

LCQ13: Traffic accident black spots

Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kong-wah 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:

It has been reported that another fatal accident occurred again recently at the crossroads at the junction of Tai Chung Kiu Road and Sha Tin Wai Road in Sha Tin, where a number of traffic accidents had occurred before, and after the accident, the Police and the Transport Department ("TD") held different views as to whether the location was a traffic accident black spot. There was a red light camera ("RLC"), commonly known as "pigeon cage", installed at the accident location, but it was removed by the authorities when road widening works were conducted last July. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the reasons why the authorities removed the aforesaid RLC; why they have not reinstalled a camera at the location since then; and whether they will reinstall it;

(b) of the numbers of traffic accident black spots and potential black spots in Hong Kong in the past three years and their district distribution; whether the Police and TD will standardise the criteria for defining traffic accident black spots, so as to facilitate the coordination of efforts in preventing traffic accidents;

(c) of the respective numbers of locations installed with speed enforcement camera ("SEC") housings and RLCs in the past three years and their distribution and, among such devices, the respective numbers of those installed at traffic accident black spots and potential black spots as well as those having

been removed subsequently;

(d) of the criteria for determining locations for installing SEC housings and RLCs, as well as the criteria for removing them; and

(e) whether the authorities will consider installing more SEC housings and RLCs at traffic accident black spots and potential black spots; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

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

(a) The junction between Sha Tin Wai Road and Tai Chung Kiu Road is not a traffic accident black spot (TABs). A red light camera (RLC) housing was located at Tai Chung Kiu Road westbound near Garden Rivera to deter inappropriate driving behaviour. The RLC housing concerned was demolished to facilitate road widening work. Reinstallation of the RLC housing was not carried out immediately upon completion of the works because of insufficient space at the original site for the camera system. The Transport Department (TD) is examining in detail with other relevant departments the feasibility of reinstalling the RLC in the vicinity. Separately, the Police will continue to step up enforcement actions at the junction.

(b) The purpose of specifying TABs is to carry out focused studies on locations where the frequency or severity of traffic accidents is relatively high, so that common characteristics of the contributory factors could be deduced, and proposals could be introduced to improve the road environment that may attribute to accidents.

The following criteria are adopted by Government departments for classification of a TABS:

(i) a location with six or more traffic accidents involving pedestrian injuries over the past one year; or

(ii) a location with nine or more traffic accidents involving personal injuries over the past one year; or

(iii) a location with two or more fatal traffic accidents over the past five years.

Criteria (i) and (ii) have been adopted by the Administration since 1992 while criterion (iii) has become effective from the first quarter of 2010. The TD updates the list of TABS on a quarterly basis and uploads the list onto its website for public information. The numbers of TABSs during the period between 2007 and 2009 and their distribution are at Annex. The Administration has not formally defined any locations as "potential black spots", but individual police formations may formulate their own enforcement strategies according to traffic condition of the districts concerned with a view to enhancing road safety.

(c) At present, there are 78 digital RLCs in 78 housings and 10 speed enforcement cameras (SECs) for 63 housings over the territory. The expansion works for the RLC system commenced in September 2008 for completion in the third quarter of 2010. The expansion works for the SEC system commenced in mid 2009 for completion in the first quarter of 2011. Upon completion of the works, there will be 155 digital RLCs in 155 housings and 20 SECs for 120 housings over the territory.

The RLCs or SECs are located where traffic accidents caused by red light jumping or speeding have taken place. These sites spread over various districts. In the past three years, six RLCs and one SEC installed were removed

subsequently due to changes in road environment (such as narrow pavement after road works, or improvement in the situation of red light jumping/speeding). Most of them have been reinstalled at other suitable sites.

(d) In general, the Administration selects sites for installation of RLC or SEC housings according to the following criteria:

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

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

(iii) the need for an even distribution of RLC/SEC 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 selecting the sites for SEC housings, the Administration also consider whether the road section in question is part of a strategic or trunk road with high vehicular speed and traffic flow, and whether the site is at a road bend or on a long steep downhill road.

If the sites installed with RLCs or SECs fail to meet the criteria due to reasons like changes in road environment or reduction in number of traffic accidents, the Administration may consider removing the cameras.

(e) The programmes on the expansion of RLC and SEC systems have commenced. Upon completion of the programmes, the Administration will be able to combat traffic offences 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 and SEC systems. Separately, the Police will continue its enforcement actions vigorously. 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.

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