

**Subcommittee on Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance  
(Amendment of Schedule 2) Order 2015**

**Supplementary Information in pursuant to the Issues and Concerns  
Raised at the meeting on 5 January 2016  
( Written Response )**

The Government's response to the issues and concerns raised by the Subcommittee members at the meeting on 5 January 2016 is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

**The Proposal**

2. Currently, there are 16 tunnels in Hong Kong, and eight of them have Bus Interchanges (BIs) located in the tunnel portal area. In order to further protect public health, the Government proposes to designate the BIs located at the said eight tunnel portal areas as no-smoking areas (NSAs). While there is no statistics on the passenger flow at the BIs concerned, the number of bus routes passing by these BIs ranged from 6 to over 30. Crowd of passengers are observed at the BIs during different times of the day, particularly during peak traffic hours.

Boundary of the NSAs

3. To better illustrate the boundary of the proposed NSAs, we have prepared site plans with photos of the BIs showing demarcations of the NSAs and areas where smoking are not prohibited. To ensure that smokers will be able to dispose the cigarette butts properly before boarding, upon discussion with the venue managers, rubbish bin(s) with ashtray will be arranged to be placed outside the NSAs.

Publicity Plan for the Proposed Measure

4. To publicize the implementation of smoking ban at these BIs, the Tobacco Control Office (TCO) will arrange to display signs, publicity materials, and other demarcations including markings on the ground as

appropriate to indicate clearly and visibly the boundaries of the NSA at each BI, having regard to their respective physical settings. The plans showing the boundaries of the NSA will be posted at prominent locations such as main entrances and exits before the statutory smoking ban takes effect. All plans of the NSAs of the BIs have been deposited in the Land Registry for inspection by the public. They will also be posted on the website of TCO before the Amendment Order takes effect. TCO will display no-smoking signs at conspicuous locations within the NSAs of the BIs to remind the public of the smoking ban.

5. In addition, various publicity activities will be launched before the smoking ban comes into operation. For example, smoke free ambassadors will be deployed to the BIs concerned to distribute publicity materials about the smoking ban and answer to public enquiries. A set of television and radio Announcement in the Public Interest will be broadcasted to publicise the smoking ban.

### **Expansion of NSAs**

6. The Government has been adopting a progressive and multi-pronged approach on tobacco control. The Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) was amended in 2006 to, inter alia, extend the statutory smoking ban to cover all indoor working places and public places as well as some outdoor places. Starting from December 2010, smoking ban has been extended to public transport facilities (PTFs). There are currently 239 PTFs designated as no smoking areas (NSAs), which are either termini with more than one bus routes or two or more modes of public transport. We have been receiving suggestions of designating more transport facilities as NSAs and we shall continue to examine the feasibility of such proposals.

7. The designation of BIs in tunnel portal areas as NSAs is an initial step for testing the feasibility of expanding NSAs to other public facilities. We will review the implementation of this initiative after 12 months and consider the timing to further expand NSAs to other facilities or areas, such as other bus stops.

## **Technical Feasibility of Setting up a Smoking Room**

8. During the deliberations of the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2006 and the follow up meetings of the Legislative Council Health Service Panel meetings, the issue of technical feasibility of setting up smoking rooms have been discussed in detail. The findings of researches concluded that there is yet no conclusive evidence to substantiate the effectiveness of smoking room in separating smokers and non-smokers and protecting non-smokers outside the room from exposure to second-hand smoke, which echoes with the World Health Organization's (WHO) advice that "ventilation and separate smoking rooms do not reduce exposure to second-hand smoke to an acceptable or safe level"<sup>1</sup>.

9. Apart from the advice of WHO, we note that some overseas jurisdictions (e.g. United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand) do not allow smoking rooms when they implement indoor smoking bans, and yet some jurisdictions have banned smoking rooms after a number of years of allowing them (e.g. Canada).

10. In view of the inconclusive evidence, we will continue to keep in view the trend and experience of establishing smoking rooms in overseas jurisdictions as well as the relevant international studies and research on the subject matter.

**Food and Health Bureau**  
**Department of Health**  
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<sup>1</sup> MPOWER: A policy package to reverse the tobacco epidemic, World Health Organization, 2008 ([http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/mpower\\_english.pdf](http://www.who.int/tobacco/mpower/mpower_english.pdf), accessed on 19 January 2016)