

LCQ14: Safety issues of pedestrian refuges

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Following is a question by the Hon Cheung Hok-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, in the Legislative Council today (November 16):

Question:

Accidents involving vehicles crashing into pedestrian refuges and resulting in casualties occur from time to time. Regarding the safety issues of pedestrian refuges, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the number of traffic accidents involving pedestrian refuges in the past three years, the casualties involved and the locations where such accidents occurred; and

(b) whether it will consider improving the installation of traffic light signals and removing pedestrian refuges gradually, so that pedestrians do not have to stop and stay in the middle of a road when they are crossing the road?

Reply:

President,

Pedestrian refuge is a facility that assists pedestrians to cross a road. When crossing a wider or two-way road via pedestrian crossing facilities such as zebra crossings and cautionary crossings, the pedestrians may not know at the time when they start crossing the road the traffic condition on the other side of the road. The Transport Department (TD) usually provides central refuges at such crossings for pedestrians to stop midway and check the traffic condition, and if it is safe, continue to cross the road. As regards signalised pedestrian crossings, it is sometimes necessary to provide central refuge for pedestrians to stop and check the signals and traffic condition at the other side of the road before continuing to cross the roads. The TD will take into account pedestrian flow in designing refuges to provide adequate space for accommodating pedestrians waiting to cross the roads. Reflective or illuminated bollards will also be installed to direct motorists to pass either on the left or right side of the refuges. Without such refuges, pedestrians will have to stand and wait in the middle of a road or between traffic lanes without any

protection, which may easily result in traffic accidents. For the sake of pedestrian safety, it is undesirable to remove the refuges.

Apart from some busier locations where pedestrian crossings have to be staggered in order to ease traffic congestion, other signalised crossings are now designed in such a way as to provide pedestrians with sufficient time as far as possible to reach the other side of the road without having to stay and wait at central refuges. The TD will review the operation of individual pedestrian crossings from time to time for continual improvement in road design and traffic signal control so as to cater for the needs of road users and ensure road safety.

During the period from January 2008 to September 2011, there was no traffic accident involving pedestrians being hit and killed on refuges. Over the same period, there was one traffic accident involving one person who was seriously injured on a refuge in Kwai Tsing District. The accident involved a motorist driving too close to the refuge. There is no information at this stage which suggests that refuges will result in serious traffic accidents. The Administration will enhance publicity and education efforts to promote safe driving among motorists.

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