



Transport

Research Office
Legislative Council Secretariat

Statistical Highlights

ISSH12/18-19

Franchised buses in Hong Kong

Figure 1 – Selected public transport patronage, 2007-2017

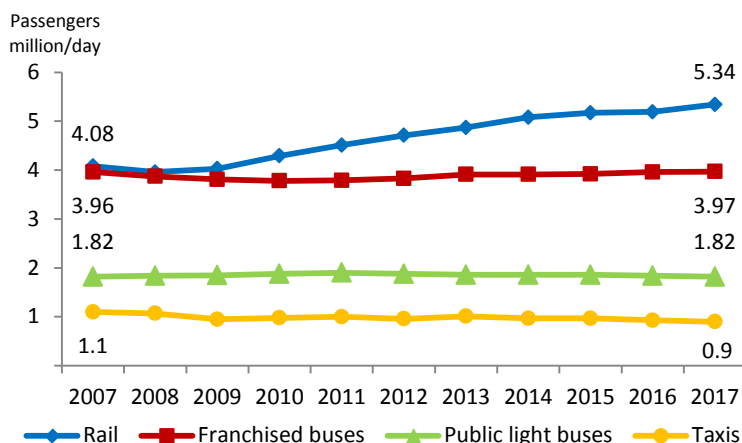
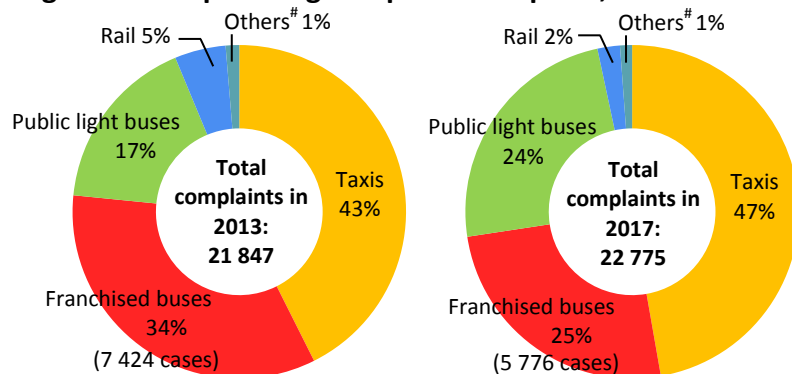


Figure 2 – Complaints against public transport[@], 2013 and 2017



Notes: (@) Percentage may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
(#) "Others" refers to non-franchised buses and ferries.

Figure 3 – Lost trip[^] rates of franchised bus services, 2008-2017

Bus operators*	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
KMB	3.2%	3.3%	6.5%	8.0%	4.6%	2.8%	2.6%	1.3%	1.5%	2.0%
CTB(F1)	1.9%	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%	3.0%	2.0%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%	1.9%
CTB(F2)	0.9%	0.5%	0.4%	0.9%	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.7%	1.6%
NWFB	2.9%	2.2%	2.5%	3.1%	4.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.0%	2.4%	2.6%
LWB	0.8%	0.5%	1.2%	2.6%	2.6%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%	0.7%	1.4%
NLB	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%

Notes: (^) Lost trip refers to situations whereby bus operators fail to operate departures that should otherwise be operated.
(*) KMB – Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited.
CTB(F1) – Citybus Limited (Franchise for Hong Kong Island and Cross-Harbour Bus Network).
CTB(F2) – Citybus Limited (Franchise for Airport and North Lantau Bus Network).
NWFB – New World First Bus Services Limited.
LWB – Long Win Bus Company Limited.
NLB – New Lantau Bus Company (1973) Limited.

Highlights

- Railways and franchised buses are the two major modes of public transport in Hong Kong. Since 2007, railways have overtaken franchised buses as the largest passenger carrying mode in Hong Kong (Figure 1). The gap between the two has widened in recent years with the introduction of new railway services such as opening of the South Island Line and Kwun Tong Line Extension.
- Notwithstanding the above development, franchised buses on average carried some 4 million passengers each day in 2017 that constituted 31% of total public transport patronage. Amid the still relatively high patronage, the quality of franchised bus services has always been an issue of concern to the general public.
- Franchised bus services remained one of the major sources of passenger complaints in 2017. There were 5 776 complaint cases, accounting for the second highest percentage share or 25% of all the complaint cases on public transport services (Figure 2). Most complaints were about conduct and performance of staff, improper driving behaviour and regularity of service.
- As shown in Figure 2, the 2017 complaint figures, nevertheless, improved on those of 2013. According to the Transport Complaints Unit, such improvement was attributable to the concerted effort of the bus companies in enhancement of training to bus captains ("BCs") and improvements of passenger facilities (e.g. provision of next bus arrival time enquiry services).
- The improvement on the regularity of service also contributed to reduced number of complaint cases against bus operators ("BOs"). Reflecting this, the lost trips due to BC shortage and traffic congestion have generally been on the decline since the peak in 2011 and 2012 (Figure 3), consequential to the measures taken by bus companies to employ part-time BCs, rehire retired BCs, and adjust service timetable of individual routes to better reflect the actual operational situation.

Franchised buses in Hong Kong (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Bus route rationalization under the Area Approach, 2013-2017

Region/ District	No. of routes cancelled, truncated, or with frequency reduced	No. of new routes introduced, or routes with service improved	Percentage change in overall patronage after rationalization
North	8	15	+6%
Tuen Mun	10	9	+6%
Yuen Long	5	17	+8.8%
Sha Tin	9	10	+2.7%
Tsing Yi	7	3	+3.5%
Tai Po	5	12	+3.6%
Kowloon	2	6	+7.2%
	31	0	-15.4% ^{#(i)}
Central and Western	15	0	-35.8% ^{#(ii)}
Southern	8	2	-23.8% ^{#(ii)}
	36	0	-36.9% ^{#(iii)}

Note: (#) Changes in patronage after implementation of the bus route rationalization in relation to the opening of (i) Kwun Tong Line Extension, (ii) West Island Line and (iii) South Island Line respectively.

Figure 5 – Monitoring of bus services, 2013-2017

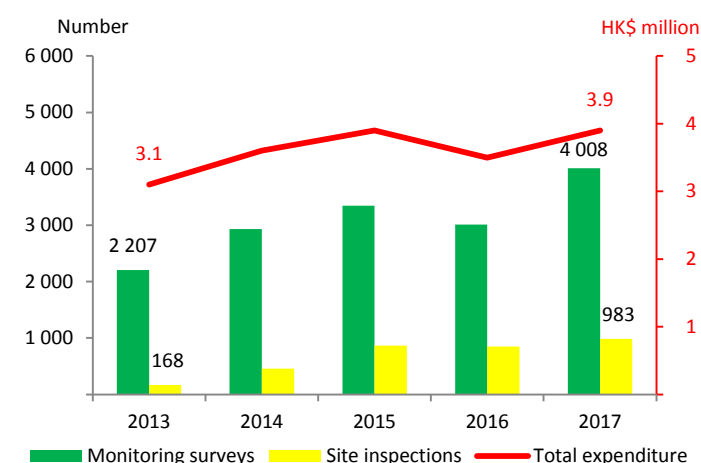
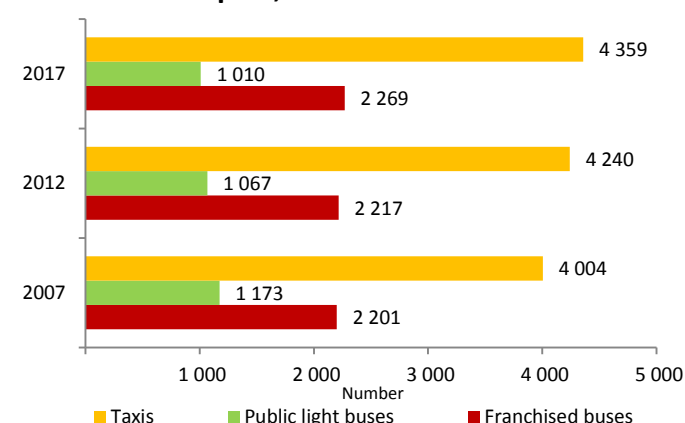


Figure 6 – Traffic accidents of selected public transport, 2007-2017



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Highlights

- In a further effort to improve the quality of franchised bus service, the Transport Department and BOs have since 2013 been implementing bus route rationalization under the Area Approach. Under the Area Approach, bus services are reviewed holistically for a district as a whole rather than on a route-by-route basis. This allows bus resources to be deployed flexibly to provide new or enhanced services where demand is high. Services with low demand are meanwhile reduced or cancelled so as to utilize resources efficiently. During 2013-2017, 136 bus routes were cancelled, truncated, or with frequency reduced. There were also 74 bus routes newly introduced or with service improved over the period.
- The patronage of buses serving the New Territories increased by some 3% to 9% during 2013-2017 (**Figure 4**), suggesting rationalization was effective to a certain extent. Meanwhile, the patronage of buses serving Kowloon and the Hong Kong Island declined markedly after the implementation of the bus reorganization plans in relation to the commissioning of new railways in urban areas.
- Franchised bus safety has been another area of public concern. In recent years, the Government has conducted more monitoring surveys and site inspections to monitor the service delivery of various BOs (**Figure 5**). However, the number of bus accidents amounted to 2 269 in 2017, roughly at the same level a decade ago (**Figure 6**). The recent outbreak of the fatal bus crashes in September 2017 and February 2018 respectively have aggravated public concern over the safety of franchised buses and the arrangements on working hours and rest time of BCs in particular.
- In response to increased call for improving bus safety, the Chief Executive set up an independent review committee in March 2018 to review regulatory system of franchised buses and recommend safety-related measures. In July 2018, the Government also reported to the Legislative Council a number of follow-up measures to enhance franchised bus safety, including (a) installation of in-vehicle safety devices and passenger seat belts for buses; and (b) promulgation of a practical note governing the structure of the training arrangement for BCs, irrespective of whether they are full-time or part-time BCs.

Data sources: Latest figures from Transport and Housing Bureau, Transport Department and Transport Complaints Unit.