

TD renews electronic audible traffic signals at crossings to provide convenience for visually impaired persons and public at large (with photos/videos)

The Transport Department (TD) today (May 20) announced the territory-wide gradual renewal of electronic audible traffic signals (eATS) at signalised crossings. People-oriented new features have been incorporated to provide convenience for visually impaired persons and other members of the public.

The original eATS indicate the status of the pedestrian traffic signal to visually impaired persons by emitting sound and vibration signals so that they can cross the road safely according to the sound signal. At some crossings with higher vehicle flows and lower pedestrian traffic, the eATS are equipped with a pedestrian push-button function. The green pedestrian signal will only be activated after it is pressed, allowing more vehicles to pass through the junction. Apart from retaining these existing functions, five new features have been introduced into the new-generation eATS (see Annex for details) to better meet users' needs:

1. A light illumination unit is installed at the top of the new eATS, making it easier for persons with amblyopia to locate the pedestrian crossing;
2. A tactile map is provided on its side, providing the layout information of the crossing for visually impaired persons;
3. A voice message of the crossing's location is added. By pressing the activation button at the bottom, the device will read out the name of streets near the crossing in Cantonese, Putonghua and English to inform users of their location;
4. A touchless pedestrian push button sensor is provided, reducing users' hygiene concerns; and
5. Featuring a new night-time operation mode, when there are no visually impaired persons seeking to cross the road at night, its operating volume will be lower than the existing level, thereby reducing its impact on neighbouring residents. Visually impaired persons can use the remote control function of a newly designed dedicated wireless device or the TD's "HKeMobility" mobile app to temporarily increase its volume when they need to cross the road to ensure safety. The TD will distribute about 15 000 one-off dedicated wireless devices free of charge to visually impaired persons for their use through a relevant organisation in the third quarter of 2025 to launch this new function.

A spokesman for the TD said, "We have consulted the Subcommittee on

Access under the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and the Legislative Council Panel on Transport, and have been maintaining good communication with representatives of visually impaired groups to optimise the functions and settings of the new eATS. The operation of the new eATS under the pilot project earlier has been smooth, and we are pleased to note the overall satisfaction of visually impaired groups with various new features which better cater for and strike a fine balance between the needs of the users and the public at large. This is conducive to upgrading the road safety experience in Hong Kong as we aspire to be barrier-free city."

The spokesman added that most of the existing eATS have been in operation for over two decades, exceeding their normal lifespan. Their fault rate has also been gradually increasing, necessitating a large-scale replacement. The TD commenced replacement of a total of some 13 000 eATS at about 2 000 junctions across the territory from April 2025 in phases, and is expected to complete the replacement by end-2027.



