

**For Discussion
15 December 2006**

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

**Response to the Proposed Amendments
to the Road Traffic Ordinance Raised by
the Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo**

Purpose

This paper sets out the response to the proposed amendments to the Road Traffic Ordinance raised by the Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (LC Paper No. CB(1)375/06-07(01)).

Proposals for Mandatory Installation of Reversing Video Device on Goods Vehicles and Other Related Proposals on Reversing Safety

2. We are very concerned about the recent traffic accidents involving reversing goods vehicles. Nevertheless, we have to point out that in the past five years, the average number of traffic accidents involving reversing goods vehicles was 187 per year, accounting for about 1.2% of the total number of traffic accidents. In the first 11 months of this year, there were 159 such accidents, which was slightly lower than that in the past years. In the past five years, the average number of fatal accidents was 7.4 per year. This year, there were 7 such fatal accidents in the first 11 months. The figure is comparable to that of past years.

3. We will continue our efforts to enhance the safety of reversing goods vehicles. We maintain an open mind to suggestions on installing reversing aids and other measures to enhance safe reversing, and have already started our preliminary work for the legislative exercise. On the technical side, for instance, we are examining how the positioning and number of parking sensors, which are ultrasonic and radar operated, will affect the detection ranges and blind spots. Regarding reversing video systems, we are examining the

positioning of the lens. Whilst affecting the effectiveness and reliability of the images produced, the positioning of the lens depends on the vehicle types and body forms. We will continue to examine with manufacturers of vehicles and these devices in regard to the setting of the relevant technical standards and specifications, such that clear statutory requirements can be put in place for effective implementation. We will also consult the trades.

4. We are also aware of the report¹ submitted by the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to the U.S. Congress in November this year. The report has pointed out that reversing video devices are more effective than rear mirrors and parking sensors. It has, however, also pointed out that video devices have their own limitations. For example, their performance can be affected by weather conditions and sun glare. Besides, the speed of the reversing vehicle, the level of driver attention and the reaction time of the driver will affect the effectiveness of these devices. Therefore, the U.S. authorities have to further examine and evaluate the effectiveness of such systems and develop performance specifications for the technologies. Our approach is in fact similar to that of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

5. As for other suggestions on enhancing safe reversing, we will take them into consideration when we examine how we can make the installation of these devices a statutory requirement.

6. In the meantime, we will continue to encourage the goods vehicle trade to install these devices voluntarily. We will also examine the effectiveness of these devices in conjunction with the trade.

Administrative Measures for Enhancing Safe Reversing in Priority Road Sections

7. The Transport Department (TD) has started its consultation with the District Councils to identify the priority road sections in each district. TD will consider on a case-by-case basis whether it is necessary to implement additional measures to enhance pedestrian safety, such as provision of facilities

¹ "Vehicle Backover Avoidance Technology Study – Report to Congress" by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, Washington, DC 20590 (November, 2006). (<http://www.nhtsa.gov>)

to segregate pedestrians and vehicles, installation of signs to warn drivers and pedestrians of possible reversing vehicles, restrictions on the time or location of loading/unloading activities or restrictions on access by certain types of vehicles, taking into account the physical environment, practical needs of local residents and commercial activities, the knock-on impact on nearby roads, as well as the views of the local community.

Mandatory Driving Improvement Courses

8. Our proposals are set out in a separate paper submitted to this Panel.

Raising the Penalty for Causing Death by Dangerous Driving

9. Our proposals are set out in a separate paper submitted to this Panel.

Raising the Penalty for Drink Driving Offences

10. Our proposals are set out in a separate paper submitted to this Panel.

Lowering the Age for Submission of Medical Examination Report

11. Statistics indicate that the traffic accidents directly caused by the health conditions of drivers are often individual incidents. Take 2005 as an example, there were only nine such accidents, which was less than 0.06% of the total number of traffic accidents in the year. Among them, only one case involved a driver aged 55 or above.

12. Besides, we have also made reference to the age requirements for submission of medical examination reports when issuing driving licences to applicants in some countries (including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore and the United States). We found that the statutory

age requirements in most of these countries are 70 to 80. In view that the proposal would bring significant impact to all drivers aged between 55 and 70 in Hong Kong, we have reservations on this proposal.

Advice Sought

13. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
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