

THB(T)L 2/14/10 Pt.6

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5 February 2008

Mr Andy Lau
Clerk to Subcommittee
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways
Panel on Transport
Legislative Council Secretariat
[Fax: 2121 0420]

Dear Mr Lau,

**Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

**West Rail Train Voltage Transformer Fire Incident
on 14 February 2007**

During the discussion of the captioned subject at the meeting of the Subcommittee on 4 May 2007, some Members requested Government to provide supplementary information on three issues. Our reply is now set out below.

More speedy action to deal with fire incidents and review the procedures relating to isolation of high voltage traction current

Before the merger, the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) has already convened a number of meetings with the Fire Services Department (FSD) to review the handling of the incident, and proposed further enhancement measures to improve the handling of such incidents taken into account the lessons learnt.

In accordance with established procedures, the railway corporation should immediately report confirmed fire incidents to FSD. Following the 14 February incident, pre-merger KCRC had already instructed Operations Control Centre staff who were responsible for making notifications to relevant departments that once a fire incident was confirmed, they should first notify FSD such that FSD could take immediate action.

In addition, when large-scale or serious incidents occur, railway corporation and FSD will set up joint command centres on site to coordinate incident handling. In order to speed up the set up of these joint command centres, pre-merger KCRC and FSD had already pre-designated the locations for these centres at different stations/rail sections so as to further enhance the efficiency of incident handling.

As regards the isolation of high voltage traction current, pre-merger KCRC and FSD had also agreed that on-site communication between the two parties should be strengthened. This would enable FSD to get hold of the most updated information, including the arrangement relating to the isolation of high voltage traction current, more efficiently and more accurately. FSD would then be in a better position to prepare and implement appropriate rescue plans according to the situation.

In October 2007, FSD, the Police, the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate and pre-merger KCRC conducted a large-scale drill simulating the 14 February incident, and successfully tested out these enhancement measures.

Replace the voltage transformers as soon as practicable

To ensure that the voltage transformers are of high quality and standard, pre-merger KCRC required time to critically examine with the train manufacturer and the supplier of the new voltage transformers issues relating to design, manufacturing, testing and installation. At present, the design of the new voltage transformer has been completed and the replacement works of these new oil-free and explosion-proof voltage transformers is planned to commence in April 2008.

In the light of the requests from Members for early replacement of voltage transformers, MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has reviewed the programme and the time required for the replacement works. According to MTRCL, the voltage transformers will be delivered by batches. The first batch will be used in the West Rail Line with replacement estimated for completion by mid 2008. The next batch will be used in the East Rail Line and the Ma On Shan Line with replacement estimated for completion by end 2008.

Train electricity supply system of pre-merger MTR system

Trains of the pre-merger MTR system use 1,500V direct current electricity. This is different from trains of the West Rail Line which use 25,000V alternating current electricity. As such, no voltage transformers are required for pre-merger MTRC trains.

Please circulate this letter to Members for their information.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Hedy Chu)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. MTRCL (Attn: Ms Ida Leung)
EMSD (Attn: Mr K M Woo)

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