

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

**MTR Tseung Kwan O Line Signaling Equipment Fault incident
on 21 August 2009**

The Legislative Council Panel on Transport Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways requested the Administration to provide a paper on the signaling equipment fault incident of the Tseung Kwan O Line (TKL) of MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) on 21 August 2009. The cause of the incident and the contingency measures adopted by MTRCL is set out in the paper of the Corporation at the Annex. The Administration's assessment on the handling of the incident by MTRCL is set out in the following paragraphs.

2. The incident was caused by the fault of a signaling equipment located north of the Tseung Kwan O Station for diverting trains to different directions. As a result, northbound trains of TKL could either all be routed to Po Lam Station or all to LOHAS Park Station. Trains passing the location of the equipment were also required to reduce speed, affecting the service headway of TKL. The incident does not affect railway safety. As the equipment could only be replaced when the train is not in operation, MTRCL has arranged for replacement after the close of train service that night to reduce the impact on passengers.

3. Transport Department (TD) has reviewed the notification procedures, dissemination of information and contingency arrangements of MTRCL. In handling the incident, MTRCL has notified the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) of TD according to the established mechanism and disseminated to the media the information about the incident and train service arrangement.

4. The incident occurred at 8:31 a.m. and train service between Tseung Kwan O Station and Po Lam Station was suspended. MTRCL immediately sent staff to the site for inspection and repair. MTRCL also notified TD according to the established mechanism, informed passengers of the service disruption through broadcasting at the affected stations and monitored the situation in the stations. Ten minutes after the incident, train service between Tseung Kwan O Station and Po Lam Station resumed operation with headway maintained at 3.5 to 4 minutes. MTRCL has separately arranged for trains to provide shuttle service between Tseung Kwan O Station and LOHAS Park Station, with headway

maintained at 10 minutes. TD considers that MTRCL has implemented appropriate contingency measures and maintained services at a reasonable level under the circumstance where the equipment has not been repaired.

5. MTRCL has made broadcasts and posted notices at stations on TKL, Island Line and Kwun Tong Line to inform passengers. Announcements were also made on the trains running on TKL and on trains running on Island Line and Kwun Tong Line when they were approaching the interchange stations. MTRCL had also implemented measures to regulate passenger flow in accordance with its contingency plan and closed the entry gates at Hang Hau Station and Po Lam Station for a short period of time to regulate the number of passengers on the platforms. At the same time, MTRCL also continued repairing the equipment. TD maintained close contact with the Police and MTRCL during the incident and noted that the situation at the MTR stations concerned was kept under control. TD considers that MTRCL has implemented the necessary measures to inform passengers and regulate the passenger flow in the stations to ensure the safety of passengers.

6. Since 9:30 a.m., the headway of TKL was maintained in accordance with the schedule of non-peak hours.

7. To prepare for the evening peak hours, MTRCL has assessed the situation in the early afternoon on that day. As the equipment could only be replaced when the train is not in operation, MTRCL has decided to arrange for replacement after the close of train service that night to reduce the impact on passengers. As a result, the headway during the evening peak that day could not be recovered to the normal level. Before the start of the evening peak hours, MTRCL has informed TD and the media through press release and continued the broadcasting arrangement and arranged for station staff to assist passengers and to maintain order at all stations of TKL during the peak hours. TD considers that the above arrangement could enable passengers to make early planning for their travel after work.

Conclusion

8. On the whole, TD is of the view that MTRCL has implemented all the necessary contingency arrangements in respect of notification procedures, dissemination of information and regulation of passenger flow. As the equipment could only be replaced when the train is not in operation, MTRCL has made the appropriate arrangement to replace the

equipment after the close of train service that night to reduce the impact on passengers. MTRCL also informed the passengers in advance through broadcast arrangement and the media before the start of the evening peak hours. The Government will continue to monitor and remind MTRCL to adopt measures to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
September 2009**

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

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Introduction

This paper provides information on the signaling equipment fault incident on the Tseung Kwan O Line of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) on 21 August 2009.

The Incident

2. At 8:31 a.m. on 21 August 2009, a signaling equipment fault occurred near Tseung Kwan O Station, affecting train services to and from North Point and Po Lam/LOHAS Park stations.

3. The function of the signaling equipment concerned is to direct trains to different destinations (i.e. to either Po Lam or LOHAS Park Station). As a result of the fault, the automatic routing of trains could not work and all northbound trains departing from North Point Station could either all be routed to Po Lam Station or all to LOHAS Park Station.

4. As more trains are scheduled to serve Po Lam Station, MTRCL arranged all trains from North Point to be routed to Po Lam with headway at 3.5 to 4 minutes. A shuttle train service was operated between Tseung Kwan O and LOHAS Park stations with 10-minute headway.

5. The incident occurred at 8:31 a.m. and train service between Tseung Kwan O Station and Po Lam Station was suspended. MTRCL immediately sent staff to the site for inspection and repair. At 8:42 a.m., train service between Tseung Kwan O and Po Lam Stations resumed operation with headway maintained at 3.5 to 4 minutes. After urgent repair, train service resumed normal at 11:50 a.m.. At 1:00 p.m., however, the fault re-occurred.

6. MTRCL has considered immediate replacement of the equipment which would require service suspension. Considering that a high level of service could still be provided and having assessed the situation, the Corporation decided that the replacement works should be carried out after the close of train service that night.

7. The incident did not affect rail safety. MTRCL replaced the faulty equipment after the close of traffic hours on that day and the train service was resumed normal the following day.

Contingency Measures

8. MTRCL has contingency measures in place to handle incidents with a view to minimising any inconvenience caused to passengers. During this incident, the following contingency measures were implemented:

(i) Information dissemination

9. After the incident, MTR informed the Transport Department in accordance with established procedures and provided the media with information about the incident and train service arrangement. A press statement was issued at 4:45 p.m. to alert passengers through the media.

(ii) Station control

10. Announcements were made every two to three minutes on all Tseung Kwan O Line trains and at all stations along the Tseung Kwan O Line, Kwun Tong Line and Island Line with station notices displayed to update passengers on the revised train service arrangement. In addition, announcements were also made on all Kwun Tong Line and Island Line trains when approaching interchange stations with the Tseung Kwan O Line. Extra staff were deployed during the incident to assist passengers and maintain order and direct passenger flow in the affected stations.

(iii) Train operation

11. The train service arrangement was adjusted following the incident. The headway of the service between North Point and Po Lam stations was maintained at 3.5 to 4 minutes during peak hours and that during non-peak hours was maintained according to its normal schedule. For the shuttle train service between LOHAS Park Station and Tseung Kwan O Station, headway of 10 minutes was maintained until the end of service hours at night.

Conclusion

12. MTRCL strives to provide safe and reliable services to all passengers and would like to apologise for the inconvenience caused to passengers due to the incident on that day. MTRCL will review how the incident was handled with a view to minimising the impact on passengers in the event of any similar occurrence in future.

MTR Corporation Limited
September 2009