運輸署
Transport Department

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16 May 2013

Ms Mary So
Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Ms So,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 60
Administration of road safety measures

Thank you for your letter of 7 May 2013. We provide the following responses in respect of the issues raised –

(a) Of the 120 road traffic fatalities in Hong Kong in 2012, 15 were involved in traffic accidents happened on expressways which represents 12.5% of fatalities on all roads. In terms of fatality rates per million veh-km, the rate for expressways was about 0.004, which was substantially lower than that of all roads which was about 0.01. The 120 road traffic fatalities contributed to about 8% of fatalities of all external causes in 2012. Typical examples of other types of external causes include suicide, falls, accidental poisoning, fire accidents and homicide etc.

(b) Not many major cities in overseas countries publish statistics on accident involvement rates separately for public transport. Within limited time, we could only obtain relevant figures for some major cities in the United Kingdom (Annex 1). Whilst there are differences in vehicle classification and the mode of public transport operation, we consider it more appropriate to

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compare the rates of London with those of Hong Kong as the public transport system and usage and the development density are more comparable. It is apparent that our rates are generally on the lower side when comparing with those of London.

(c) For franchised buses, because of the large number of passengers carried and the presence of standing passengers, a significant proportion of accidents involves injury of passengers even there is no collision. This type of accidents typically involves passengers losing balance inside the bus compartment due to various reasons, such as not holding the handrail tightly or falling down when boarding or alighting. These are classified as non-collision type accidents. Of the 2 217 franchised buses involved in road traffic accidents in 2012, 1 294 (58%) were non-collision type accidents. The rates per million veh-km of franchised bus involved in all accidents, non-collision type accidents, and collision type accidents from 2007 to 2012 are given respectively in Annex 2. A chart comparing the involvement rates in collision type accidents for selected transport modes is also shown in Annex 3. It can be seen that the involvement rates of franchised bus in collision type accidents were comparable to that of all motor vehicles. The factors contributing to occurrence of collision type accidents of franchised buses are similar to those of other vehicle types, except that there was much higher percentage of the factor "failing to ensure the safety of passenger", as illustrated in Annex 4. We are mindful of the high proportion of non-collision type accidents of franchised buses. We have jointly taken effort with the franchised bus companies to promote bus passenger safety through education and publicity channels such as Announcement of Public Interest on TV and radio, on-bus TV broadcasting as well as display of "holding onto handrails" and "no standing on stairway" posters and sticker notices inside bus compartments. Most of the franchised buses currently in service are equipped with some, if not all, of the features like low-floor (wheelchair-accessible), continuous railing and handrails at exit door and priority seats for passengers in need. In addition, there are standard provisions on new buses for a safer bus journey including non-slippery bus floor material, high contrast step-edge and closing door buzzer and warning lamp at exits.

(d) The practices in addressing the privacy concern arising from the use of average speed camera system (ASCS) in Australia, New Zealand, Norway and European Union (EU) are summarized in Annex 5.

(e) We estimate that $3.2 million will be spent on studying the feasibility and the design of the average speed camera system in Hong Kong, and $11.3 million will be spent on the procurement and installation of the ASCS for the trial scheme at the Shenzhen Bay Bridge of the Hong Kong Shenzhen Western Corridor.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Ingrid Yeung)
Commissioner for Transport

c.c. Secretary for Transport and Housing (Fax : 2537 6519)
Commissioner of Police (Fax : 2520 1210)
Director of Information Services (Fax : 2537 9560)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Fax : 2147 5239)
Director of Audit (Fax : 2583 9063)

Annex 1

Vehicle involvement rates (in million veh-km) for selected classes of motor vehicle in 2011

Mode	Hong Kong	City of London	Manchester	Birmingham
Public bus	3.11 (1)	7.73 (2)	2.64 (2)	1.23 (2)
Franchised bus	4.19	-	-	-
Taxi and private car (3)	1.51	1.99	1.02	0.77
Taxi (3)	1.85	-	-	-

Notes:

(1) The involvement rate for public bus includes franchised buses and non-franchised buses.

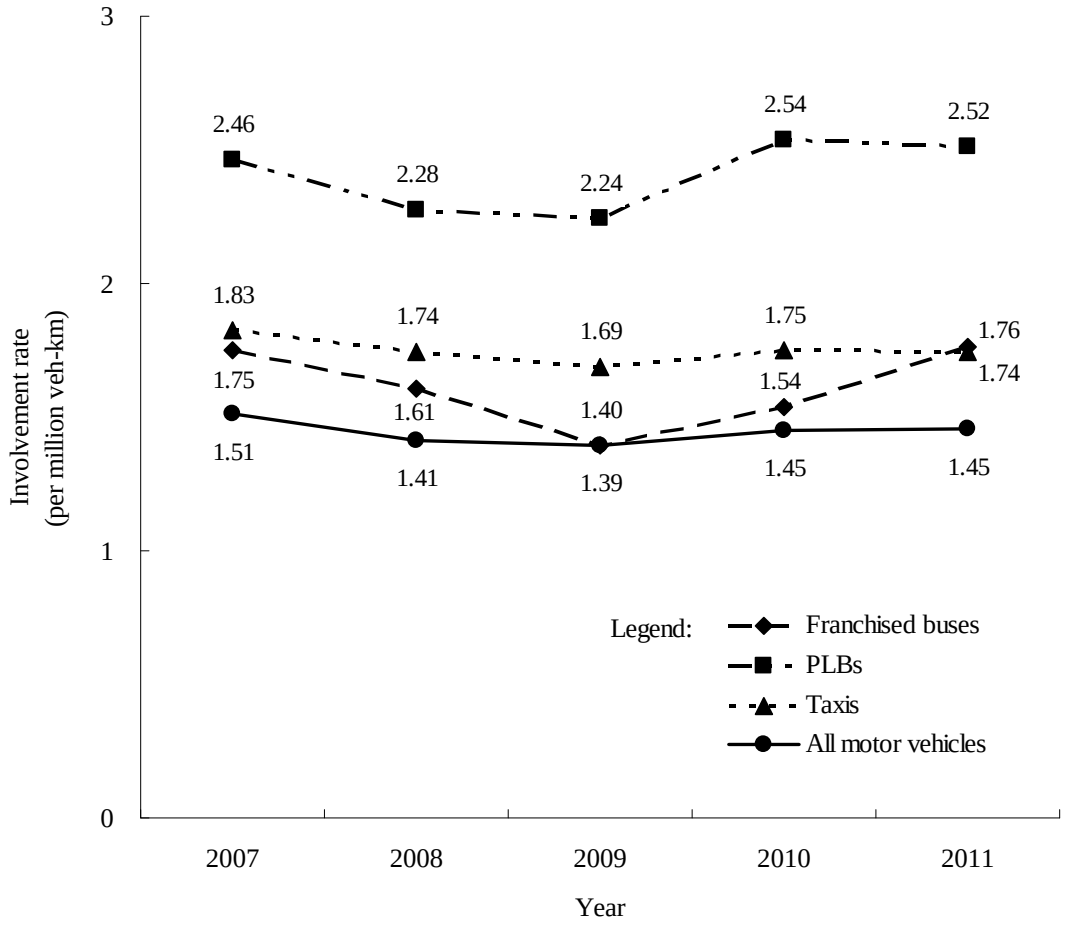
(2) Figures refer to the involvement rates for all buses.

(3) Only figures including taxis and private cars are available from London, Manchester and Birmingham. The vehicle involvement rate of taxi in Hong Kong is also listed out as reference.

Involvement rates (in million veh-km) of franchised bus in Hong Kong, 2007-2012

Year	All franchised bus accident involvement rates	Involvement rate of franchised bus in non-collision type accidents only	Involvement rate of franchised bus in collision type accidents only
2007	4.07	2.32	1.75
2008	3.83	2.22	1.61
2009	3.63	2.23	1.40
2010	3.84	2.30	1.54
2011	4.19	2.43	1.76
2012	4.27	2.49	1.78

Involvement rates (in million veh-km) in collision type accidents of selected classes of vehicle in Hong Kong, 2007-2011



Involvements of franchised buses and other motor vehicles in collision type accidents in 2012 by driver contributory factors

Driver contributory factor	Franchised buses		Other motor vehicles	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
With driver factor				
Driving inattentively	93	(10.1)	2 724	(16.0)
Driving too close to vehicle in front	62	(6.7)	1 294	(7.6)
Careless lane changing	36	(3.9)	855	(5.0)
Turning right/left negligently	19	(2.1)	486	(2.8)
Starting negligently	11	(1.2)	150	(0.9)
Failing to ensure the safety of passenger	10	(1.1)	11	(0.1)
To avoid collision or otherwise : swerving/stopping suddenly	5	(0.5)	294	(1.7)
Emerging from side road negligently	5	(0.5)	121	(0.7)
Lost control of vehicle	4	(0.4)	340	(2.0)
Disobey traffic signal/light	4	(0.4)	196	(1.1)
Driving too close to vehicle alongside	4	(0.4)	46	(0.3)
Driving too close to kerb	4	(0.4)	34	(0.2)
Reversing negligently	3	(0.3)	347	(2.0)
Overtaking on offside/nearside negligently	3	(0.3)	148	(0.9)
Opened door negligently (driver)	2	(0.2)	33	(0.2)
Furious/dangerous driving	2	(0.2)	14	(0.1)
Sudden illness, or mental defect	2	(0.2)	6	(0.0)
Disobey give way sign (slow)	1	(0.1)	108	(0.6)
Disobey stop sign (halt)	1	(0.1)	43	(0.3)
Driving a dangerous vehicle	1	(0.1)	21	(0.1)
Disobey double white lines	1	(0.1)	16	(0.1)
Stopping negligently	1	(0.1)	7	(0.0)
Failing to keep to nearside of road	1	(0.1)	4	(0.0)
Other driver factor	86	(9.3)	1 516	(8.9)
Subtotal	*361*	*(39.1)*	*8 814*	*(51.7)*
With no driver factor	562	(60.9)	8 246	(48.3)
Total	923	(100)	17 060	(100)

Overseas practices in addressing privacy concern arising from the use of average speed camera system

(i) In Australia, the legislation that regulates the use of traffic cameras make it clear that the images (whether or not they contain any personal information) can only be used for speeding or other traffic offences, or for another purpose that is authorized by law. The images recorded by the ASCS do not identify a driver or other vehicle occupants but the licence plates. All images are encrypted at time of capture, and protected by a digital signature for proving the authenticity of the evidence. The encryption and decryption keys are only made available to authorized persons.

(ii) In New Zealand, cameras should not be able to inadvertently capture images within someone's private property, nor capture any other personal information because the legislation protects individuals from having their private property exposed by other parties. The cameras of ASCS are employed to observe solely the traffic on the roads.

(iii) In Norway, the Data Protection Agency is authorized to inspect the ASCS on how personal data was handled in order to ascertain whether it was stored and deleted in accordance with the regulations. The camera boxes and central servers would be reviewed to verify that all personal data in connection with ASCS operations never leaves the boxes containing the cameras and is deleted as soon as the speed is determined. The same applies to data from violation vehicles after the maximum number of days (30) of storage.

(iv) In EU countries currently using ASCS, data of vehicles not exceeding speed limits are automatically erased by the systems for privacy reasons. Data protection should not therefore constitute a major legal obstacle for the deployment of ASCS. However legislation varies from country to country, and since data from all vehicles entering a section of road equipped with ASCS are collected and processed in a first step before being erased, it has been made clear that the whole process should comply with the legislation of individual country.