

**(Translation)**

Secretary General  
(Attn.: Ms. Sophie LAU)  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
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Central, Hong Kong  
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6 August 2015

Dear Ms. LAU,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 May enclosing the Hon. Gary FAN's letter of 20 May to Chairman of the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council regarding the training and duty schedule arrangements for bus captains of franchised buses.

The Government has all along been attaching great importance to the safe operation of franchised buses. The Transport Department ("TD") and franchised bus companies have put in place appropriate measures in respect of training and rest time arrangements for bus captains.

According to the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations, all bus captains must pass TD's driving test and hold a valid driving licence for "Public Bus" or "Public Bus - Franchised" for driving franchised buses. Holders of such driving licences have already met TD's basic driving skill requirements.

The franchised bus companies provide various types of training for newly-recruited and serving bus captains based on their respective daily operational needs. Depending on whether he/she is a holder of a driving licence for buses, a new recruit will receive driving training for a minimum of 13 to 28 days. Over the last ten years, none of the franchised bus companies have shortened the duration of the training for newly-recruited bus captains. The training for the new recruits includes classroom lessons and on-site practice in such areas as driving skills, incident handling, customer service and familiarisation of different bus models and bus routes. After completing the training, bus captains will

normally be familiar with several bus routes and bus models. Serving bus captains are required to receive enhancement training lasting several days on a regular basis, and attend refresher training where necessary. If a bus captain is assigned to serve a new route or drive a new bus model, the bus company will arrange training for him/her as necessary.

To ensure that bus captains have sufficient rest time, the franchised bus companies currently arrange their duty schedules in accordance with the *Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks* promulgated by the TD. Moreover, having regard to actual operational needs and passenger demand, the bus companies will flexibly deploy their bus captains and buses. Whenever such flexible deployment is required, the bus companies will endeavor to help their bus captains get prepared.

In response to the reports in May 2015 that there were bus captains who did not know the bus routes and bus models that they were driving well, the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (“KMB”) conducted an investigation and took follow-up actions. KMB has also reviewed the training arrangement for its bus captains and strengthened the training to further familiarise bus captains with the bus routes and bus models. The training arrangements are as follows –

- (a) **Providing additional assistance to serving bus captains :**  
Upon completion of the training programme on routes, a serving bus captain may request an inspector or a senior “buddy” to travel on board to provide assistance when he/she drives on the new route for the first time. Also, KMB will arrange a serving bus captain to drive the bus route that he/she is trained for in the first month after the training; and
- (b) **Strengthening support for newly-recruited bus captains :**  
In the past, when a new recruit formally started carrying out driving duty, KMB would arrange a “buddy” to travel on board for half a day on the first day, second day, and within the seventh to ninth working days respectively. Starting from June 2015, KMB has enhanced its support to the newly-recruited bus captains. The “buddy” will provide assistance to the new recruit on board for the whole day on the first working day. Depending on the performance of the new recruit on the first day, the half-day on-board assistance to be provided on the second day and within the seventh to ninth working days may be extended to whole-day assistance

if necessary.

The TD will continue to closely monitor the daily operation and safety of the franchised bus companies to ensure that franchised bus services are provided to the public in a proper, effective and safe manner.

Yours sincerely,

( Peggy NG )

*for* Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.: Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Miss Rachel KWAN)