

LCQ16: Measures to prevent traffic accidents

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Following is a question by the Hon Miriam Lau Kin-yee and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Yau Shing-mu, at the Legislative Council meeting today (June 9):

Question:

A fatal traffic accident occurred recently in Sha Tin, in which a public light bus fell into a subway after colliding with a taxi at a crossroads, resulting in one death and six injuries. It has been reported that this traffic accident was suspected to have been caused by red light jumping by either one of the drivers. A red light camera (RLC) was once installed at the crossroads, but was removed more than two years ago allegedly due to the location not meeting the criteria for installing RLCs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of traffic accidents caused by red light jumping in the past five years and, among such accidents, the number of those which occurred at crossroads or traffic accident black spots, the types and number of vehicles involved as well as the resultant casualties;

(b) of the number of RLCs which were removed in the past five years because the installation locations concerned did not meet the installation criteria, as well as the number of proposals or plans for installing RLCs which were rejected or aborted because the suggested locations did not meet the installation criteria, and the number of cameras involved; among those locations which did not meet the installation criteria, the number of those which were crossroads or traffic accident black spots; when it is not possible to install RLCs, what remedial measures the authorities have to combat speeding and red light jumping by vehicles, in particular late

at night and early in the morning; and

(c) focusing on the safety at crossroads, whether the authorities will carry out territory-wide site inspections, and in the light of actual road and traffic conditions, classify different junctions into categories according to their levels of risk and adopt remedial measures accordingly (e.g. erecting more warning signs, adjusting traffic light signal durations and cycle times, as well as installing more RLCs, etc.); if they will, of the details and the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(a) In the past five years, the numbers of traffic accidents involving failure to comply with traffic signals, the resultant casualties, and the types and numbers of vehicles involved are provided at Annex.

(b) In general, the Administration selects the sites for red light camera (RLC) housings according to the following criteria:

(i) record of traffic accidents caused by red light jumping by vehicles at the site;

(ii) prevalence of red light jumping by vehicles at the site;

(iii) the need for an even distribution of RLC housing sites to provide an area-wide deterrent effect on motorists; and

(iv) physical environment, including whether the pavement is too narrow or whether there are underground facilities (such as pipes and cables) at the site that cannot be removed.

In the past five years, six RLC housings were removed due to changes in road environment (such as narrow pavement after road works or improvement in the situation of red light jumping). Most of the removed RLC housings have been reinstalled at other suitable sites. Besides, five installation proposals were rejected because they did not meet the installation criteria. All of the above 11 sites are at road junctions, and only one of them is a traffic accident black spot. The installation of RLC system facilitates prosecution against drivers suspected of red light jumping and helps deter such improper driving behaviour. In parallel, the Police take vigorous enforcement actions. Individual police formations will continue to keep a close watch over traffic accidents and offences within their respective regions, perform patrol duties and institute prosecutions against offenders.

(c) The Transport Department (TD) will continue to review the territory's traffic accident data. Focus studies will be carried out on locations (including road junctions and non-road junctions) where the frequency or severity of traffic accidents is relatively high, so that common characteristics of the contributory factors may be deduced, and proposals could be introduced to improve the road environment that may attribute to accidents. The improvement proposals include providing new traffic signals or altering traffic signals; improving road environment; improving pedestrian facilities; improving traffic signs and road markings; and installing RLCs.

The programme on the expansion of RLC system has commenced. Upon completion of the programme in the third quarter of 2010, the Administration will be able to combat the traffic offence concerned more effectively. The TD will analyse the data, trends and causes of traffic accidents for devising corresponding measures, including exploring the need for further expanding the RLC system.

The TD will continue to inspect regularly traffic facilities in various districts throughout the territory. It will also listen to views from District Councils, local communities and other members of the public through various channels, and will take appropriate improvement measures to enhance road safety if necessary. Separately, the Police will investigate the causes of each traffic accident. If they find that there is scope for improvement to the road environment, they will reflect their views to the relevant departments (such as TD and Highways Department) for follow-up actions.

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