

Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2010 to be gazetted

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2010 will be published in the Gazette on Friday (April 30).

"The Bill aims to provide the necessary statutory provisions for introducing measures to further combat drink driving and other inappropriate driving behaviour, with a view to enhancing road safety," a government spokesman said today (April 28).

"Since the implementation of a number of measures on February 9, 2009, there has been a significant drop of 67% in the number of traffic accidents involving drink driving," the spokesman said.

"However, as drink driving can bring about grave consequences to the drivers concerned and to other road users, the Government proposed to introduce heavier penalties to further deter drink driving and other inappropriate driving behaviour," he added.

The Bill proposes to amend the existing ordinance by introducing a series of measures, which include introducing a three-tier penalty system with a sliding scale (i.e. the higher the proportion of alcohol in excess of the prescribed limit, the longer the driving disqualification period); and making a high alcohol level (the proportion of alcohol is at or exceeds three times the prescribed limit) as a circumstance of aggravation in all dangerous driving offences.

In addition, the Bill proposed the introduction of a new offence of "causing grievous bodily harm by dangerous driving", providing for a heavier penalty for a driver who causes grievous bodily harm by driving a motor vehicle on a road dangerously.

"In order to enhance the deterrent effect, we also propose to introduce a provision to require the court to order that the disqualification period should commence at the conclusion of the imprisonment sentence, unless the court sees fit that both imprisonment and disqualification terms should be implemented concurrently, in the circumstance that the driver is convicted of a subsequent serious traffic offence," the spokesman added.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on May 12.

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