

For information**Legislative Council Panel on Transport****Private Driving Instructors' Licences****Purpose**

This paper informs Members of the outcome of the biennial review conducted by the Transport Department ("TD") in end 2014 on the need to issue new Private Driving Instructor's ("PDI") licences.

Background

2. The Government adopts a "two-pronged approach" for driving training in view of the traffic situation in Hong Kong. On the one hand, we promote off-street driver training through the establishment of designated driving schools to reduce traffic congestion caused by on-street driving training. On the other hand, we maintain a sufficient supply of PDI for on-street driving training provided that such activities will not aggravate the traffic situation or cause road safety concerns.

3. A comprehensive review on the driver training policy was conducted in 1999 which concluded that the above-mentioned "two-pronged approach" should be maintained. Following the review, the PDI licensing regime was streamlined and PDI licences were regrouped from seven into three as follows –

- Group 1 : Private Cars and Light Goods Vehicles
- Group 2 : Light Buses and Buses
- Group 3 : Medium Goods Vehicles, Heavy Goods Vehicles and Articulated Vehicles

4. The TD also agreed with the trade in 1999 that the number of valid PDI licences prevailing then for the three groups of PDIs (i.e. 1 050 for Group 1, 130 for Group 2, and 230 for Group 3) would be used as benchmarks for future review, and that the Commissioner for Transport ("the Commissioner") would consider issuing new PDI licences for a particular Group of PDI licence when the number of respective valid

licences¹ falls below the benchmark by 10%. The Commissioner reviews biennially the need to issue new PDI licences. In accordance with the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap. 374B) (“the Regulations”), the Commissioner shall take into account the following factors in a review :

- (a) prevailing traffic conditions;
- (b) policy adopted for driver training; and
- (c) demand of learner drivers to receive driving instructions from PDIs in respect of that group of motor vehicles.

5. Pursuant to the Regulations, if new PDI licences are to be issued, the Commissioner should invite the public to apply for them. If the total number of applications received exceeds the number of new PDI licences proposed to be issued, the TD will draw lots to determine the order in which the applications are to be dealt with. Eligible applicants will be invited to take the driving instructor’s test conducted by the TD according to their orders as determined by lot. The Commissioner has no power to issue new PDI licence direct, or give any priority, to any individuals or particular groups of individuals.

6. Since 1999, five reviews on the need to issue new PDI licences have been carried out. A total of 173 new licences for Group 1 PDI were issued following the 2002 review while no new PDI licences had been issued after the reviews in 2004 and 2006. Following the 2008 review, a total of 460 new PDI licences (347 for Group 1, 55 for Group 2, and 58 for Group 3) were issued. Based on the outcome of the 2012 review, the Commissioner decided to issue a total of 287 new PDI licences including 212 for Group 1, 32 for Group 2 and 43 for Group 3. The TD has been arranging eligible applicants for these PDI licences to sit for the driving instructor’s tests and the issuance of PDI licences is underway.

7. The issuing mechanism of new PDI licences was also reviewed in 2013. There was no consensus among the stakeholders on whether and how the existing issuing mechanism should be changed after extensive consultation. It was therefore considered prudent that the Government should continue with the current mechanism to issue new PDI licences which is based on the consensus reached by the driving instructor trade

¹ The average number of valid licences for the period of six months prior to the review is used for comparison.

back in 1999. We reported the outcome of the review to the LegCo Panel on Transport in March 2014².

Outcome of the 2014 review

8. Following established practice, the TD conducted a review in 2014 on the number of PDI licences in the three groups based on their respective numbers in the latter half of 2014 and taking into account the number of new PDI licences that would be issued following the 2012 review. The results are as follows:

PDI Group	Benchmark (as at 1 Nov 1999)	Average number of valid PDI licences (Jul – Dec 2014)	Number of new PDI licences to be issued based on outcome of the 2012 review	Difference from benchmark (percentage)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D) = (A)-(B)-(C)
1	1 050	830	212	8 (0.8%)
2	130	95	32	3 (2.3%)
3	230	185	43	2 (0.9%)

9. The average number of PDI licences (after taking into account the number of new PDI licences that would be issued following the 2012 review) in all the three groups was well above 90% of the benchmarks during the review period which should not trigger the issue of new PDI licences. As such, the Commissioner will not issue any new PDI licence in the light of the 2014 review findings.

10. The TD informed the 12 PDI associations of the outcome of the 2014 review in May 2015. The Hong Kong School of Motoring Driving Instructors Union (“the Union”) was also represented at the meeting. Whilst the PDI associations and the Union had no comment on the outcome of the 2014 review, some members of the PDI associations and the Union continued to request for a review on whether existing PDIs of Group 2 and

² Please refer to Legislative Council Panel on Transport Paper No. CB(1)1101/13-14(05).

Group 3 and Restricted Driving Instructors employed by designated driving schools should be given priority in applying for new Group 1 PDI licences. There is, however, still no consensus among stakeholders of the driving instructor trade on whether and how to change the issuing mechanism. TD will continue to maintain close liaison with the trade to listen to their views.

Advice Sought

11. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Transport Department
Transport and Housing Bureau
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