

Administration's Response to Members' Written Questions

Written questions from Hon Albert Cheng on 16 June 2005:

Q1 To law enforcement personnel, would it be more difficult to memorize and easier to remember wrongly a vehicle registration mark (VRM) consisting of 8 characters?

A1 The Hong Kong Police Force's position is that the Personalized Vehicle Registration Marks (PVRMs) Scheme does not give rise to concerns from an enforcement point of view. A PVRM consisting of 8 characters does not necessarily mean that it is more difficult to remember. For example, it may probably be easier for some people to remember a PVRM by attaching to it a special meaning. Furthermore, in law enforcement, the agencies generally refer to, apart from the VRM of a vehicle, the full description of the particulars of the vehicle, including the type, make, model, color, etc as well, and check these information against the registration records in the computerized licensing system of the Transport Department (TD). The Police do not expect particular difficulties in tracing the wanted vehicles bearing a PVRM, if required.

Q2 Would it be more difficult to remember VRM consisting of intermixing letters and numerals (e.g. E5H69YTJ) than a VRM consisting of letters and numerals in separate groups?

A2 A VRM consisting of intermixing letters and numerals does not necessarily mean that it is more difficult to remember. For example, it may probably be easier for some people to remember such PVRM as "A11 4 U" by attaching to it a special meaning. With the assistance of the Police, relevant Government departments and non-official members, TD will ensure that those PVRM applications which will likely be confusing for law enforcement will not be approved.

Written questions from Hon Wong Ting-kwong on 17 June 2005:

Q1 In a hit-and-run traffic accident in which a pedestrian is injured, would it be more difficult for the pedestrian to report the VRM to the relevant authority if he is under-educated and does not know the letters?

A1 Any difficulty in reading letters will apply to both the existing VRMs and the proposed PVRMs, as the existing VRMs are commonly prefixed with letters. In law enforcement, the agencies generally refer to, apart from the VRM of a vehicle, the full description of the particulars of the vehicle, including the type, make, model, color, etc as well, and check these information against the registration records in the computerized licensing system of TD. These particulars, together with any numerals in the VRM (in case the injured pedestrian is not able to recognize the letters), if recorded by the injured pedestrian, will all help the Police to trace the vehicle concerned.

Q2 Can the cameras installed on road (i.e. speed cameras) effectively handle personalized vehicle registration marks?

A2 Currently, the Speeding Enforcement Camera and the Red Light Camera can record the VRMs of the vehicles committing the related traffic offences for further processing by the Police for prosecution action. To tie in with the implementation of the proposed PVRMs Scheme, these traffic enforcement systems will be enhanced. The necessary cost is estimated to be about \$3 million and has been included in the estimated one-off cost of \$16 million for implementing the proposed Scheme.

Treasury Branch

Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau

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