
INFORMATION NOTE

Whether passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways in selected overseas places

1. Background

1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on Transport on 28 January 2008, the Panel discussed safety issues relating to passengers standing on buses operating on expressways. During the deliberations, Members asked the Government to review whether passengers should be allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways in Hong Kong, and requested the Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) to conduct a research on whether passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways in overseas places, and measures taken to address the safety of standing passengers.

1.2 Against this background, enquiries were sent to the major cities of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States and Singapore.¹ As at the publication of this information note, Queensland of Australia, Wellington of New Zealand, Toronto and Vancouver of Canada, San Francisco of the United States, and Singapore have responded to RLSD's enquiries. The findings are presented in the Tables below.

¹ Enquiries were sent to the relevant government departments in New South Wales and Queensland of Australia, Auckland and Wellington of New Zealand, Toronto and Vancouver of Canada, London of the United Kingdom, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco of the United States, and Singapore.

Table 1 – Whether passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways

	Australia	New Zealand	Canada		United States	Singapore
	Queensland	Wellington	Toronto	Vancouver	San Francisco	
Whether passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p> <p>However, according to Section 12 of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2000, there are two circumstances restricting passengers standing on buses:</p> <p>(a) no passengers are allowed to stand for more than 20 km; and</p> <p>(b) the roads the buses may travel on should not be in a steep environment.</p>	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p>	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p> <p>For bus services across municipal boundaries, there is a regulation that the total number of standing passengers should not be more than one-third of the total number of seats available on a bus. However, this regulation does not apply to bus services which mainly operate within the boundary of Toronto.</p>	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p>	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p>	<p>Yes, passengers are allowed to stand on buses operating on expressways.</p>

Table 2 – Measures taken to address the safety of standing passengers

	Australia	New Zealand	Canada		United States	Singapore
	Queensland	Wellington	Toronto	Vancouver	San Francisco	
Measures taken to address the safety of standing passengers	The buses must be equipped with suitable handholds, have sufficient aisle width to carry standing passengers, and must not be overloaded.	There are handstraps and stanchion poles provided for standing passengers to hold on while travelling on buses. According to the Wellington Regional Transport, overall safety would be improved as the bus fleet would be replaced with more modern vehicles.	There are handstraps and stanchion poles provided for standing passengers to hold on while travelling on buses. According to the Toronto Transit Commission, there are no additional safety measures, and the number of safety incidents involving passengers standing on buses operating on expressways in Toronto is small.	According to Section 9 of the Passenger Transportation Regulation: (a) the buses should be equipped with a sufficient number of handholds, straps, rails or other equipment to provide support for the number of standing passengers authorized; and (b) the vision or movement of the bus drivers should not be impaired in any way by the standing passengers.	No information is available on measures taken to address the safety of standing passengers. According to the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, no safety incidents involving passengers standing on buses operating on expressways have been reported in recent years.	There are handstraps and stanchion poles provided for standing passengers to hold on while travelling on buses. In addition, the bus drivers must observe the speed limit imposed on the buses.

References

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