

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport  
Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways**

**Restrictions on the size of luggage that can be carried  
into the MTR network**

**Purpose**

The MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”) rolled out a four-month trial Registration Scheme for Carriage of Oversized Musical Instruments (“Scheme”) in November 2015 to allow passengers with prior registration to carry oversized musical instruments when travelling on MTR during non-peak hours. The MTRCL also announced back then that, depending on the effectiveness of the trial Scheme, the feasibility of including oversized sports equipment in the Scheme would also be considered. The four-month Scheme has ended. This paper briefs the Subcommittee on the effectiveness of the Scheme, and the latest progress of the review on the size restriction of sports equipment.

**Current conditions of luggage**

2. The MTR network carries more than 5 million passenger trips per day. The safety, reliability and smoothness of railway operation are of paramount importance. Carriage of oversized luggage into the MTR may pose safety risk and inconvenience to railway operation and other passengers. The MTRCL has therefore established a set of conditions of luggage, which state the size restrictions of luggage to be allowed in the MTR network. According to these conditions of luggage, passengers may carry a piece of luggage provided that the total dimensions (i.e. length, width and height) of that piece of luggage do not exceed 170 cm and the length of any one side does not exceed 130 cm. The existing size restrictions have been in place since the rail merger in 2007. Besides, given that heavy luggage carried by some passengers when travelling on East Rail Line may pose safety risk or inconvenience to others, a maximum weight limit of 32 kg for luggage has been imposed for East Rail Line since October 2012. The MTRCL further tightened the weight limit from 32 kg to 23 kg since February 2013. Notices showing size and weight restrictions on luggage are displayed at MTR stations and uploaded to the MTR website for passengers’ reference.

3. When stipulating the size and weight restrictions, the MTRCL has

taken into account the following major factors relating to the safety and operational fronts of railway:

- (a) maintaining clear passageways to ensure smooth passenger flow;
- (b) oversized objects may block the ways and hamper emergency evacuation in stations and trains where necessary; and
- (c) long objects, when in contact with high-voltage overhead lines and equipment, may conduct electricity and lead to electric shock (particularly in the event of detrainment inside tunnels).

4. In 2015, there were approximately 9 000 cases on average every month involving passengers being advised to use other transport modes because their luggage exceeded the prevailing size or weight limits. Generally speaking, the front-line staff will give verbal advice, warnings or take enforcement actions, depending on the circumstances. The number of cases in the past three years (2013 – 2015) involving the MTRCL taking enforcement action against passengers because of carriage of oversized or overweight luggage are at [Annex I](#).

### **Registration Scheme for carriage of oversized musical instruments**

5. In response to views of some passengers on the need to carry relatively larger musical instruments when travelling on MTR, the MTRCL, upon consulting the public and conducting comprehensive risk assessment, rolled out a four-month trial Scheme on 2 November 2015. Passengers are allowed to carry a oversized musical instrument into MTR after applying for a “Carriage of Oversized Musical Instrument Permit” (“Permit”) issued by the MTRCL. Under the Scheme, total dimensions (length, width and height) of the musical instrument should not exceed 235 cm, while the length of any one side should not exceed 145 cm (including the case or bag). The summary of the Scheme is at [Annex II](#).

6. As of 29 February 2016, over 2 300 Permits have been issued by the MTRCL. The MTRCL has not made any prosecution or received any complaints in relation to breaches of conditions under the Permits since the implementation of the Scheme. In the light of the smooth trial and no adverse impact on railway operation, the MTRCL announced on 1 March 2016 that the Scheme would be regularised. All Permits issued during the trial period can be used up to end 2018, and are renewable.

7. According to the MTRCL's assessment, many musical instruments comply with the original size restriction (i.e. the total sum of length, width and height does not exceed 170 cm and the length of any one side does not exceed 130 cm). The MTRCL believes that with the appropriate relaxation arrangement under the Scheme, more and a vast majority of musical instruments can be covered, so as to respond to the needs of various passenger groups.

### **Carriage of oversized sports equipment**

8. During the trial Scheme, the MTRCL received views from various sports groups; some of them suggesting that oversized sports equipment should also benefit from the relaxed size restriction for musical instruments. After preliminary assessment, the MTRCL considers that the vast majority of sports equipment should fall within the original size restriction as stipulated in the current conditions of luggage. Whether the relaxed size restriction for musical instruments should be applied to sports equipment will require detailed risk assessment. As there is a large variety of sports equipment, the assessment takes time. Announcement of the outcome will be made once available.

### **Way forward**

9. The MTRCL will continue to pay attention to the impact of carriage of oversized musical instruments into the MTR under the Scheme on railway service, and will complete the review on whether the size restriction for sports equipment should be relaxed as soon as possible.

**MTR Corporation Limited**  
**April 2016**

**Annex I**

**Enforcement actions taken by the MTRCL in relation to  
the carriage of oversized or overweight luggage by passengers**

Enforcement actions pursuant to the Mass Transit Railway By-laws  
(applicable to the heavy rail network)

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Written warning	6 988	4 881	8 388
Prosecution	90	114	310
Conviction	50	74	125

Enforcement actions pursuant to the Mass Transit Railway (North-West  
Railway) Bylaw (applicable to the Light Rail network)

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Written warning	1	0	2
Prosecution	0	0	0
Conviction	0	0	0

**Summary of the Registration Scheme for  
Carriage of Oversized Musical Instruments**

Scope

- Applicable to musical instruments beyond the current limits but with total sum of length, width and height not exceeding 235 cm and length of any one side not exceeding 145 cm (including the case or bag).
- Passengers with musical instruments falling within the original size restriction (i.e. total sum of length, width and height does not exceed 170 cm and length of any one side does not exceed 130 cm) do not require a Permit to travel on MTR.

Quantity of luggage

- Each passenger can carry only one oversized musical instrument at any one time with the Permit.

Applicable MTR lines

- Applicable to Island Line, Kwun Tong Line, Tsuen Wan Line, Tung Chung Line, Tseung Kwan O Line, Disneyland Resort Line, East Rail Line, Ma On Shan Line and West Rail Line

Travelling Time

- Carriage of oversized musical instruments into MTR will not be allowed during peak hours, i.e. between 8:15 am and 9:15 am (based on the entry time through ticket gates) from Mondays to Fridays, except public holidays.

Application

- Applicants can submit registration forms through the internet, in person or by mail.

- Applicants under the age of 18 are required to have the application forms signed by their parents or legal guardians.

### Validity

- As the MTRCL has already announced that the Scheme be regularised, the validity of all Permits issued during the trial period would be extended until 31 December 2018.