consider a guideline on this aspect necessary. In response to the complaints made by a driver union of NWFB about meal break arrangements, NWFB has already reached an understanding with their unions that bus drivers may identify specific undesirable meal break arrangements for the company to consider appropriate adjustment.

9. As all bus companies have agreed to consider adjusting the schedule of undesirable meal breaks as far as possible, TD and the franchised bus operators consider it unnecessary to draw up a specific guideline on scheduling of meal time.

Advance notification of changes of driving schedule

10. At present, franchised bus companies normally give 4 to 7 days' notice to drivers of changes of regular driving schedules. A union of NWFB asked for a 7-day advance notice of changes in driving schedules and the company has agreed to this arrangement. The franchised bus

driver unions are generally satisfied with the current arrangements. Some unions consider that imposition of a rigid guideline on advance notification of driving schedules will be less flexible.

11. The franchised bus operators do not consider a guideline on advance notification necessary because -

- (a) driver scheduling arrangements vary among bus companies and their existing systems on notifying drivers on schedule changes have been operating satisfactorily; and
- (b) the proposed guideline may limit their ability to respond quickly to ad hoc and unforeseeable changes.

OTHER INFORMATION

Statistics on accident rates

Annex C

12. The statistics on accident rates in terms of km operated, number of bus trips operated and passengers carried are at Annex C. All the statistics indicate that, in the past five years, there was in general a slight downward trend in the bus accidents rate.

Bus accident rates in different transport and road network

Annex D

13. The accident rates of an individual company are affected by many factors, such as different transport and road networks. A breakdown of accident rates of different route groups operated by KMB and NWFB is at Annex D. As regards KMB, the accident rate per km operated for urban routes is much higher than that for rural routes and highway routes. For NWFB, the accident rate of buses operating in the highly urbanised northern shore of Hong Kong Island is higher than that of those serving less densely populated areas. It is not uncommon that there might be higher accident rates on busy roads with heavy traffic as well as intensive

pedestrian and kerbside activities. The hilly terrain and narrow and winding roads on Hong Kong Island may also be attributable to the higher accident rate.

Compliance with the Guidelines on Working Schedule for Bus Drivers

14. TD requires the franchised bus companies to submit quarterly reports on the compliance rate in respect of the Guidelines on the Working Schedule for bus drivers. A summary showing the compliance rates in the past three years is at Annex E. As at September 2004, except for NWFB, all franchised bus operators fully complied with the Guidelines. NWFB fully complied with Guidelines B³ and D⁴ while its compliance with Guidelines A⁵ and C⁶ is improving. NWFB has agreed to fully comply with Guidelines A and C by early 2005.

15. TD will, together with the franchised bus operators, continue to closely monitor the accident statistics, analyse causes and trends of bus accidents, and map out improvement measures to enhance bus safety where necessary. TD will also review the Guidelines from time to time and keep track of the practices of bus safety arrangements in overseas countries for continuous improvement.

March 2005

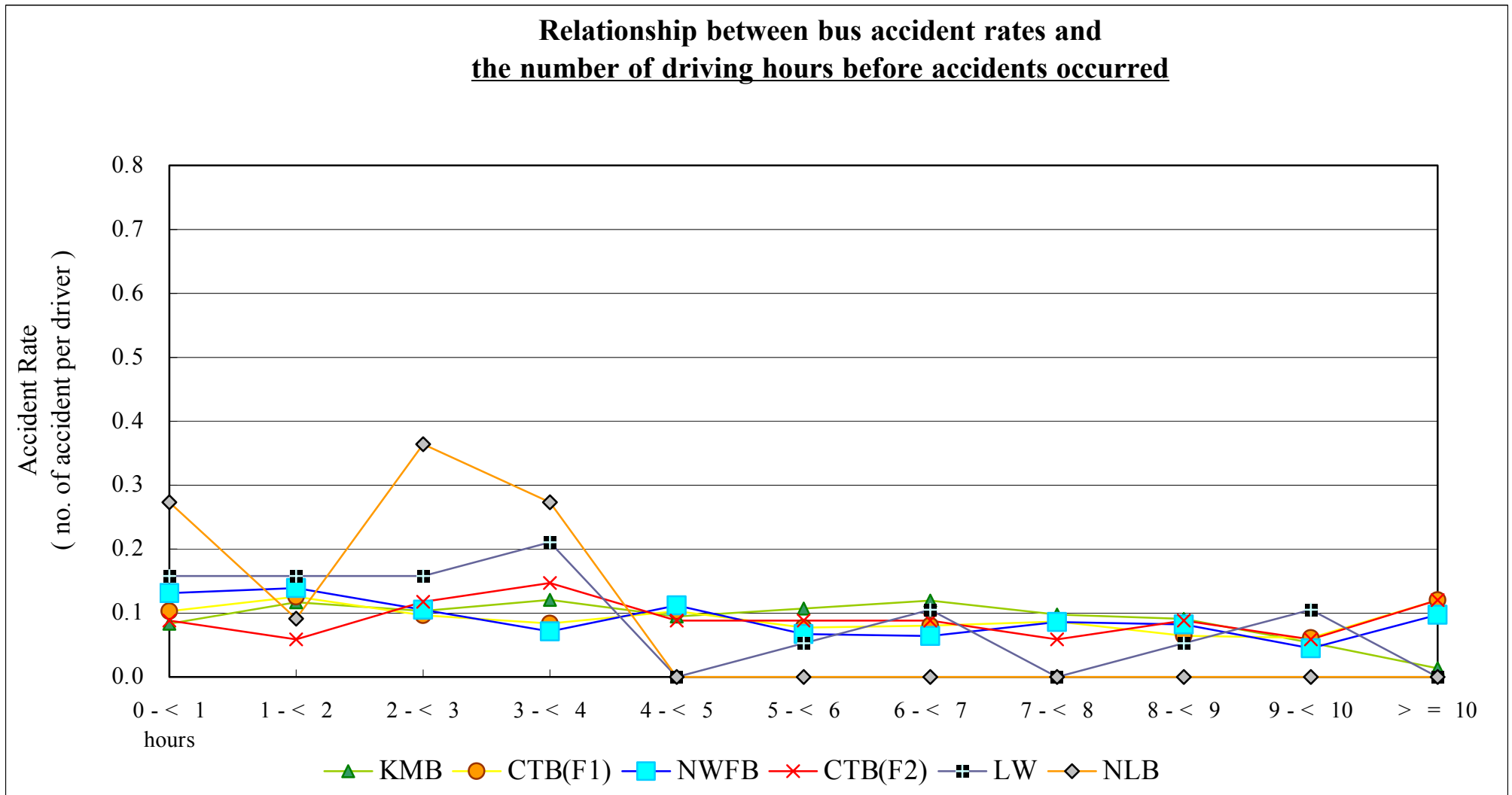
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

³ Guideline B refers to “maximum duty (including all breaks) should not exceed 14 hours.”

⁴ Guideline D refers to “break between successive working days.” (The break between successive working days has been extended from 8 hours to 9 hours since 1.5.2004.)

⁵ Guideline A refers to “drivers should have a break of at least 30 minutes after 6 hours of duty and within that 6-hour duty, the drivers should have total service breaks of at least 20 minutes.”

⁶ Guideline C refers to “driving duty (i.e. maximum duty minus all breaks of 30 minutes or more) should not exceed 11 hours.”



Note: Figures were based on bus accidents occurred in a 12-month period in 2002/03.

Summary of overseas requirements on bus driver working hours and rest breaks

City / Country	Maximum duty hours per day	Service break requirement	Maximum Driving Duty per day	Break between 2 successive working days
(1) San Mateo County, California, USA ⁽¹⁾	16 hrs	Rest / meal break after 6 hr of work	10 hrs	8 hrs
(2) London, UK ⁽²⁾	16 hrs	Rest break after 5.5 hrs of work	10 hrs	10 hrs
(3) British Columbia, Canada ⁽¹⁾	15 hrs	Nil	13 hrs	8 hrs
(4) New Zealand ⁽²⁾	14 hrs	Rest / meal break after 5.5 hrs of work	11 hrs	9 hrs
(5) Queensland, Australia ⁽¹⁾	14 hrs	Rest break of 30 minutes after 5 hrs	12 hrs	10 hrs
(6) Berlin, Germany ⁽²⁾	14 hrs	Minimum 12 minutes rest break after 4.5 hrs of work. Meal break after 6 hours of work	10 hrs	10 hrs
(7) Hong Kong ⁽²⁾	14 hrs	Minimum 30 minutes rest break after 6 hrs of work, and within that 6-hr duty, service breaks of at least 20 minutes.	11 hrs	9 hrs

City / Country	Maximum duty hours per day	Service break requirement	Maximum Driving Duty per day	Break between 2 successive working days
(8) New York City, USA ⁽²⁾	14 hrs	Meal break after 5 hrs 59 minutes of work	10 hrs	8 hrs
(9) Republic of Slovenia ⁽²⁾	13 hrs	(a) Rest break after 4 hrs 30 minutes of work (b) Meal break not stated	9 hrs	Nil
(10) Montreal, Canada ⁽²⁾	12 hrs 30 minutes	Nil	Nil	8 hrs
(11) Switzerland ⁽¹⁾	12 hrs	(a) Rest break after half of work time (b) 3 rest breaks	7 hrs	12 hrs
(12) Ireland ⁽²⁾	12 hrs	Rest / meal break after 4 hrs 30 min of work	11 hrs	10 hrs
(13) Norway ⁽¹⁾	9 hrs	(a) Rest break after 4 hr 30 min of work (b) Meal break not stated	9 hrs	11 hrs
(14) Denmark ⁽¹⁾	Nil	(a) Rest break after 4 hr 30 min (b) No restriction on meal break	9 hrs	11 hrs

(1) Information as at March 2004

(2) Information as at November 2004

Accident Rates in Terms of km Operated, Number of Bus Trips Operated and Passengers Carried

Franchised Bus Operators	No. of accidents per million km operated					No. of accidents per million bus trips					No. of accidents per million passengers				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
KMB	3.25	3.03	2.85	2.79	2.73	48.69	46.38	45.27	45.32	44.80	1.05	1.00	0.99	0.96	0.98
LW	1.35	0.08	1.03	1.01	0.78	46.51	35.29	38.17	39.82	31.07	1.89	1.33	1.32	1.23	0.99
CTB(F1)	5.33	5.48	5.50	5.05	4.56	77.00	80.33	82.45	76.85	70.94	1.72	1.72	1.70	1.58	1.50
CTB(F2)	1.49	1.70	1.76	1.37	1.48	59.70	72.41	75.44	58.62	64.29	3.25	3.12	2.92	2.13	2.38
NWFB	5.77	5.97	4.91	4.21	4.50	77.78	81.03	70.35	61.97	66.82	2.07	1.86	1.54	1.42	1.61
NLB	0.78	1.02	0.41	1.56	1.15	14.50	18.70	7.06	25.37	17.89	0.73	0.91	0.29	0.89	0.62

Comparison of Accident rate
by types of bus routes operated by KMB and NWFB

(No. of accident per million km during the period from 1.7.2003 to 30.6.2004)

Types of bus route	KMB	NWFB
Urban routes (Note 1)	4.51	5.11
Rural Routes	2.45(Note 2)	4.76(Note 2)
Highways Routes	1.49	-

Notes

Note 1 : Urban routes are routes with over 50% of journey distance serving densely populated urban areas in Kowloon and northern shore of Hong Kong Island.

Note 2: KMB rural routes are routes with over 50% of journey distance mostly serving new towns in the New Territories. NWFB's rural routes are routes serving Southern District, a big number of which are operating on hilly terrain and narrow and winding roads.

Guideline C

Driving duty (i.e. maximum duty minus all breaks of 30 minutes or more) should not exceed 11 hours.

Year	KMB	CTB F1	NWFB	CTB F2	LW	NLB
2001	99.99%	99.5%	97.3%	100%	100%	100%
2002	99.97%	99.9%	97.3%	100%	100%	100%
2003	100%	100%	87.2%	100%	100%	100%
2004 (Jan-Sep)	100%	100%	96.5%	100%	100%	100%

Guideline D

Break between successive working days *

Year	KMB	CTB F1	NWFB	CTB F2	LW	NLB
2001	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2002	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2003	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
2004 (Jan-Sep)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note: The compliance rate is the % of driving duties that meets the Guideline concerned.

* The break between successive working days has been extended from 8 hours to 9 hours since 1.5.2004. The table above shows the compliance rate of a 8-hour break during the period from 1.1.2001 to 30.4.2004 and a 9-hour break from 1.5.2004 onwards.