

**For information
on 23 May 2016**

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Handling the Upsurge in Renewal of Full Driving Licences**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the measures to be put in place by the Transport Department (“TD”) to cope with the upsurge in renewal of ten-year full driving licences starting from 2016-17.

Background

2. Since 1997, the longest validity period of a full driving licence issued by TD has been set at 10 years. Driving licence holders may apply for renewal of full driving licences four months before expiry of the current licence, up to three years after the expiry.

3. Since the introduction of full driving licence with a validity of 10 years, there has been an upsurge in renewal every 10 years. The next cycle of renewal will commence in 2016-17. It is estimated that about 1.6 million driving licences will be due for renewal between 2016-17 and 2021-22, with the peak falling on 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 when around 300 000 to 400 000 driving licences a year will be due for renewal. This is around 4 to 5 times of the number of renewals per year in 2014-15 and 2015-16 which stood at around 80 000 per year.

Application Channels

4. The number of licensing transactions (including driver-related and vehicle-related transactions) processed by TD has been on a constant rise in recent years. Compared with that in 2011-12, the total number of driver-related transactions (e.g. issue/renewal of full driving licence,

direct issue of full driving licence, issue/renewal of learner's driving licence, and sale of driving test form, etc.) grew by 27% (from 1 173 000 to 1 490 000) in 2015-16. During the same period, the total number of vehicle-related transactions (e.g. first registration of vehicle, issue/renewal of vehicle licence, transfer of vehicle ownership, retention of/assigning registration mark, issue of certificate of vehicle particulars, etc.) increased by 10% (from 1 620 000 to 1 783 000). In view of the rising trend in the number of licensing applications handled each year, and the need to maintain the quality of service provided over the counters, TD has been encouraging applicants to make more use of non-counter channels to submit applications for driving licence renewal.

5. Currently, applicants may apply for renewal of full driving licences in one of the following ways –

(a) Counter Service

Applications for renewal of full driving licences can be submitted in person or by agent at any one of TD's four Licensing Offices (located at Admiralty, Cheung Sha Wan, Kwun Tong and Shatin). To shorten the queuing time, TD has put in place an appointment booking system such that applicants can make advance booking of counter services through the 24-hour booking hotline (Tel: 3763 8080) or the Internet (<http://www.gov.hk/tdabs>);

(b) Drop-in Box

Applicants may also submit application forms through drop-in boxes at all Licensing Offices. To facilitate submission of applications, TD has also set up a network of drop-in boxes in 20 designated post offices covering 18 districts in Hong Kong;

(c) By Post

Applicants may send application forms to TD's Kwun Tong Licensing Office at "P.O. Box 68115, Kowloon East Post Office, Kowloon"; or

(d) Through the Internet

Applicants may apply on TD's website (https://eapps2.td.gov.hk/odlr/odlr_ext_web/Welcome.do?language=en&country=US).

6. TD pledges to issue renewed driving licences to an applicant within 70 minutes upon receiving an application through counters at TD's four Licensing Offices. For applications submitted through drop-in box, post and the Internet, TD will complete processing of applications and mail the renewed licences to the applicants by registered post within 10 working days, provided that all documents have been duly submitted.

7. TD encourages online applications to save their waiting time for applying at counters. To facilitate online applications, TD has been issuing a personal renewal identification number ("RIN") to driving licence holders since March 2008, allowing them to renew their driving licences online without digital certificates¹. The RIN is printed on the Renewal Notice cum Application Form ("Renewal Notice") which is sent to driving licence holders around four months before expiry of their licences to remind them of the renewal.

8. TD has effectively increased the number of online applications for driving licence renewal with the provision of RINs. Before the introduction of RIN, less than 1% of applications were received through the Internet. In 2015, 20% of applications were submitted through the Internet.

9. Details of the above application channels can be found in the Government's website (www.gov.hk/drivinglicence).

¹ A digital certificate is issued by certification authorities authorised under the Electronic Transactions Ordinance (Cap. 553) to individuals and businesses to authenticate the online identity of subscribers and to facilitate the conduct of online transactions in a secure and trusted environment. It is commonly used for online payment to the Government.

Measures to Cope with the Upsurge in Renewal Applications

10. Taking reference from the successful experience of handling the previous 10-year cycle of full driving licence renewal started in 2007-08, TD will adopt the following measures to remind applicants to apply for licence renewal, and to prepare its Licensing Offices for the anticipated large number of applications and related workload such as enquiries and complaints.

(a) Publicity

11. TD will broadcast Announcement of Public Interest, put up posters and distribute leaflets at TD's Licensing Offices, post offices and district offices. Licence holders will be reminded to check the expiry date of their licences and to apply for renewal in good time in light of the upsurge in renewal applications. TD will also encourage renewals through non-counter channels (i.e. drop-in box, postal services or through the Internet), or advance booking of counter services. This is aimed to ease the anticipated pressure on demand for counter services at TD's Licensing Offices.

(b) Additional Manpower

12. Between 2016-17 and 2021-22, TD will create a total of 50 executive and clerical short-term posts for deployment to Licensing Offices. This is to cater for frontline counter duties and backend processing of full driving licence renewal applications, as well as the handling of public enquires and complaints. TD will form additional postal teams to mail Renewal Notice to full driving licence holders according to the expiry date of their licences. These teams will also be responsible for handling the very large amount of postal applications during the upsurge, including mailing back the renewed driving licences to the applicants who have applied online.

(c) Setting up Dedicated Counters

13. To minimise the impact of the upsurge on other users of TD's counter services, dedicated counters at the Licensing Offices will be set up to handle applications for renewal of driving licence.

14. TD will keep in view the effectiveness of the above measures in handling the increase in workload during the coming upsurge period, and may consider further measures if necessary.

Advice sought

15. Members are invited to note the measures to meet the upsurge in renewal of full driving licences as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 above.

**Transport Department
Transport and Housing Bureau
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