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[English translation for reference only]

Ms Sophie LAU  
Legislative Council Panel on Transport  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
[Fax no.: 2978 7569]

Dear Ms LAU,

**Follow-ups of Panel on Transport –  
Rest Time Arrangements for Bus Captains and  
Facilities at Bus Termini**

I am writing to provide information for the Panel's reference in response to Hon LEE Cheuk-yan's request for an update on the progress of the provision of rest time and implementation of other safety measures for bus captains and Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip's request for information on the provision of rest place and toilet facilities at bus termini.

**Rest Time Arrangements for Franchised Bus Captains**

To ensure that bus captains have sufficient rest time, the Transport Department ("TD") promulgated the Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks ("the Guidelines") (see **Annex**) for the franchised bus companies in 1983. The TD would review and revise the Guidelines from time to time. The arrangements under the existing Guidelines were implemented in full since the third quarter of 2012. In 2013, the TD reviewed the Guidelines again with the franchised bus companies and has listened to the views of bus captain unions. According to the review outcome, the arrangements under the Guidelines for bus captains' working hours, rest times and meal breaks are generally appropriate. The bus captain unions accepted the review outcome.

To ensure compliance with the Guidelines in arranging shifts, the franchised bus companies are required to submit quarterly reports to the TD on the implementation of the Guidelines. The TD also engages independent contractors to carry out annual compliance surveys on working hours, rest times and meal breaks of bus captains. The franchised bus companies' reports and the TD's survey findings both indicate that the shift arrangements for bus captains are largely in compliance with the Guidelines. The TD will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Guidelines.

### **Safety Measures for Franchised Bus Captains**

At present, all franchised bus companies are providing various kinds of trainings for bus captains to enhance their awareness of safe driving and of their own health condition. In addition, the TD has promoted safe driving and drivers' awareness of their health condition through various channels. These include organising "Road Safety Seminars for Franchised Bus Drivers", "Safe Driving and Health Campaign for Commercial Vehicle Drivers", disseminating messages about safe driving and awareness of health condition through announcements of public interest on the radio and other media, and providing free health checks for professional drivers (including franchised bus captains).

Meanwhile, all franchised bus companies, as per TD's request, have since 2007 required their bus captains aged 50 or over to undergo health checks every year. The items covered in the checks differ between franchised bus companies, but usually include chest examinations as well as eyesight, hearing, diabetes, blood pressure, blood and urine tests. For bus captains aged 60 or over, an electrocardiogram ("ECG") is also required. In 2012/13, the TD and the franchised bus companies reviewed the health check arrangements for bus captains. After the review, the franchised bus companies have implemented the following measures since August 2013:

- (1) on top of requiring bus captains aged 50 or over to undergo annual health checks, bus captains aged below 50 who have ever suffered from any of the following illnesses are required to declare the illness(es) and undergo health checks (including ECG) every year:
  - (i) stroke;
  - (ii) cardio-vascular diseases;
  - (iii) diabetes mellitus (on medication); and
  - (iv) hypertension (on medication);
  
- (2) on top of requiring bus captains aged 60 or above to undergo an ECG, all bus captains will have to undergo ECG at 50, 54 and 57 years old.

The above measures have been implemented for some time and are working well on the whole. Bus captains generally agree that these measures help them better understand their physical conditions at an early juncture. Furthermore, the franchised bus companies have issued guidelines to remind bus captains not to continue driving if feeling unwell while on duty. The working manuals also remind bus captains to ensure physical and mental fitness and to seek medical consultation promptly in case of sickness.

### **Facilities at Bus Termini**

There are currently about 280 bus termini<sup>1</sup> in Hong Kong. Since 2006, toilets and rest facilities are part of the basic facilities of all new termini. In the past few years, the franchised bus companies have continued providing toilets and rest facilities in existing bus termini to meet the needs of bus captains. Today, over 94% of the bus termini are provided with toilets or with access to toilets within a walking distance of about three minutes. Toilets are basically available within about four to seven minutes of walking distance<sup>2</sup> for the remaining bus termini. Moreover, close to 90% of the bus termini are provided rest facilities for use by bus captains. For those bus termini which do not have rest facilities or toilets for use by bus captains, it is mainly due to physical constraints of the site (e.g. the bus termini are located beside a narrow pavement or there is a lack of power supply) or views of residents living nearby. The bus companies will continue exploring possible ways to overcome the physical constraints so as to provide toilets for those bus termini without toilet access within a walking distance of three minutes and rest facilities for bus captains at bus termini without such facilities.

I should be grateful if you could kindly relay the above information to Members of the LegCo Panel.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

(Peggy NG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr. Reginald CHAN)

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<sup>1</sup> These are terminating points serving at least one whole-day franchised bus route and at which the bus captains must stop over and take a break.

<sup>2</sup> There is another bus terminus at which toilet facilities are not available within four to seven minutes of walking distance. Toilets could not be provided in nearby areas as the bus terminus is located beside a narrow pavement adjacent to a school and residential development. Nevertheless, the terminus is serving only a bus route involving a journey of less than 20 minutes. The bus captains may make use of facilities at the terminus at the other end of the route.

Annex

**Guidelines on Bus Captain  
Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks  
issued by the Transport Department  
(Revised in October 2010)**

- Guideline A – Bus captains should have a **rest time**<sup>3</sup> of at least 30 minutes after 6 hours of duty and within that 6-hour duty, they should have **rest times** totalling 20 minutes of which no less than 12 minutes should be within the first 4 hours of duty. **The time bus captains spend at a terminal point preparing for the next departure and monitoring boarding of passengers should not be regarded as rest time.**
- Guideline B – Maximum duty (including all **rest times**) in a **working** day should not exceed 14 hours.
- Guideline C – Driving duty (i.e. maximum duty less all **rest times** each of 30 minutes or more) in a **working** day should not exceed 11 hours.
- Guideline D – The break between successive working days should not be less than **10** hours.
- Guideline E – Bus captains working for a duty of not less than 8 hours in a working day should have a meal break. Bus companies should complete the improvement of meal breaks to no less than 45 minutes by the third quarter of 2011, and further improvement to no less than one hour in one year thereafter.**

*Note: Improvements introduced in the revised Guidelines issued in October 2010 are marked in **bold**.*

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<sup>3</sup> Meal break is also regarded as rest time.