

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

**Minutes of special meeting on
Thursday, 28 June 2012, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- Members absent** : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

**Public Officers
attending** : **Agenda item I**

Mr YAU Shing-mu, JP
Under Secretary for Transport and Housing

Mr José YAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and
Housing(Transport)4

Mr K M LEUNG
Assistant Director/Railways
Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

Miss LUI Ying
Assistant Commissioner/Bus & Railway
Transport Department

Mr Ken HUI
Principal Transport Officer/Bus & Railway 2
Transport Department

**Attendance by
invitation** : **Agenda item I**

Mr Adi LAU
Chief of Operating
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr David LEUNG
Chief of Operations Engineering
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Alan CHENG
Head of Operating - West Region
MTR Corporation Limited

Mr Jeff LEUNG
Senior Manager – External Affairs
MTR Corporation Limited

Clerk in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Mr Franco KWONG
Council Secretary (1)2

Ms Emily LIU
Legislative Assistant (1)2

Action

I Recent railway incidents and MTRCL's contingency arrangements and maintenance work

(LC Paper CB(1)2236/11-12(01)	No. - MTRCL's paper entitled "MTR railway service performance"
LC Paper CB(1)1162/11-12(01)	No. - MTRCL's paper entitled "Occurrences of non-stopping of MTR trains or door opening procedures not properly followed by MTR train captains"
LC Paper CB(1)2236/11-12(02)	No. - Background brief entitled "MTRCL's contingency arrangements and maintenance work" prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

The Subcommittee deliberated (Index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

Railway service performance

2. With the aid of Powerpoint presentation, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) briefed the Subcommittee on the railway service performance, contingency arrangements for railway incidents and maintenance regime for the period between 1 January and 31 May 2012.

3. The Subcommittee noted that there were 82 delays for the heavy rail network during the said period. 78 of these delays were between 8 and 30 minutes; three were between 31 and 60 minutes; and there was one delay that exceeded one hour, which was the West Rail Line (WRL) incident on 3 May 2012 causing 93-minute delay and suspension of train service between Nam Cheong Station and Tsuen Wan West Station. Of the 82 delays, 48 were caused by equipment failure. For the light rail network, there were 41 delays of 8 minutes or more. Of them, 11 delays were caused by equipment failure.

Action

4. Subcommittee members expressed the following concerns on railway service performance –

- (a) MTRCL should put more efforts to analyzing the common causes of service disruptions so as to formulate effective preventive measures accordingly;
- (b) MTRCL should introduce a mechanism for the offer of compensations to passengers affected in railway incidents, and the Administration should consider apportioning blame for railway incidents or introducing a penalizing mechanism;
- (c) as a number of the train service delays were caused by equipment failure, MTRCL should review whether it should increase investments to maintain and upgrade railway systems.

Admin/
MTRCL

5. At the request of the Subcommittee, MTRCL agreed to provide supplementary information on the causes of the aforementioned 48 delays for the heavy rail network caused by equipment failure for members' reference.

Occurrences of non-stopping of MTR trains or door opening procedures not properly followed by MTR train captains

6. The Subcommittee was also briefed by MTRCL on the recent occurrences of non-stopping or door opening procedures not properly followed by train captains. Between 1 October 2011 and 31 January 2012, there were two occurrences of door opening procedures not properly followed by train captains for the heavy rail network. Subcommittee members expressed concern about passenger safety in these incidents and the improvement measures to minimize human errors in order to prevent recurrence of similar incidents.

7. MTRCL advised that the train captains concerned were temporarily relieved from driving duties and required to attend re-training courses and complete re-qualification before being allowed to resume driving duties. Measures had been taken to prevent the reoccurrence of such cases due to human errors, such as reminding all train captains to strictly follow the door opening procedures when stopping at MTR stations and Light Rail stops by issuing reminders and conducting briefings.

Action

West Rail Line (WRL) service disruption on 3 May 2012

8. With the aid of Powerpoint presentation, MTRCL briefed the Subcommittee on the WRL service disruption on 3 May 2012. Subcommittee members in general expressed concern about the effectiveness of the contingency measures implemented in the course of the incident and urged MTRCL to make improvements. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that he was also stranded during the incident and expressed strong dissatisfaction with the MTRCL's contingency measures, in particular, those relating to information dissemination and crowd control.

9. MTRCL advised that it had identified the following areas for improvement in handling train service delays and serious disruptions –

- (a) in case of similar occurrences in the future, the Operations Control Centre would directly disseminate information through the centralized public announcement system to passengers on train;
- (b) a new smartphone app "Traffic News" would be launched in the third quarter of 2012, which would assist passengers to better plan their journeys by providing up-to-date information of serious service disruptions of over 20 minutes directly to their smartphones; and
- (c) regarding crowd control at Tsuen Wan West Station, passengers would be guided to only Exit A of the station to reach the emergency bus pick up/drop off points at the public transport interchange to improve the queuing order.

10. The Administration had reviewed the MTRCL's established contingency plans to handle service disruptions and the measures implemented by MTRCL in the course of the WRL incident. The Administration considered that the improvement measures proposed by MTRCL were appropriate.

Action

II Any other business

11. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:05 am.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 September 2012

Panel on Transport

Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways

Proceedings of the special meeting on Thursday, 28 June 2012, at 8:30 am in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
Agenda item I – Recent railway incidents and MTRCL's contingency arrangements and maintenance work			
000128 – 000253	Chairman	Opening remarks	
000254 – 001919	Chairman Administration MTRCL	Briefing and Powerpoint presentation by the Administration and MTRCL (LC Paper No. CB(1)2236/11-12(01)).	
001920 – 002701	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	<p>Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that he was stranded during the West Rail Line (WRL) incident. He expressed strong dissatisfaction with the areas for improvement in incident handling set out in paragraphs 26 to 29 of MTRCL's paper. He highlighted the following salient points –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the public announcement did not provide the details of incident; (b) entry gates of affected stations were still in operation, making the problem of overcrowding more serious; (c) escalators of affected stations were switched off and the passengers stranded were required to walk up staircases to the concourse level; (d) insufficient manpower to provide assistance to passengers and implement crowd management measures; and (e) insufficient signage to guide passengers to the waiting location of emergency buses (e-bus). <p>Mr WONG said that he had expressed his views to the Administration earlier, but it did not attend to it. He considered that the Administration failed to perform its monitoring role.</p>	
002702 – 003504	Chairman Mr Ronny TONG MTRCL	Mr Ronny TONG expressed dissatisfaction with the large number of delays due to equipment failure. He enquired whether MTRCL had analyzed the	MTRCL to provide information (para. 5 of minutes)

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>service disruptions, hereby finding out the causes in common and formulating preventive measures.</p> <p>MTRCL confirmed that regular internal meetings were held to discuss service disruptions. It agreed to provide supplementary information on the analysis of the 48 delays of heavy rail network between 1 January and 31 May 2012.</p>	
003505 – 004322	Chairman Mr WONG Sing-chi MTRCL Administration	<p>Expressing disappointment with the increase in service delays caused by equipment failure, Mr WONG Sing-chi considered that MTRCL should introduce a mechanism for penalizing the management staff of MTRCL for their failure to ensure smooth operation of railway service; and make compensation to the passengers affected by service delays. He also enquired whether there was a relationship between frequent occurrence of equipment failures and the ageing problem of the railway system.</p> <p>MTRCL responded that –</p> <p>(a) safety was the top priority in MTR operation. The MTR train operation system was designed to be fail-safe, and built-in protections were in place every system which would bring train operation to an automatic halt whenever any irregularity was detected to facilitate the required inspection;</p> <p>(b) more than \$4 billion was invested each year into the maintenance, repair and renewal of railway assets; and</p> <p>(c) MTRCL apologized for the inconvenience caused to the passengers who were delayed in their journeys.</p> <p>Chairman urged the MTRCL's representatives to relay the members' proposal of setting up a compensation mechanism to the Executives for consideration.</p>	
004323 – 005245	Chairman Miss Tanya CHAN MTRCL Administration	<p>Sharing the views of Mr Ronny TONG, Miss Tanya CHAN also considered that preventive measures were very important. She enquired –</p> <p>(a) the number of delays caused by equipment failure in recent years; and</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required																
		<p>(b) the frequency of staff meetings for discussing service disruptions.</p> <p>MTRCL responded –</p> <p>(a) the numbers of delays caused by equipment failure from 2005 to 2011 –</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><u>Year</u></th> <th><u>Number of delays</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>240</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2006</td> <td>168</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2007</td> <td>134</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>120</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>112</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>125</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>139</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>and;</p> <p>(b) the meetings would be held every week and month among different levels of management and maintenance staff to discuss the points to note on maintenance and recent incidents caused by equipment failure.</p> <p>The Administration responded –</p> <p>(a) the Transport Department was responsible for monitoring railway services, whilst the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) was responsible for railway safety. Efforts had been made to assess the causes of incidents. Having regard to the large number of train journeys a day, the Administration considered the number of delays not unacceptable. There was no sign of systematic problem; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration was empowered to take punitive action against MTRCL in the event that the failure was substantial and persistent in nature.</p>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of delays</u>	2005	240	2006	168	2007	134	2008	120	2009	112	2010	125	2011	139	
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005246 – 010247	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration MTRCL	<p>In response to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's previous speech and enquiries, the Administration said that it had taken his views on the WRL incident seriously.</p> <p>MTRCL advised that –</p> <p>(a) some passengers could not clearly hear the public announcement made by train captains of</p>																	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>individual trains to provide information on service disruption. On review, in case of similar occurrences in the future, Operations Control Centre would directly disseminate information through the centralized public announcement system to passengers on train; and</p> <p>(b) crowd control measures were in place at the affected stations to ensure the safety of passengers, including temporarily stopping the operation of escalators when the concourse level was quite crowded and danger might arise if more passengers were delivered from the platform level to the concourse level.</p> <p>The Administration advised that EMSD had reviewed the relevant MTRCL's operation manual and the measures taken by MTRCL during the incident. It considered that the measures undertaken and the areas for improvement identified by MTRCL were appropriate.</p> <p>Mr WONG remained unconvinced of the MTRCL's explanation of the need to stop the escalators. He considered that the problem of overcrowding stemmed from insufficient manpower at the concourse level to channel the stranded passengers.</p>	
010248 – 011159	Chairman Mr WONG Sing-chi MTRCL Administration	<p>Given the frequent occurrence of railway incidents, Mr WONG Sing-chi considered that the Administration should consider introducing a penalizing mechanism for MTRCL and MTRCL should make compensations to the passengers affected by service delays.</p> <p>With reference to the MTRCL's paper entitled "Occurrences of non-stopping of MTR trains or door opening procedures not properly followed by MTR train captains" (LC Paper No. CB(1)1162/11-12(01)), Mr WONG enquired whether there was a loophole in the established procedures that the train captain concerned could activate the override switch to open train doors before obtaining authorization from the Operations Control Centre.</p> <p>MTRCL advised that under normal train operations, if a train was not stopped at the proper stopping position, the train doors could not be opened.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker	Subject(s)	Action required
		After the review of workflow, the established procedures were revised that the Operations Control Centre would first ascertain whether the train was stopped at the proper stopping position through CCTV and monitoring device, before authorizing the train captain to activate the override switch.	
011200 – 011759	Chairman Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	Mr WONG Kwok-hing strongly condemned MTRCL for failing to implement effective and sufficient contingency measures in the course of the WRL incident. Mr WONG also strongly criticized the Administration for failing to monitor MTRCL and accepting the MTRCL's explanations easily.	
011800 – 013056	Chairman Mr WONG Sing-chi MTRCL	Mr WONG Sing-chi enquired about any further measures in place to prevent human errors committed by train captains. MTRCL advised that – (a) the safety design of MTR railway system was in line with the international standard; (b) there was an operational need to maintain the override switch. To avoid any inadvertent activation, the switch had been covered and placed at the back of train captain seat; and (c) the train captain concerned was temporarily relieved from driving duties and was required to attend retraining courses and complete re-qualification before resuming driving duties.	
013057 – 013311	Chairman MTRCL	In response to the Chairman's enquiry, MTRCL advised that to improve queuing order, passengers would be guided to only use Exit A of Tsuen Wan West Station to reach the e-bus pick-up/drop-off point in the future.	