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16 March 2016

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Sophie Lau)

[Fax no.: 2978 7569]

Dear Ms Lau,

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Safety of Glass Panes of Doors on Franchised Buses**

Thank you for your letter of 18 February 2016, enclosing with it the views from Hon Tang Ka-piu on the safety of glass panes of doors on franchised buses.

The Government has all along been attaching great importance to the operational safety of franchised buses. Under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) (“the Ordinance”), every new model of buses, like any other vehicles, has to be type approved by the Transport Department (“TD”). Also, each bus has to undergo TD’s pre-registration examination before it can run on the road. The Specification of Safety Glass Notice (Cap. 374H), a subsidiary legislation made under the Ordinance, stipulates that the glass used in a motor vehicle, including a bus, shall be glass that meet the relevant requirements of Economic Commission of Europe Regulation (ECE 43) (“ECE standards”). Specifically, the glass that conforms to ECE standards has to pass a ball-impact test (i.e. the glass can sustain the impact of a hard object with a mass of 0.227 kg from a drop height of 2.5 m and should not be brittle and cracked) and a fragmentation test (i.e. the glass will be broken into small pieces and the ends of the fragments will not be knife-edged). Every glass pane that conforms to

ECE standards is imprinted with a permanent marking to facilitate clear identification and inspection.

In view of the two incidents occurred in this February involving shattered glass panes of the doors of buses of the Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) limited (“KMB”), TD and franchised bus companies have implemented the following four measures to further safeguard the safety of passengers:

- (a) TD has immediately inspected the doors of all buses plying the same routes to see if the doors are functioning properly and ascertain if there are signs of structural damage and cracks on the glass panes. In response to TD’s request, KMB has also conducted inspection of all of its 228 buses which are of the same models as the two buses concerned. The two inspection exercises have been completed with no abnormalities identified. Although there is a marking of compliance with ECE standards on the glass panes of the doors of the buses involved in the incidents, TD is studying the possibility of engaging an expert(s) to carry out tests in Hong Kong on the quality of the glass of the doors concerned to further look into the causes of the incidents.
- (b) TD has set up a working group with representatives from franchised bus companies and bus manufacturers to review the safety of bus doors and follow up on measures to enhance safety. The working group held its first meeting in mid-February. Noting that bus doors opening inwards have already been fitted with handles, the working group is of the view that franchised bus companies and bus manufacturers should actively explore the addition of horizontal bars on doors opening outwards to give added protection to passengers. Pending the confirmation of technical feasibility by bus manufacturers and bus door manufacturers, franchised bus companies will work out the timetable for the retrofit works.
- (c) Franchised bus companies have enhanced the training for their bus captains. Among other things, bus captains are reminded to control bus speed properly having regard to road conditions, avoid sudden braking and abrupt turning of the steering wheel, reduce bus speed well ahead of turning and select the proper carriage lane, as well as not to move forward until they are certain that the road ahead is safe and clear. Bus captains are also reminded to make use of the rear view mirror and video recording device on board more often to keep in view the situation in the bus compartment, and not to start the bus until all passengers have finished embarking and alighting the bus, held the handrail or sat down properly so as to avoid accidents.

- (d) The Government and franchised bus companies will continue to remind passengers to hold the handrail by announcements of public interests on television as well as on-bus video and sound clips in order to enhance the public's awareness of safety when taking the bus.

TD will continue to proactively follow up on the investigation of the two incidents. It will also work with franchised bus companies through the working group on the various improvement measures with a view to safeguarding passenger safety.

Yours sincerely,

(Louis Leung)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Commissioner for Transport (Attn.: Mr Reginald Chan)