

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport**

**Measures to Improve Vehicle Safety**  
**TV Monitors and Reversing Horns for Goods Vehicles**

**PURPOSE**

This paper seeks Members' advice on two proposed measures to improve vehicle safety-

- (i) To regulate the installation and use of TV monitors in motor vehicles in the light of the latest technological advancement; and
- (ii) To require the installation of reversing horns by all goods vehicles to reduce traffic accidents caused by vehicles reversing manoeuvres.

**BACKGROUND**

**TV. Monitors**

2. The use of TV monitors in motor vehicles is regulated by Regulation 37 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap.374). The regulation prohibits the installation of television receiving apparatus on a motor vehicle within the view of the driver except other than those designed to give the driver a closed circuit view of any part of the vehicle or the surrounding area. The spirit of the regulation is to ensure that drivers will not be distracted by displays on the TV monitors when they are driving.

3. Regulation 37 was first enacted in 1982. However, technological advancement in automobile industry has rendered this regulation somewhat out of date. It is now the trend for vehicle manufacturers to install visual display (usually liquid crystal display) screens on vehicles within the view of the driver. Information pertaining to the functioning of the vehicle, including average speed, fuel consumption and warning of any vehicle malfunction are displayed on these monitors. In addition, route navigation systems, which can display road maps and indicate the vehicle's location by receiving signals from satellite Global Positioning System, are now being developed and may become a standard feature on vehicles in the future. Many of these visual display units are also capable of receiving commercial television broadcast or viewing other cinematographic products e.g. VCD.

4. The Government has reviewed the legislative framework for regulating the use of TV monitors in motor vehicles in the light of the recent technological developments. It is considered that the use of apparatus for the transmission of useful vehicle information to drivers through such visual display unit can benefit drivers and should be supported. On the other hand, we also need to be cautious against total liberalization which may result in drivers turning to these displays and watch television or cinematographic programmes even while driving. This can become a hazard to other road users.

5. To strike a balance between accepting the benefits of the latest technology and maintaining road safety, it is proposed that -

- (i) the law should be relaxed to allow the installation of the TV monitor which is within the view of the driver; and
- (ii) allow the display only of the following information on TV monitors while the car is being driven -
  - (a) the state of the vehicle and its equipment;
  - (b) location of the vehicle; and
  - (c) the route to be used by the driver to reach his destination.

6. The proposed amendment will still effectively prohibit broadcast in and viewing of commercial television programmes and other cinematographic products while the car is being driven. The intention is that such activities should not be prohibited if the vehicle is not being driven on the roads.

### **Reversing Horns**

7. At present, reversing horns are fitted by some goods vehicles only on a voluntary basis. In view of the growing number of accidents involving reversing movement of goods vehicles, Government is considering the need to legislate for mandatory installation of reversion horns by all goods vehicles to enhance road safety.

8. In the past three years, there had been 580 traffic accidents caused by the reversing manoeuvres of goods vehicles, resulting in 137 cases of serious injuries and 14 fatalities-

	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>
Fatalities	4	4	6
Serious Injuries	53	43	41
Slight Injuries	148	140	141
Total	205	187	188

In view of such alarming accident statistics, it is proposed that installation of reversing horns by goods vehicles be introduced as a measure to alert pedestrians.

9. Environmental Protection Department has been consulted on environmental implications of this proposal. They recommend that as there is at present no control on other audible warning instrument, there is no need to prescribe any noise level standard unless future experience warrants such control. As reversing horns would only be operative for less than 10 seconds in a reversing movement, noise created by reversing horns should not be unacceptable.

10. It is proposed that the requirement for reversing horns should be made mandatory for all goods vehicles. Newly registered goods vehicles will be required to be equipped with reversing horns. A grace period will be given to existing goods vehicles after the enactment of the new legislation. This additional requirement should not cause hardship to goods vehicle owners as the cost of installation should be about \$500. Further extension of this requirement to other types of the vehicles can be reviewed in the light of the experience gained from the scheme for goods vehicles.

## **CONSULTATION**

11. There is initial support of these proposals from the Hong Kong Motor Traders Association and the trucking industry. We will carry out further consultations with the trade before we finalize our proposals.

**ADVICE SOUGHT**

12. Members are requested to give their views on the two proposed measures to improve safety-

- (i) to relax the restrictions on installation of TV monitors as proposed in para 5; and
- (ii) to require mandatory installation of reversing horns by all goods vehicles as proposed in para 10.

Transport Bureau  
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