

Legislative Council Panel on Transport

Progress of Y2K Rectification and Contingency Planning in the Transport Sector

Introduction

At the Panel Meeting held on 25 June 1999, Members requested to follow-up on the progress of Y2K compliance work and contingency planning, and asked the Administration to update Members on the details of the Y2K contingency plans for the transport sector.

2. Subsequent to the above meeting, an information note setting out the Administration's contingency plan and monitoring of the contingency measures by the transport sector was submitted to the Panel at the meeting on 28 July 1999. This paper updates Members on the progress of Y2K rectification work and contingency planning in the transport sector.

Y2K Compliance Position

3. Government has attached great importance to the timely completion of the Y2K rectification work by the public transport service providers. With close monitoring from the Administration, all transport service providers have completed Y2K rectification work by mid-September 1999.

4. The Transport Department and Highways Department have completed their Y2K rectification work for mission critical systems. This means that all Government's transport facilities, including road tunnels, traffic control and surveillance systems, car parks, electronic parking meters and the toll collection system at Tsing Ma Control Area, are all Y2K compliant.

Contingency Planning

Contingency plans of the public transport service providers

5. All major transport service providers, including bus companies, railway corporations, ferries and tunnel operators, have submitted their

contingency plans to the Administration. The transport service providers have taken active steps in the formulation of the contingency plans, including the undertaking of drills and testing to refine the procedures, organization and resources planning for the contingency measures.

6. While individual transport operators have reviewed their respective contingency plans, the Transport Department has taken a further step to examine the contingency plans with a view to refining the plans to tie in with the overall sector-wide contingency plan. In this connection, Transport Department's major objectives are to ensure safety of the travelling public in the occurrence of Y2K-induced disruptions, and to maintain essential transport services as far as possible so as to minimize inconvenience to the public. Other major objectives are -

- (a) to check whether an efficient monitoring system has been instituted by the transport operators for identifying and handling Y2K-induced incidents, including provision of back-up facilities, manpower resources and recovery plans; and
- (b) to ensure efficient and accurate dissemination of information, particularly for adequate publicity and communication between the transport operators and Transport Department.

7. The contingency plans of the transport service providers include setting up monitoring centres, stocking spare materials and reserving manpower resources. A summary of the contingency plans from the major transport service providers is at **Annex A**.

Contingency plans of the Transport Department

8. Contingency plans have been developed for all transport facilities under the Transport Department, including tunnels, licensing office, car parks, computer booking system for vehicle examination and the Cross-Harbour Tunnel, which has reverted to Government on 1 September 1999. **Annex B** lists out the contingency measures for the transport systems under the Department.

Contingency Planning for the Transport Sector

9. The Transport Department assumes an overall co-ordination role in the preparation of a sector-wide Y2K contingency plan. In this connection, a Steering Committee chaired by the Commissioner for Transport has been set up to examine the contingency plans from the public transport service providers and devise the strategy for contingency planning. The sector wide contingency plan has been drawn up having regard to the contingency plans submitted by the transport service providers, the risk assessment on the operation of the transport services due to Y2K and the existing emergency handling arrangement. Details of the plans are set out below.

Organization setting

10. Based on the existing emergency transport coordination and response system, the Transport Department will activate the Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) on 31 December 1999 and during the rollover to other Y2K critical dates for the central coordination of transport services. The ETCC will report regularly to the Y2K Central Coordination Centre (Y2K CCC) on all major incidents identified. The organization chart showing the structure of the ETCC is at **Annex C**.

Manpower resources

11. The Transport Department and public transport service providers will deploy additional manpower resources to monitor the provision of services on the Y2K critical dates. In particular, the ETCC will be manned by over 50 staff from the Transport Department, Police, and the essential public transport service providers during the roll over period. Apart from the staff manning the ETCC, the Transport Department will set up observation teams to help monitor on site the traffic conditions and provision of transport services during the roll over. The essential transport service providers will assign a liaison officer to the ETCC to act as the point of contact and facilitate communication between the ETCC and the operator concerned.

Communication strategy

12. In the event that any Y2K-induced problems are identified, the relevant transport service providers will immediately alert the ETCC and the

relevant parties, and implement their prescribed contingency plans. The field teams will also report any incidents to the ETCC. The ETCC will activate the appropriate contingency plans having regard to the nature and impact of the incidents and report to Y2K CCC. A reporting and logging system will be in place for efficient collection and dissemination of information. Each transport service provider will set up a command centre for direct liaison and communication with the ETCC.

Scenario Planning

13. The Transport Department has, in consultation with the relevant Government departments and public transport service providers, drawn up the action plans under different scenarios of Y2K-induced incidents. A brief summary of the action plans under the major planning scenarios is at **Annex D**. Each scenario will be supported by detailed plans.

Testing

14. The transport sector has taken part in a series of drills and exercises coordinated by the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting since September 1999. Further exercises will be conducted in end October and November 1999 to help identify any gaps in the sector-wide Y2K contingency plan and to enable all the relevant parties to be fully conversant with their respective roles. The Transport Department will further refine the sector-wide contingency plan if inadequacies are identified.

Publicity

15. In the run up to the millennium roll over, the Transport Department and the major public transport service providers will arrange suitable publicity programmes to inform the public of the Y2K readiness of the transport sector. A summary of the sector-wide contingency plan for the transport sector will be publicized towards the end of the year through various channels to let the public know the arrangements in case of public transport services disruption.

Special transport and traffic arrangements for millennium celebration

16. The special transport and traffic arrangements for millennium celebration are being finalized by the Administration in collaboration with the

relevant public transport service providers. The sector-wide contingency plan will take into account these arrangements and be revised as necessary.

Way forward

17. The Transport Department will continue to work closely with other Government departments and public transport operators to ensure the smooth transition to 2000 and other Y2K critical dates.

Transport Department
20 October 1999

Annex A

Highlights of the Y2K Contingency Plan from various Transport Service Providers

KCRC East Rail

- in case of control and signal system failure, to conduct initial system rectification and switch to manual operation if rectification fails.
- to request the Public Omnibus Operators Association (POOA) to operate shuttle bus services, such as from Fo Tan or Shatin Station to Mong Kok Station and from Tai Po to Sheung Shui or Lo Wu Station.

MTRC

- Urban Line: in case of control and signal system failure, to conduct initial system rectification and switch to remote manual (RM) operation if rectification fails.
- Airport Express and Tung Chung Line: in case of control and signal system failure, to conduct initial system rectification and stop operation completely if rectification fails.
- to request the bus operators to strengthen their services that run in parallel to the MTR corridor and request POOA to operate shuttle bus service as necessary.

Light Rail Transit

- to switch on all lighting system at all LRT stations manually on 31.12.1999 and 1.1.2000 as a precautionary measure.
- in case of control system failure, to conduct initial system rectification and switch to manual operation. Service level remains normal under manual operation.

Bus Services

- to top up all fuel tank.
- to prepare soft back up as well as hard copies of schedule and not to change schedule on the last week of December 1999 and use the same schedule on the first week of January 2000 as necessary.
- to adopt mix bus types deployment on all essential routes to ensure continuity of service or to re-deploy bus types from other routes should a specific type of bus be affected by Y2K problem.
- to implement predetermined service priority plan depending on the availability of fleet.

Hongkong Tramways and Peak Tramways

- Hongkong Tramways to arrange for the return of all trams to depot should two or more of its power sub-stations fail.
- Peak Tramways will switch to manual operation and manual fare collection should the control/fare collection systems fail.

Ferry Services

- to switch to manual steering if the auto-pilot system, global positioning system or radar fails.
- to prepare hard copies of schedules and important documents.

Tunnels and Tsing Ma Control Area

- to implement manual toll collection and issue pre-printed "Toll paid ticket" to drivers should the computerized toll collection systems fail.
- to close all auto-toll lanes initially but allow auto-toll users to use other toll lanes without payment (after dropping down details) if the auto-toll systems fail.
- to revert to manual fall back system.
- to close down tunnel (excluding the lower deck of Lantau Link) in case of power failure.

Annex B

Contingency Plans for Transport Department's Facilities

(a) Toll Collection Systems

All systems are already Y2K compliant. However, in the unlikely event of system failure, the contingency arrangements will be by means of manual operation.

(b) Traffic Control and Surveillance System

Similar to the toll collection system, they are also Y2K compliant. In case

of system failure, the contingency arrangement will be manual operation through increased patrol frequency.

(c) Central Monitoring & Control System/Environmental Monitoring System

Apart from being Y2K compliant, these systems are equipped with panels for manual control. Hence, the contingency arrangement in case of system failure will be by means of manual operation.

(d) Communication System

All tunnels and TMCA are equipped with two or more communication systems. Switching to the other communication system will be the fall back arrangement.

(e) Area Traffic Control System

The central computer systems are already Y2K compliant. In addition, failure of the central computer system is not expected to affect the operation of individual roadside controllers and no safety problem will arise.

(f) Licensing /Vehicle examination System

The systems are Y2K compliant. However if the existing computer system fails to function, applications for licence and vehicle examination and booking can still be processed manually.

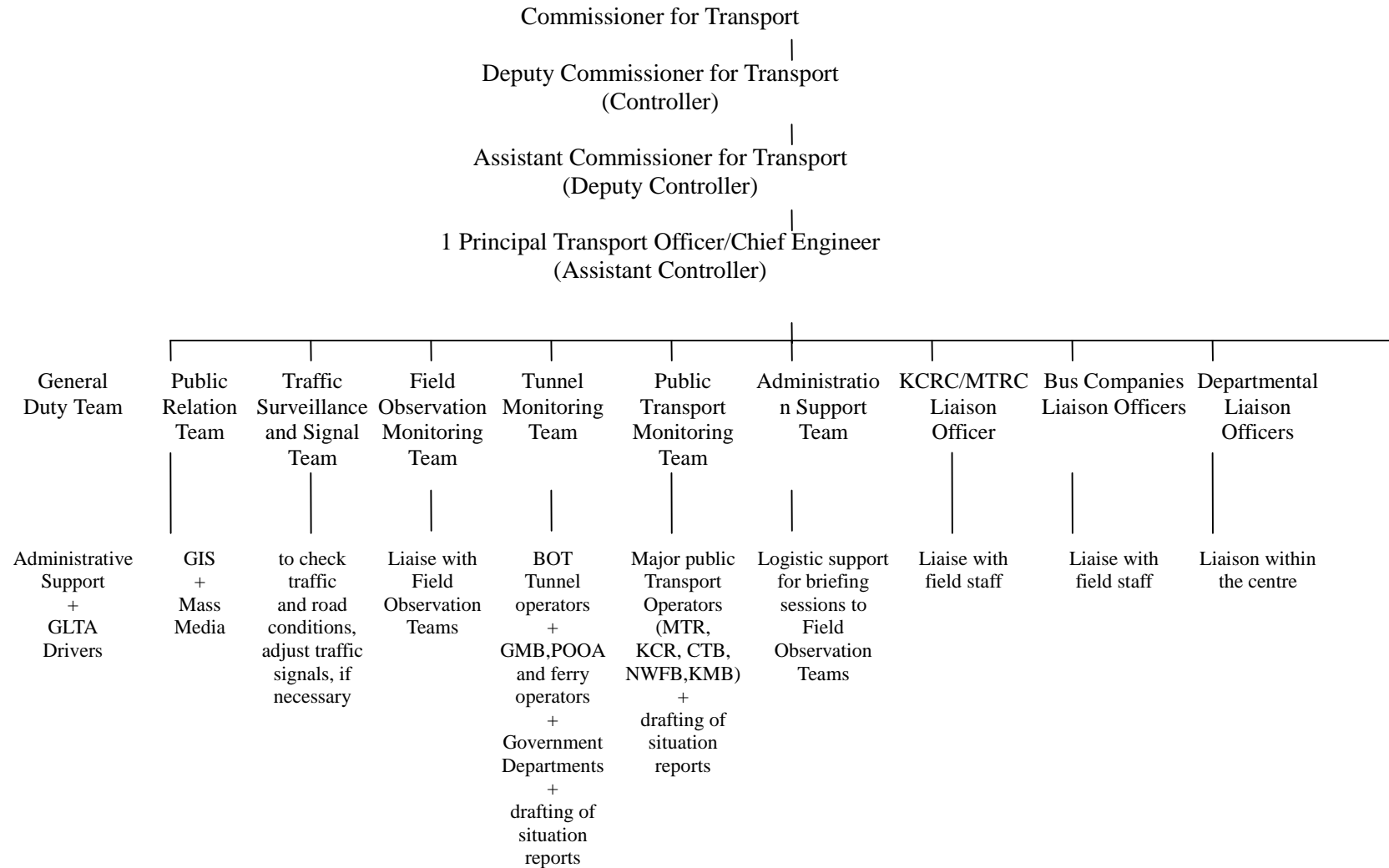
(g) Booking/Written test marking system

The fall back arrangement is to process booking and marking manually

(h) Car park

The access control computer systems are Y2K compliant. However, in case the access control system fails, manual operation of the access control system will be the fall back arrangement.

Organization Chart of the ETCC



Annex D

Brief Summary of Action Plans

Contingency transport arrangement strategy

- Encourage interchange by suspending the operation of long haul bus services but strengthening feeder services.
- Suspend the operation of recreational routes if regular bus service is nearby.
- Suspend the rail feeder bus routes that only serve as feeder to railways in the event that a railway fails to operate.
- Implement short working, truncation and half empty despatch arrangement for bus services as necessary.
- Reserve extra buses during the transition.
- Strengthen rail services as appropriate.

Crowd control arrangement strategy

- The ETCC to notify the Police of service disruption and request the Police to step up crowd control in the vicinity of the venue of the function/event and to keep a close watch on the need for crowd control assistance at appropriate venues/locations, including major termini, railway stations and en-route bus stops as alerted by the transport operators.

Publicity arrangement strategy

- The ETCC to issue media announcements covering details of disruption to transport services, encourage the public to take alternative modes in such circumstances and answer media enquiry.

Communication procedures

- The ETCC to maintain close liaison with the command centres of respective transport service providers and report to the Y2K CCC of all Y2K induced problem identified.