

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Meeting on 18 March 2010

**Information note on the notification system
of the MTR Corporation Limited**

The subject of railway incidents was last discussed by the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (the Subcommittee) at its meeting on 4 December 2009. During discussion on the item on "MTR Kwun Tong Line service disruption and review of recent railway incidents" at the Subcommittee meetings on 16 December 2008 and 16 January 2009, the Administration explained the existing notification system as follows -

- (a) the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) is required to notify the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD)¹ of railway incidents. Under Mass Transit Railway Regulations (the Regulations), railway incidents are classified into "accidents" and "occurrences", as follows -
 - (i) for accidents² that occurred on the railway, railway corporations should immediately after the occurrence of the accident make a verbal report to Government; and

¹ As approved by the Finance Committee on 11 January 2008, the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate was transferred from Transport Branch of the Transport and Housing Bureau to the EMSD and renamed as the Railways Branch on 1 February 2008, with a view to enhancing Government's regulatory role and functions regarding railway safety.

² Under Regulation 2 of the Mass Transit Railway Regulations (Cap. 556A), an accident is notifiable if it occurs on a part of the railway which has commenced operation for public use and -
(a) as a result thereof any person dies or suffers serious injury; or
(b) it involves a train (i) colliding with, or striking against, another train or any other object; or (ii) leaving the rails,
and doing so either on a line used for the carriage of passengers or goods or in circumstances where the normal operation of such a line is affected.

(ii) apart from accidents, the Schedule to the Regulations sets out notifiable occurrences, which cover seven types of occurrences "directly affecting persons" and 12 types of occurrences "affecting railway premises, plant and equipment". MTRCL should as soon as practicable after the occurrence complete and deliver a written report on the occurrence to Government.

(b) Apart from the above requirement under the legislation, MTRCL also notifies Government of incidents which are of "public concern and media interest". This is to facilitate explanations to address public concerns about the safety-related incidents and to initiate follow-up actions where necessary.

2. At the request of the Subcommittee, the Administration provided a supplementary information paper on "notification of railway incidents when there is service disruption" in June 2009. The paper is attached in **Appendix** for members' easy reference.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
12 March 2010

Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Notification of Railway Incidents
when there is service disruption

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways (Subcommittee) on 16 January 2009 during which the item on the MTR Kwun Tong Line service disruption was discussed, Members requested the Administration to provide a paper on the notification of railway incidents when there is service disruption. This paper provides the relevant information.

2. We have all along put in place an alert system for incidents which applies to all public transport operators including the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL). Under this system, MTRCL (as well as other public transport operators) issues an “Amber Alert” as an early warning in respect of an incident which could lead to a serious disruption of service; and a “Red Alert” is issued as a signal to indicate that a serious disruption has continued or is expected to continue for over 20 minutes, and emergency transport support services from other operators are required.

3. To facilitate relevant operators and agencies to gear up resources to assist affected passengers, MTRCL is required since 2004, to notify the Transport Department (TD) within 8 minutes on any service disruption incident that has occurred for 8 minutes or is expected to last for 8 minutes or more. Train service disruption incidents refer to those incidents that lead to a stoppage of service at a railway station or a stop (in respect of Light Rail), or on a section of a railway line, or an extension in end-to-end journey time on a railway line of 8 minutes or more.

4. Upon receiving notification, TD would liaise closely with MTRCL and provide assistance as necessary. The early notification has enabled preparatory work for emergency/support services to start at the earliest available opportunity. Apart from notifying TD, MTRCL is also required to disseminate at the same time the service disruption messages to passengers on the affected train and in the stations within 8 minutes.

5. The notification system has been working well. During the discussion of the MTR Kwun Tong Line incident at the meeting of the Subcommittee on 16 December 2008, Members expressed that MTRCL

should further enhance the existing system with regard to notifying the media. We have followed up with MTRCL. MTRCL has agreed that in addition to the existing circumstances for notification to the media, it will also notify the media of those incidents that are related to train operation and are of public concern and which has resulted in or could potentially result in injuries or deaths. This has already been reported to the Subcommittee in January 2009.

**Transport and Housing Bureau
June 2009**