

Legislative Council Panel on Transport.
Legislative Council Secretariat.
3/F, Citibank Tower.
Hong Kong.

(2121-0420)

By Fax & Post.

13th December, 2004.

Dear Sir,

Measures to improve road safety at traffic lights

With the recent fatal accident involving franchised mini buses running red traffic lights the Association is of the following opinion:

Whilst, in an ideal situation, the best interests of the community would be served by an immediate ban from driving for the offender this is, in practise, an unrealistic and politically unachievable goal.

Therefore the Association supports the options of either an 8 point penalty on the offender's licence **OR** the imposition of 5 penalty points with an enhanced, fixed penalty, fine of HK\$1,000.

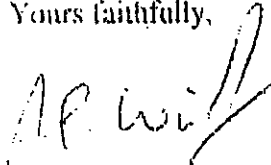
To be completely effective either of these options will need concerted action in the areas of driver education and strict enforcement, initially as a blanket road safety focus campaign by the HKP, and then on an on-going, targeted, basis of known black-spots.

It should be remembered that there is no excuse for this type of driving behaviour -- the few seconds gained can and do result in serious injury and death with all its commensurate costs, both financial and emotional, to the community at large and especially the family of the innocent victim.

There is nothing to be gained from a "count down" system as experience in other jurisdictions, especially the Australian study, has shown -- in fact it tended to increase the accident rates in the trial areas. It must be remembered that the traffic light system as employed in Hong Kong is of the international standard and incorporates an amber signal between green and red as a warning to be prepared to stop at the red signal -- it is *not* an invitation to accelerate to "try to beat the lights" -- this is where the education of drivers is absolutely necessary.

Whilst we understand that there is considerable opposition to any enhancement of the penalties from the various minibus owners and drivers associations it must not be forgotten that minibuses are annually involved in a disproportionately high number of accidents compared to their numbers on the road – the self interests of the few *must not be allowed* to outweigh the general good of the Hong Kong community.

Yours faithfully,



Andrew P. Windebank.
Chief Executive,
Hong Kong Automobile Association.

cc: General Committee and Advisors.