

LCQ8: MTR train services and station facilities

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Following is a question by the Hon Wong Sing-chi and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, in the Legislative Council today (October 19):

Question:

Regarding the train services and station facilities of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether it knows the design carrying capacity and the estimated patronage of various rail lines when they were built and whether MTRCL had, in the past five years, examined the improvement of train frequencies to alleviate the crowded conditions; if it had, the details; if not, the reasons for that; and provide a breakdown of such information by rail line;

(b) given that the information provided to this Council by the authorities on April 6, 2011 indicated that MTRCL had displayed a set of "Don't be a Silent Victim, Report Indecent Assault" posters at most of the MTR stations:

(i) of the respective number of sex crimes which occurred within the area of MTR stations in each year since 2010 and, among such cases, the respective numbers of reported cases and persons being arrested, broken down by nature of the crime;

(ii) whether it knows the names of the stations at which the aforesaid posters are not displayed at present and the reasons for that; the percentage of the number of such stations in the total number of MTR stations along various rail lines; whether all MTR stations and Light Rail stations will be required to display the aforesaid posters; whether MTRCL has displayed a set of "Don't be a Silent Victim of Indecent Assault, Seek Help Immediately" notices; if it has, whether such notices are displayed at each MTR station at present; if not, whether such notices will be required to be displayed at all MTR stations and Light Rail stations;

(iii) whether it knows if the aforesaid posters or notices are at present displayed in train compartments; if not, the reasons for that, and whether MTRCL will display such posters or notices in the train compartments; if it will, the details and the specific

timetable; and

(iv) whether it knows, other than displaying posters and notices, what other publicity and education programmes MTRCL has put in place to promote safety awareness among female passengers;

(c) whether it knows, in each year since 2005, the respective total number of Railway Police District staff as well as station staff and station assistants discharging duties at MTR stations and Light Rail stations, with a breakdown by rail line;

(d) whether it knows if there were Railway Police District staff as well as MTRCL station staff and station assistants discharging duties at various stations daily in each year since 2005; if not, list respectively by year and rail line the day(s) of the week when no such staff discharged duty at stations, and whether the authorities and MTRCL will deploy more manpower on such days respectively; if they will, the details and the timetable; and

(e) whether it knows the progress of retrofitting lifts at MTR stations since the Secretary for Transport and Housing replied to a question concerning the progress of retrofitting lifts at existing stations by MTRCL raised by a Member of this Council on January 19, 2011 (set out in Annex 1)?

Reply:

President,

The replies to various parts of the question are as follows:

(a) According to the information provided by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the designed carrying capacity and the actual patronage in 2010 of various railway lines are set out in Annex 2.

The carrying capacity of the MTR railway lines is sufficient to cope with the present passenger demand and there is still spare capacity. In fact, in drawing up the service timetable for each railway line, the MTRCL has already taken into consideration the travelling patterns of passengers and patronage of different areas and stations in order to ensure that railway service meets passenger demand. For example, MTR passengers are benefited from enhanced train services on the West

Rail Line, Tsuen Wan Line and Kwun Tong Line from mid-June 2011. In particular, the frequency of trains on the West Rail Line during the evening peak period has been enhanced to 4-minute intervals from the existing 4.5 minutes per train. Service hours in the Tuen Mun-bound direction has also been extended with the last train departing Hung Hom Station at 12.25am, rather than the current 12.08am.

The Transport Department (TD) examines regular reports submitted by MTRCL on its service performance. TD also conducts on-site investigations and inspections to ensure that railway service meets passenger demand. If necessary, TD will urge MTRCL to adjust its service arrangements based on changes in passenger demand within the constraints of the operational system (such as the signalling system and track available).

(b) According to the information provided by the Police, the breakdown of the number of reported cases on sex crime which occurred within the railway station premises from 2010 to August 2011 is set out in Annex 3.

The MTRCL collaborates with the Railway Police District to promote prevention of crimes. The poster titled "Don't be a Silent Victim, Report Indecent Assault" was displayed in all MTR stations, including designated Light Rail stops in rotation in mid-2011 to encourage victims of indecent assault to report offences. The locations and the quantity of posters put up at individual stations are determined in a co-ordinated manner taking into account the need to provide other information to passengers such as safety and ticketing.

Another series of notices titled "Don't be silent. Cry out immediately to report indecent assault, when considered safe" have also been put up in front of entry gates in different MTR stations since 2009 to remind passengers to stay alert to prevent crime. Besides, the newly designed anti-crime poster "Stay alert, watch out" has been put up at stations and some train compartments. The same message is also being disseminated through electronic displays in train compartments and passenger information displays at platforms.

In addition, the MTRCL also organises promotional activities from time to time to remind passengers to stay alert and watch out for each other to prevent crime within the railway premises. A new round of joint anti-crime campaign with the Railway Police District was launched on September 15 this year, which aims to combat crimes such as theft and indecent assault within the railway premises.

Moreover, a special squad of "Senior Crime Fighters" comprising senior citizens visit different MTR stations to remind passengers to stay alert to prevent crime. The MTRCL will continue to work with the Police to pro-actively review the effectiveness of the measures from time to time to curb crime in the railway network.

(c) and (d) The Police reviews the establishment of the Railway Police District as necessary in the light of MTRCL's developments and the crime trends within the railway station premises. At present, the Railway Police District has a strength of about 370 officers. The Police flexibly deploys the manpower of each railway line as necessary having regard to the passenger flow, crime situation, etc. of each railway line. Officers of the Railway Police District perform duties every day at various stations in the railway system. The Railway Police District, having regard to the crime blackspots and trends, deploys police officers to conduct targeted patrols at stations and on train compartments. Static post duty is also carried out at stations which have a higher volume of passenger flow or more reported crime cases in order to prevent and combat crime.

The MTRCL indicates that all MTR stations are always manned by staff during operating hours. The major duties of station staff and station assistants are to maintain order and security at stations, manage passenger flow and provide assistance to passengers so as to ensure smooth station operations. Instead of being assigned to perform duty at a designated location, these station staff and station assistants are deployed according to the needs of different stations and time periods. The MTRCL also strengthens its manpower during festive days. The number of station staff and station assistants is tabulated in Annex 4.

(e) The latest progress of retrofitting lifts at existing MTR stations is appended in Annex 5.

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