

EPD convictions in December

Thirty-eight convictions were recorded in December 2018 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

Five of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, four were under the Noise Control Ordinance, three were under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation, 24 were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance, and two were under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

The heaviest fine in December was \$10,000, assessed against a person who imported controlled waste without a permit and three companies which installed or altered furnaces/chimney without authorisation, deposited waste unlawfully and contravened the provisions of a licence respectively.

ANE: Chairman of SCVPD to meet the media

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) will convene a meeting this afternoon (January 9).

The Chairman of the SCVPD, Dr Chow Chun-bong, will meet the media after the meeting. The Controller of the CHP of the DH, Dr Wong Ka-hing, will also be present.

Coverage is invited. Media representatives are advised to arrive at the Risk Communication Centre, Ground Floor, CHP, 147C Argyle Street, Mong Kok, by 5pm.

LCQ20: New railway projects

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Wan and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

The Railway Development Strategy 2014 released in September 2014 recommended that the Government should implement the projects of the Tuen Mun South Extension of the West Rail (South Extension) and the Northern Link and Kwu Tung Station (Northern Link) in 2019 to 2022 and in 2018 to 2023 respectively. In her Policy Address delivered in 2017, the Chief Executive undertook that the Government would aim to consult the public on these two railway schemes in 2018. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) why the Government did not consult the public on the schemes of the South Extension and the Northern Link in 2018 pursuant to the undertaking made in the 2017 Policy Address;

(2) of, in the light of the current progress, the respective anticipated commencement dates of the construction works and the commissioning dates of the South Extension and the Northern Link; if the anticipated commissioning dates will be behind the originally scheduled commissioning dates, of the measures put in place by the Government prior to the completion of those railway projects to improve the traffic arrangements for residents of the New Territories commuting to and from the urban areas; and

(3) given that problems of non-compliant works were uncovered earlier on in the Shatin to Central Link project, which is implemented under the concession approach, whether the Government will continue to adopt the concession approach for implementing the South Extension and the Northern Link; if so, of the reasons for that; if not, the approach(es) it will adopt for implementing those new railway projects?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the Hon Andrew Wan's question is as follows:

Having regard to the indicative implementation window recommended in the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014), the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit proposals for the implementation of the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station). MTRCL submitted proposals for these two railway projects to the Government in end-December 2016 and end-March 2017 respectively. THB, the Highways Department and relevant bureaux/departments have been evaluating the proposals and have requested MTRCL to provide additional information and supplement details. In carrying out the evaluation, our main focus is to ensure that the proposals are practically feasible and can bring maximum benefits to the community.

As clearly stated in the RDS-2014, the taking forward of individual proposed railway projects set out in the Strategy will be subject to the outcome of detailed engineering, environmental and financial studies relating to each project, as well as updated demand assessment and availability of resources. Moreover, for railway projects which are mainly intended to

complement new development areas and new housing developments, the implementation timetable for the development areas and new housing developments in question will be an important planning parameter for the railway projects. Therefore, the indicative implementation windows recommended in the RDS-2014 may be adjusted having regard to any change in circumstances. In fact, in MTRCL's project proposals submitted to the Government, their proposed implementation windows are different from those in the RDS-2014.

Railway projects involve huge capital investment, and the Government has to plan in a prudent manner. The new railway projects proposed in the RDS-2014 have different degrees of complexities. In planning the Tuen Mun South Extension, we need to consider the various impact on nearby residents arising from the proposed alignment and the mitigation schemes. In planning the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), we need to assess in details and mitigate the impact on ecologically-sensitive areas (such as the Mai Po Nature Reserve, fishponds, wetlands, egrettries and farmlands) along the railway alignment. Meanwhile, in light of the tight housing supply, the Government is reviewing the potential housing supply that may be brought about by the proposals for the Tuen Mun South Extension and the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), and will strive to undertake public consultation on these proposals as soon as possible.

In line with established procedures, prior to the finalisation of any new railway scheme, we will consult the public, including the Legislative Council and the relevant District Councils, on the details of the scheme including detailed alignment, locations of stations, mode of implementation and cost estimate. We understand that the Tuen Mun District Council and the residents expect an early implementation of the Tuen Mun South Extension. We will strive to undertake public consultation on the proposal as soon as possible. In planning the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), we will also continue to monitor the development of the new development areas (such as the Kwu Tung North New Development Area), to ensure that the implementation of the Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station) will match the timetable for the development of the new development areas.

The form of funding support for railway projects should be project-specific. We will consider in details and review whether a new railway project shall be implemented under the ownership approach or the concession approach on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the experience of implementing the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and Shatin-to-Central Link projects.

LCQ14: Road safety of non-franchised

buses

Following is a question by the Hon Ho Kai-ming and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

On November 30 last year, a serious traffic accident involving a non-franchised bus happened on Cheung Tsing Highway in Tsing Yi, causing six deaths and some 30 persons injured as well as arousing public concern. The Transport Department subsequently held a meeting with the trade in respect of the road safety of non-franchised buses. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of traffic accidents involving non-franchised buses in each of the past three years, with a breakdown by type of accidents;
- (2) of the progress of the authorities' work on formulating guidelines on the working hours, rest times and meal breaks for non-franchised bus captains; and
- (3) whether the authorities will take measures (e.g. stepping up law enforcement) to improve the road safety of non-franchised buses; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to road safety and has been adopting a multi-pronged approach to enhancing the road safety of non-franchised buses (NFBs). My reply to the various parts of the Hon Ho Kai-ming's question is as follows:

- (1) The number of traffic accidents involving NFBs each year from 2016 to November 2018 by the degree of severity is tabulated below:

	Number of accidents		
	Fatal	Serious	Slight
2016	6	43	388
2017	8	40	391
2018 (January to November)*	4	28	338

* Provisional figures

(2) and (3) The Government has been adopting a multi-pronged approach to enhancing the road safety of NFBs. On law enforcement, the Police have been taking stern and vigorous enforcement actions in recent years to combat improper driving behaviour. To this end, roadside equipment such as red light cameras and speed enforcement cameras as well as mobile instruments such as laser guns, are used for enforcement actions. At the same time, the Police are taking enforcement actions according to the "Selected Traffic Enforcement Priorities" (such as operations that target speeding, use of mobile phones/telecommunications equipment while driving, drink driving, drug driving, etc.). In addition, the Police take regional and territorial level traffic enforcement actions regularly with a view to reminding motorists to stay alert, reducing the risk of traffic accidents and enhancing road safety.

Apart from enforcement, the Government also joins forces with the Road Safety Council to launch publicity and educational activities on a regular basis, and produce announcements of public interest (APIs) and publications targeting motorists (including drivers of commercial vehicles) for the promotion of road safety. For example, a new API on television recently produced reminds motorists to "always concentrate when driving" and "stay alert while driving". Every year, the Transport Department (TD) organises the Safe Driving and Health Campaign, and produces pamphlets such as Road Safety Bulletin and Non-franchised Bus Bulletin to provide motorists with comprehensive road safety information to enhance their understanding of matters on road safety that require attention. The TD also collaborates with the Police in holding regular Road Safety Seminars for Franchised and Non-franchised Bus Captains, at which police officers are invited to give bus captains of franchised buses and NFBs tips on safe driving and analyse causes of traffic accidents so as to enhance the road safety awareness of bus captains and promote good driving behaviour.

In addition, the TD holds meetings with the NFB trade regularly to discuss matters on the trade's operation, including operational safety. In response to the recent traffic accident involving an NFB, the TD held a special meeting with the trade on December 5, 2018 to discuss ways to enhance operational safety of NFBs, including installing and providing safety devices on NFBs, applying technologies to enhance operational safety, and drawing up guidelines on working hours and rest times for NFB drivers, etc.

Regarding seatbelts, the major NFB operators have been purchasing new buses equipped with seatbelts in recent years. The trade also supports enacting legislation to compulsorily require newly registered NFBs to be fitted with seatbelts. The TD will review the suggestions on installing seatbelts on NFBs and requiring passengers to fasten seatbelts. Consideration will be given to various factors, such as safety benefit, technical feasibility, overseas practices, as well as impact on vehicle operation, passengers and the trade, and views from stakeholders, etc.

At the said meeting, the TD also suggested that the NFB trade should install other safety devices on vehicles and use technology to enhance safety, including speed limiter, tachograph (commonly known as "blackbox") and electronic stability control system. The trade was in support of these suggestions, and would proactively consider installing relevant devices when

procuring new buses. Where actual operational condition permitted, the trade would be willing to introduce a bus driver monitoring system (for example, collision prevention alert system) to some NFBs for testing purposes. The TD will offer assistance and advice in that regard.

Meanwhile, the TD has been attaching great importance to the occupational health of NFB drivers, and urging the NFB operators to ensure not only operational safety of NFBs, but also a good balance between work and rest for their drivers to avoid fatigue driving. As regards formulating guidelines on the working hours, rest times and meal breaks for NFB drivers, the trade has agreed to the proposal in principle. Since NFB operation involves different types of services, mainly providing hire services based on the demand of specific passenger groups, the trade considers that the formulation of the details of such guidelines should take into account the existing mode of operation of NFBs. The trade has pledged to continuously engage in further discussions with the TD with a view to formulating and implementing relevant guidelines as promptly as possible.

In order to follow up on and expedite the implementation of the above specific measures for enhancing NFBs' operational safety, the TD will set up a special working group under its regular meetings with the NFB trade to further discuss and follow up on the aforementioned matters. The working group will hold its first meeting in mid-January 2019.

[Hong Kong and Japan sign Memorandum of Cooperation \(with photos\)](#)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the Ministry of Justice of Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) today (January 9) to strengthen their collaboration on issues relating to international arbitration and mediation.

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, and the Minister of Justice of Japan, Mr Takashi Yamashita, signed the MoC at a ceremony in the HKSAR.

The MoC provides a framework for Hong Kong and Japan to strengthen their communication, collaboration and co-operation on issues relating to international arbitration and mediation and to facilitate the development of services for international arbitration and mediation in Hong Kong and Japan.

The International Affairs Division of the Minister's Secretariat of the Ministry of Justice will be the focal point for Japan while the newly established Inclusive Dispute Avoidance and Resolution (IDAR) Office of the DoJ will be the focal point for Hong Kong, to be responsible for implementation of the MoC. The IDAR Office spearheads the co-ordination of

initiatives to promote Hong Kong as an ideal hub for deal making and a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services. It aims to facilitate access to justice and promote inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The MoC reflects the joint efforts of Hong Kong and Japan in strengthening their co-operation and exchange of information regarding training in international arbitration and mediation, and provides a framework for the DoJ and the Ministry of Justice of Japan to promote collaborative initiatives and exchanges. It is expected that Hong Kong and Japan will benefit greatly from their co-operation in the development and provision of arbitration and mediation services.

