

For discussion
on 16 June 2000

Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Regulation of Traffic Movement during Road Openings

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the arrangements regarding the regulation of traffic movements during road openings.

Background

2. Road works are frequently carried out by works departments and utility companies for the purposes of improving and maintaining the road or utility networks to better serve the community. These works would inevitably occupy road space and cause certain inconvenience and disruption to users. To minimize the disruption and ensure road safety, all road works are required to be carefully planned in advance. Traffic arrangements during the carrying out of road works need to be agreed by relevant departments including the Police, Transport Department (TD) and Highways Department (HyD).

Legal and Contractual Regulation

3. Before any road openings can be carried out, the road works agent has to devise necessary temporary traffic arrangement to ensure traffic safety. The Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations provide that the person responsible for road works has an obligation to erect and maintain prescribed lanterns, traffic signs and road markings etc and to locate them in the manner set down in the Code of Practice for Lighting, Signing and Guarding of Road Works. Failure to comply with the Regulations may render the person responsible liable to prosecution.

4. To further ensure compliance, standard clauses have been used in all public works contracts. The clauses require the contractor to provide and employ skilled labour for the proper and timely execution of the site works; to take full responsibility for the adequate stability and safety operations on site; and to have full regard for the safety of all persons on the site. The contractor is also obliged to make the site a safe place for his workers as well as for any other persons happened to pass through the site.

Planning and Implementation of Traffic Arrangements

5. The road opening agent has to consult the Police, TD and HyD on the traffic arrangements well in advance of the commencement of site activities. Failure to do so may result in the works being stopped on the spot by the Police and the person responsible being prosecuted. We will critically examine the traffic arrangement proposals and ensure that adequate traffic signs, signals, lighting and lanterns must be available and properly maintained at all times.

6. Should the need arise, traffic impact assessment and/or bus trial run would be made to assess the effect on traffic flow and to determine appropriate arrangements for the works to be carried out. TD will consider relocating bus stops/loading and unloading facilities and imposing stopping restriction as a temporary measure.

7. Usually the Police will inspect the site arrangements and assist in regulating the traffic when the temporary traffic arrangements are put into operation. The Police and TD will closely liaise with the road opening agent and monitor the effectiveness of such arrangements during the construction stage. They will also consider the feedback from road users. If the actual traffic conditions are considered to be different from those expected in the planning stage, the works agent will be requested to revise the traffic arrangements.

8. If the works involve reduction in traffic lanes but the remaining lane width is more than 5.5m, two way traffic movement may still be tolerated. However, if the remaining traffic lane width is less than 5.5m, the

road opening agent is required to operate the reduced lane width as a single lane carriageway by provision of approved portable traffic light signals or prescribed STOP/GO traffic signs for two way traffic movements. The guidelines on the use of portable traffic light signals and prescribed STOP/GO traffic signs as traffic control equipment are contained in the Code of Practice.

9. At locations where traffic flows fluctuate significantly for different hours of the day, the road opening agent would be required to extend the hours of manual control of the temporary signals to make the arrangement more effective.

10. To illustrate, 2 sketches are attached to show the typical arrangements involving signs and signals for road works on single lane carriageway roads with one lane closed.

Enforcement

11. The prescribed road signs, markings, signals and traffic control devices approved by the Government and installed on site have the same status as other normal traffic aids in public roads. All motorists have to obey such regulatory measures. Otherwise they will contravene the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations and be liable on first conviction to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for 3 months and on second or subsequent conviction to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for 6 months. The Police may also issue a fixed penalty ticket of \$450 under Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance for the offences.

Advice Sought

12. Members are requested to note the contents of this paper.

Transport Bureau
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