

香港特別行政區政府
保安局



The Government of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Security Bureau

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20 November 2012

Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Fax No.: 2185 7845)

Dear Miss MA,

Panel on Security
Theft Cases of Passengers' Luggage or Belongings by Taxi Drivers

I refer to your letter dated 26 October 2012. Regarding Members' concern over theft cases in which luggage or belongings of passengers, in particular tourists, were stolen by taxi drivers, we would like to provide information as follows:-

Reported Figures of Theft of Passengers' Luggage or Belongings by Taxi Drivers

According to the information provided by the Police, a total of 19 theft cases of passengers' luggage or belongings by taxi drivers were reported to the Police from January to 31 October 2012, with two cases involving Hong Kong residents and 17 others involving Mainland tourists or foreigners. With regard to the modus operandi of such cases, some passengers reported that they were suddenly asked by the drivers to get off the taxis which sped away before they could retrieve their luggage from the trunks, or that the

drivers, upon arriving at the destinations, quickly drove away after the passengers had alighted and before they could retrieve their luggage from the trunks of the taxis.

Follow-up Actions on the Cases by the Police

The Police arrested a total of five taxi drivers in suspected connection with the above cases. One of them was convicted in July and sentenced to five months' imprisonment. Another one was convicted in September and sentenced to 100 hours' community service.

The Police attach great importance to such cases, which have been referred to Regional Crime Unit of Kowloon West for consolidated follow-up investigation. There is currently no evidence to suggest that syndicate elements are involved in such cases. However, the vast majority of the tourist victims cannot provide the Police with information such as the vehicle registration numbers of the taxis involved or the names of the drivers, which makes the investigation all the more difficult.

The Police have set up an "Advice to Visitors" section on their Public Page, informing tourists that taxi drivers must display their Taxi Driver Identity Plates inside the vehicle compartments on which their photographs, names in both Chinese and English, as well as the vehicle registration numbers of the taxis are shown. In that the "Advice to Visitors" section, tourists are also encouraged to request the drivers to print out fare receipts which bear the vehicle registration numbers of the taxis. To combat such kind of crime, the Police have also strengthened specific enforcement actions, which include stepping up patrols at black spots and carrying out intelligence-led operations.

In addition, the Police maintain active contact with the Hong Kong Airport Authority (HKAA), hoping that the HKAA will upgrade the CCTV systems in the vicinity of the airport taxi stands and step up their efforts in reminding inbound tourists to jot down the vehicle registration numbers of the taxis.

Legislation and Penalties

Theft of luggage or belongings of tourists by taxi drivers is a serious offence. The person concerned might commit the offence of "theft" under Section 2 of the Theft Ordinance (Chapter 210 of the Laws of Hong Kong): A person commits theft if he dishonestly appropriates property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

Any person who commits theft shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction upon indictment to imprisonment for 10 years.

Yours sincerely,

(Millie NG)
for Secretary for Security