

LCQ13: Driving training and driving test systems

Following is a question by the Hon Miriam Lau Kin-yee and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Ms Eva Cheng, at the Legislative Council meeting today (April 14):

Question:

Regarding driving training and driving test systems, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number of traffic accidents in each of the past three years which involved drivers holding a probationary driving licence and the resultant casualties;
- (b) whether the authorities had, in the past three years, studied the driving training and driving test systems in other places; if they had, of the results, and how such systems compare with those in Hong Kong; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (c) whether it will review the existing driving training and driving test systems in Hong Kong, with a view to reducing traffic accidents through enhancing driving training; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The Government launched the Probationary Driving Licence (P Licence) Scheme for motor cycles and motor tricycles in October 2000. Any person who applies to take and passes a motor cycle or motor tricycle driving test on or after October 1, 2000 is required to undergo a 12-month probationary driving period in accordance with the Road Traffic (Driving Licences) Regulations (Cap.374B) (the Regulations) before such person is qualified to apply for a full driving licence. The Scheme has subsequently been extended to cover private cars and light good vehicles. Any person who applies to take and obtains a pass in a private car or light goods vehicle driving test on or after February 9, 2009 is also required to undergo a probationary driving period. In respect of the vehicle classes covered by the Scheme, the numbers of traffic accidents and the resultant casualties involving P licence holders in the past three years are at the Annex.

(b) The Transport Department (TD) from time to time makes reference to the driver training and driving test systems of other places, such as the United Kingdom, Singapore and the Mainland China, etc. The driver training and driving test systems of these places, for example, the regulation on driving instructors and the arrangement of driving tests, are similar to those of Hong Kong.

Similar to the driving test systems of most places, driving test in Hong Kong is divided into written and road tests to assess from the theoretical and practical perspectives whether candidates are suitable for driving and obtaining a driving licence, in order to ensure road safety. According to the existing requirements, candidates have to pass the written test before they are allowed to take the road test. Written test aims to examine candidates' understanding of the Road Users' Code, which covers driving theory, traffic offences, emergencies handling, language of the road, etc; road test examines the driving techniques of candidates from various aspects, items to be tested include to stop the vehicle on slope, u-turn on narrow road, reverse and park the vehicle, overtake other vehicles, and meet or cross lanes, etc.

Besides, all driving instructors have to pass the tests administered by TD as required by the Regulations to be qualified for providing driver training services. TD also regulates and governs the operation of designated driving schools in accordance with the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap.374) to ensure the quality of the driver training services provided by these schools.

(c) TD has been keeping a close view on the figures and causes of traffic accidents, as well as maintaining frequent contacts with the trade in respect of driver training, and reviewing the driving test system from time to time to further enhance road safety. On driver training, TD has been overseeing the driver training programmes in the market to ensure that learner drivers can enjoy quality driver training services from either private driving instructors or designated driving schools.

TD launched the Driving Improvement Course (DIC) Scheme for drivers in September 2002. The court also has the discretionary power to order traffic offenders who incur five driving-offence points (DOPs) or above to complete a DIC, in order to instill in them a stronger sense of road safety and to help them improve their driving attitude and develop good driving behavior. With effect from February 2009, TD has required offenders of serious traffic offences or traffic offenders who have accumulated ten or more DOPs within a period of two years to attend a DIC on a mandatory basis so as to enhance their sense of road safety.

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