

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Security**

### **Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 7 May 2019**

#### **Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles**

#### **Purpose**

This paper summarizes past discussions of the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on issues relating to Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles ("SCMVs").

#### **Background**

2. According to the Administration, SCMVs with water spray devices have been used in such countries/places as the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Korea and Macau for effectively dispersing protesters who stage violent charging acts, creating a safe distance between protesters and police officers, reducing the chance of injuries to protesters and police officers, and stopping behaviour jeopardizing public safety and public order. After making reference to overseas experience in handling large-scale public assemblies, the Police have procured three SCMVs with water spray device. The vehicles will be equipped with large display screens and public address systems, which can put across the Police's advice, warnings or other messages to the protestors.

#### **Deliberations of the Panel**

3. Issues relating to the procurement of SCMVs were discussed at the Panel meeting on 5 May 2015 in the context of the Police's handling of

public meetings and public processions. The relevant deliberations are summarized in the following paragraphs.

#### Need for Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles

4. Some members expressed reservations about the procurement of SCMVs. These members took the view that when considering the need for SCMVs, the Police should compare the degree of violence of public assemblies in Hong Kong with that of other places, given that participants of public assemblies in Hong Kong were not violent in comparison with those of many other places. Some members also expressed concern that the liquid dye-spraying function of SCMVs was intended merely for the identification of persons to be arrested subsequently.

5. Some other members, however, were of the view that there was a need for the procurement of SCMVs from the perspective of maintaining law and order in Hong Kong. They considered that when demonstrators exhibited more violence, police officers would have to employ a higher level of force to handle the situation. It would be important to maintain a safe distance between protesters and police officers in such a situation to minimize injuries. Similarly, there would also be a need to maintain a safe distance in confrontation between different groups with opposing views. These members expressed doubt about whether demonstrators who staged violent charging could be dispersed by police officers without the assistance of any equipment.

6. Members were advised that according to Principle 2 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials adopted in 1990, governments and law enforcement agencies should develop a range of means as broad as possible and equip law enforcement officials with various types of instruments that could be used for handling different situations. Based on this principle, the Administration considered that the Police should be equipped with a wider range of instruments that could be deployed in situations where necessary.

#### Possibility of injury by water jet sprayed from Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles

7. Some members expressed concern that there had been cases in other countries in which the water jet sprayed from SCMVs had caused blindness or death. Some other members, however, considered that the crux of the

issue was the formulation of strict, reasonable and lawful guidelines on the use of SCMWs.

8. According to the Administration, experience indicated that injuries in large-scale public order events were sustained mostly when there was body contact. With the deployment of the proposed SCMV, a safe distance could be created between demonstrators and police officers, thus reducing the chance of injuries to demonstrators and police officers. In overseas countries, the water spray devices of such vehicles were capable of discharging different spurts of spray with different water pressure. A weaker water pressure was generally applied initially.

#### Training and guidelines on the operation of Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles

9. Members requested the Administration to provide the guidelines on the use of SCMV with water spray devices, after such vehicles were procured. Members were advised that the Police would formulate strict operating guidelines on the use of SCMV. Only trained police officers would be allowed to operate SCMV under supervision. The Police had plans to send officers to advanced countries where such vehicles were deployed in order to study their operational experience. The Police would also study the court cases, if any, relating to the use of such vehicles in these countries. The Police could then formulate guidelines on the use of such vehicles and draw up relevant training programmes accordingly.

#### **Relevant papers**

10. A list of relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

**Relevant papers on  
Specialized Crowd Management Vehicles**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Security	5.5.2015 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>
Legislative Council	13.6.2018	<a href="#">Official Record of Proceedings (Question 9)</a>

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