For discussion
24 June 2011

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Measures to Enhance Safety of Reversing Goods Vehicles

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the progress of the various measures taken to enhance the safety of reversing goods vehicles (GVs).

Background

2. Due to the public's concerns over the safety of reversing GVs, the Transport Department (TD) has, over the past five years, undertaken a wide range of measures with a view to improving the situation. These measures include implementation of a vigorous traffic management project which involves traffic management improvements at 129 locations across 18 districts, promotion of safe driving among GV drivers, stepping up of publicity and education efforts to encourage GV owners to install reversing aids in their vehicles.

Traffic Management Initiatives

3. The TD conducted a review of the road environment in 2006/2007 in consultation with the various District Councils, and identified 129 locations where suitable traffic management measures may help further improve road safety, in particular preventing accidents involving reversing GVs. A breakdown of these locations by districts is at **Annex A**. The TD has completed the necessary measures at 128 locations. These measures included restricting vehicular access, designating no-stopping restrictions, installing crash barrier and steel bollards, providing loading and unloading bays, widening

carriageways, and erecting suitable traffic and warning signs. There is only one outstanding project (in Tai Po) which will be completed in July this year.

Training Courses for Goods Vehicle Drivers

4. The TD has been organizing dedicated training courses, safety workshops and driving safety seminars targeting at drivers of commercial vehicles such as public light buses, taxis, non-franchised buses and GVs with a view to improving their driving knowledge and skills. There are also dedicated and professional road safety and driving improvement courses organized by the Employees Retraining Board Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus. We will continue to promote the organization of these kinds of training courses and encourage GV drivers to participate in them.

Education and Publicity Efforts

5. As driver and pedestrian behaviour is one of the contributory factors to traffic accidents, publicity and education efforts promoting responsible driving and usage of roads are crucial to enhancing road safety. Since 2006, various publicity and education measures targeting at safety of GVs have been undertaken. These include radio announcements, leaflets, specific training and refresher courses, talks organized by the Police regional road safety teams, safety campaign organized by the Road Safety Council, as well as delivery of safety messages to the GV trade through various channels of contacts. Details of these measures are given in **Annex B**.

Additional Devices to Assist Drivers in Reversing Goods Vehicles

6. Since 2000, there is a statutory requirement for all GVs to be fitted with an automatic device capable of giving an audible warning to nearby pedestrians when it reverses.

7. Besides the audible warning device, there are also other auxiliary devices to assist drivers to reverse more safely. These additional devices which include rear view mirrors, reversing sensors and reversing video device

(RVD) can improve the drivers' view of the area around the rear of their vehicles, which should be useful for GVs with goods compartments that obstruct the rear view.

8. To encourage the GV owners to install reversing aids, the TD published in August 2007 "A Guide for the Installation of Devices to Assist Reversing of Goods Vehicles" which set out the advantages and limitations of these reversing aids so that GV owners can have some reference when choosing an equipment appropriate to their vehicle type/body. The Guide also includes a recommended scope of vision for RVDs to help owners select from the market the RVDs which can meet such performance requirements. The Guide was updated in September 2009 to take into account the availability of RVDs with wider viewing angles in the market, which would allow more GV types (mainly those with lower bodies) to be fitted with RVDs which can achieve the recommended scope of vision. Surveys indicated that the percentage of GVs fitted with RVDs voluntarily rose from around 6% to 15% in the past 3 years, suggesting an increased acceptance by GV owners of such device.

Further Measures

9. With the adoption of the various improvement measures, the number of reversing GVs involved in traffic accidents has declined. In the past five years, the number of reversing GVs involved in traffic accidents dropped by 35% (from 176 to 115), while the number of fatalities in reversing GV accidents dropped by 80% (from 5 to 1). The numbers of GVs involved in reversing accidents for the past ten years are given in **Annex C**. This notwithstanding, continued promotion of GV safety is essential.

10. On RVD, the TD has been making continued efforts in promoting its voluntary adoption amongst the GV trade. As outlined in paragraph 8 above, there is a gradual acceptance in the trade of such device. The trade is also prepared to continue to work with the TD to look at ways to further promote the use of the device. By and large, more and more GV owners see the usefulness and benefits of a RVD which can provide the necessary scope of vision, is reliable, and is affordable.

11. In this connection, in considering options to further promote the use of RVDs on GVs (including the mandatory installation of the device on registered GVs), a number of issues have to be borne in mind. First, given the current state of technology and the RVDs available in the market, not all GVs can be fitted with RVDs with the necessary scope of vision. Fitting an RVD which cannot meet the recommended scope of vision has potential safety hazard because it may mislead the driver as to the actual road situation. We will continue to be on the look out for the latest available devices in the market, and to keep a close eye on overseas practices and developments. Second, whilst more and more RVD models can achieve the recommended scope of vision, the reliability and durability of some of the models have to be further improved. The feedback of the trade is that the performance of RVDs retrofitted on heavy vehicles are not always reliable, possibly because such vehicles operate on higher voltage (whilst most RVDs are designed to operate on lower voltage) and in much harsher environment, such as construction sites. Therefore, at this stage at least, it is not practicable to mandate the installation of the device on all GVs.

12. As RVDs designed and installed by vehicle suppliers as an integral part of a new vehicle should be more reliable, it may be more feasible to require all new GVs to be equipped with RVD. With this approach, however, some GVs with low body may have to be exempted from the requirement (at least initially) as there may not be RVDs in the market with the necessary scope of vision for these types of GVs. We plan to consult the GV trade and vehicle suppliers on this proposal. We will also continue to encourage the GV trade to use escort, and to install reversing aids including additional rear view mirror, reversing sensor and RVD on a voluntary basis. We will report to this Panel when there is further progress on the matter.

Advice Sought

13. Members are invited to note the latest progress on measures taken to enhance safety of reversing GVs.

Transport and Housing Bureau
June 2011

Annex A

Locations with traffic management measures to enhance safety of reversing goods vehicles

District Council	No. of locations
Island	
1. Central & Western	49
2. Eastern	5
3. Wan Chai	6
4. Southern District	1
Kowloon	
5. Yau Tsim Mong	12
6. Kowloon City	6
7. Wong Tai Sin	2
8. Kwun Tong	3
9. Sham Shui Po	9
New Territories East	
10. Sha Tin	2
11. Tai Po	2 + 1#
12. Sai Kung	4
13. North	2
14. Islands	3
New Territories West	
15. Tsuen Wan	4
16. Kwai Tsing	6
17. Tuen Mun	7
18. Yuen Long	5
Total	**129**

Traffic management measures to be completed in July 2011

Annex B

Publicity and Education for improving behaviour of GV drivers

Since late 2006, the following publicity and education activities / events have been undertaken:

(a) A radio Announcement of Public Interest reminding goods vehicle drivers about safe reversing has been broadcast on a regular basis;

(b) A leaflet to remind drivers, vehicle owners, shop and factory owners as well as pedestrians on actions that they can take to enhance safety in respect of reversing vehicles has been distributed through the goods vehicle trades, district offices, car parks and TD's licensing offices and vehicle examination centres;

(c) TD and the Police have conveyed safety messages to the goods vehicle trades through meetings, talks and seminars;

(d) TD, in conjunction with other institutions, has organized specific training and refresher courses as well as safety workshops and driving safety seminars for drivers of public service vehicles and goods vehicles;

(e) The Police regional road safety teams have organized talks at elderly centres, kindergartens and schools in order to reach the senior citizens and children who are the high-risk groups in traffic accidents; and

(f) The Road Safety Council has launched Campaigns such as "Safe Driving Campaign for Goods Vehicles Drivers". The main objective of this publicity activity was to reduce traffic accidents involving goods vehicles by raising road safety awareness.

Annex C

No. of Reversing Goods Vehicles Involving in Accidents and No. of Fatalities in Accidents Involving Reversing Goods Vehicle in 2001 – 2010

Year	Reversing Goods Vehicle Involvements	No. of licensed Goods Vehicles as at end year	Accident Involvement Rate per 1,000 Licensed Goods Vehicles	No. of Fatalities in Accidents Involving Reversing Goods Vehicle
2001	200	112,585	1.78	5
2002	181	110,025	1.63	7
2003	182	109,777	1.66	4
2004	179	110,477	1.62	4
2005	195	110,989	1.76	6
2006	176	111,726	1.58	5
2007	144	110,746	1.30	0
2008	122	109,262	1.12	3
2009	113	107,402	1.05	1
2010	115	109,416	1.05	1