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Mr Lemuel WOO  
Clerk to Legislative Council Panel on Transport  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
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13 April 2018

Dear Mr WOO,

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2018 enclosing a letter jointly issued by Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho, Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Alvin YEUNG, in which views on the working hours of public transport drivers were expressed.

The Government has been attaching great importance to the driving safety of public transport. It maintains close communication with the industry and improves the rest time and working hour arrangements of public transport drivers to ensure safe and reliable services, through various measures such as formulating relevant working guidelines.

Regarding franchised buses, the Transport Department (“TD”) enhanced the arrangements in the Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks (“Guidelines”) on 23 February 2018. The TD has taken into account the views of staff unions, franchised bus companies and the public, and has strived to strike a balance among the provision of proper bus services for the passengers, the rest time and working hours of bus captains, and the operational needs of the bus companies when reviewing the Guidelines. Upon working out the details of the shift arrangements, the franchised bus companies aim at implementing the Guidelines progressively from the second quarter of this year, and fully implementing the Guidelines in the second quarter of 2019. It must be emphasised that the Guidelines just regulate the upper limit of the working hours and the lower limit of the rest time

of bus captains. The TD will continue to review the actual situation from time to time, and encourage the franchised bus companies to make effective arrangements for the shift duties of bus captains proactively and shorten the working and driving hours of bus captains to less than the relevant upper limit stipulated when possible.

On green minibuses (“GMB”), the Guidelines on Working Hours of GMB Drivers have been implemented since 15 August 2017. The TD will gather relevant operational statistics at regular intervals, keep a close watch on the implementation of the relevant guidelines, and review the guidelines with the GMB trade in a timely manner.

Moreover, the MTR Corporation Limited (“MTRCL”), major ferry operators and the Hong Kong Tramways Limited have put in place working hour arrangements for their drivers/crew. For details of the above guidelines / arrangements, please refer to the Annex.

The TD will continue to hold regular meetings with public transport operators and the trade to discuss matters such as working hours of drivers, and remind the operators to formulate work schedules for their drivers according to the relevant guidelines. The TD will also maintain communication with their drivers regarding the working hours and relevant arrangements on a need basis. Also, the Marine Department will from time to time review the working hour arrangements with the ferry trade.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nick Choi', with a small dot at the end.

( Nick CHOI )  
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

**Guidelines on/Arrangements for Working Hours of  
Drivers of Major Public Transport/Crew**

**Franchised Buses (“Guidelines” (2018 Revised Version))**

- Guideline (1) (a) Maximum duty hours<sup>1</sup> in a shift should not exceed 12 hours, and driving hours<sup>2</sup> therein should not exceed 10 hours.
- (b) Duty hours in a special shift duty arranged to cater for service demand in the morning and evening peaks may exceed 12 hours but maximum duty hours should not exceed 14 hours, and driving hours therein should not exceed 10 hours. A rest break of no less than 3 consecutive hours should be provided in the special shift.
- Guideline (2) — The off-duty break between 2 successive shifts should not be less than 10 hours. The total off-duty breaks in 3 successive shifts, other than special shift duties, should not be less than 22 hours.
- Guideline (3) — Bus captains should have a rest break<sup>3</sup> of at least 40 minutes after 6 driving hours<sup>2</sup>, and within that 6-hour duty, they should have short rest breaks<sup>4</sup> totalling not less than 20 minutes, of which no less than 12 minutes should be within the first 4 hours of duty. The time bus captains spend at a terminal point preparing for the next departure and monitoring boarding of passengers should not be regarded as rest break/short rest break.
- Guideline (4) — Bus captains working for 8 hours or above in a shift should have a meal break of no less than 1 hour.

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<sup>1</sup> Duty hours refer to the total number of hours from the beginning to the end of a shift, including all the rest breaks.

<sup>2</sup> Driving hours refer to all driving time plus rest breaks, but excluding rest breaks each of 40 minutes or above.

<sup>3</sup> Meal breaks are also regarded as rest times.

<sup>4</sup> Short rest breaks refer to rest times of less than 40 minutes.

**Green Minibuses (GMB) (Aug 2017 Revised Version)**

- Guideline (1) — GMB drivers should have a rest break (including meal breaks) of at least 45 minutes after working 9 hours, and the rest break of no less than 10 minutes should be within the first 4 hours of duty.
- Guideline (2) — The maximum duty hours of GMB drivers, including all rest breaks, should not exceed 14 hours per day.
- Guideline (3) — The maximum driving duty duration of GMB drivers (i.e. the maximum duty hours less all rest time) should not exceed 11 hours per day.
- Guideline (4) — GMB drivers working for no less than 9 hours in a working day should have a meal break.
- Guideline (5) — The rest break between 2 successive working days should not be less than 10 hours.

**MTR**

The contractual working hours of MTR train captains and bus captains are 42 hours per week. During the daily work period, the MTRCL will arrange appropriate meal/break time for the captains after they have worked for a period of time. At present and generally, MTR trains and bus captains will have meal/ break time when they have worked for not more than 4.5 hours and 6 hours respectively. Moreover, their daily driving working hours will not exceed 11 hours.

The MTRCL has always put safety in its top priority. Even if it is not a franchised bus operator and is not subject to the “Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks”, it has been following the Guidelines to operate its bus business. The Corporation is studying the impact of the new “Guidelines on Bus Captain Working Hours, Rest Times and Meal Breaks”, as enhanced by the Transport Department in February this year.

**Tram**

The maximum duty hours of tram motormen will not exceed 12 hours per day, and a meal / rest break of 30 minutes will be arranged every 5 hours of duty.

**Ferry**

According to the understanding of the TD, there are currently two modes of working hours for crew, namely the “single shift” and the “double shift”. For the “single shift”, the working hours of crew are around 7 to 14 hours per day (including meal breaks and rest breaks). For the “double shift”, the crew are on duty for 24 hours (including rest breaks, meal breaks and sleeping time, and the average actual working hours are around 15 hours), followed by 24 hours off duty. The “double shift” mode is mainly to meet the operational needs of ferry routes which provide overnight services, and to tie in with the arrangement that some vessels are berthed at sea areas far away from piers when they are not in service.