

Hong Kong Customs inspects Lunar New Year Fairs

Hong Kong Customs today (January 30) distributed pamphlets to stall operators at various Lunar New Year Fairs to remind them not to sell infringing goods.

The Divisional Commander (Intellectual Property General Investigation), Ms Peggy Tam, said today that Customs will step up inspections in different districts, including at Lunar New Year Fairs, and take stringent enforcement actions against infringing activities to protect consumer interests.

Last November, Customs distributed leaflets to successful bidders for Lunar New Year Fair stalls reminding them to be cautious about the authenticity and origin of their purchased goods. They were also reminded to verify with the corresponding agents or representatives of trademark and copyright owners if in doubt.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the Copyright Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any infringing goods commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 per infringing copy and imprisonment for four years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

LCQ6: Air Quality Objectives

Following is a question by the Hon Chu Hoi-dick and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

Earlier on, the Environment Bureau (ENB) recommended to the Air Quality Objectives Review Working Group that the average 24-hour concentration limit stipulated for fine suspended particulates (i.e. PM2.5) in the Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) be tightened from 75 µg/m³ at present to 50 µg/m³, but the

number of exceedances allowed be relaxed from the current level of not more than 9 days to not more than 35 days per calendar year. On the other hand, some environmentalists have pointed out that it is anticipated that during the period from 2020 to 2025, there will be a high concentration of air pollutants over the waters around Kau Yi Chau, i.e. the reclamation area under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that under the World Health Organization's Interim Target-2, the number of exceedances allowed in respect of PM2.5 is no more than three days per calendar year, of the justifications for ENB's recommendation to relax that number to 35 days;

(2) whether it has assessed if the recommendation has run counter to the aim of reviewing AQOs as set out in section 7A of the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, which is to ensure that AQOs are the objectives that should be achieved and maintained in order to promote the conservation and the best use of air in the air control zone in the public interest; if it has assessed and the outcome is in the affirmative, whether ENB will shelve the recommendation; and

(3) given that some members of the public suspect that the recommendation was made to make it easier for the environmental impact assessment reports for the reclamation and related infrastructure works projects under the Lantau Tomorrow Vision to get approval, whether ENB will shelve the recommendation so as to allay public concerns?

Reply:

Acting President,

The World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) clearly state that different countries may set different air quality standards due to different approaches in balancing health risks, technological feasibility, and economic, political and social considerations. The AQGs recommend guideline values (i.e. ultimate targets) and interim targets (ITs) for air quality. The setting of ITs by WHO is intended for governments, having regard to their local circumstances, to adopt ITs to progressively tighten their air quality standards towards an ultimate goal of meeting the WHO ultimate targets. At present, no country has fully adopted WHO ultimate targets as legal air quality standards.

The AQGs do not provide recommendations on the number of allowable exceedances when formulating the guideline values of the concerned air pollutants. In view of the fact that air quality may violate the standards owing to uncontrollable circumstances such as extreme weather, Chapter 8 of the AQGs states that when the air quality standards are set to be legally binding, governments could quantify the compliance criteria through establishing the number of allowable exceedances. The AQGs have also quoted the number of allowable exceedances for the 8-hour ozone standard set by the European Union (EU) at 25 times per year and that for the 24-hour nitrogen dioxide standard set in South Africa at three times per year as examples to

illustrate that the numbers of allowable exceedances for different air pollutants concentration limits vary among different places.

The prevailing Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) came into effect on January 1, 2014. The Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) stipulates that the AQOs must be reviewed at least once in every five years. The Environment Bureau embarked on a review of the AQOs in mid-2016 and formed a AQOs Review Working Group (Working Group) and sub-groups comprising members from relevant stakeholders and government department representatives to take forward the work. The review has been completed in December 2018. We plan to report the review findings to the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE) in the first quarter of this year, consult the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on the Environmental Affairs (EA Panel) afterwards and launch a three-month public consultation. After completing the public consultation, we shall consider views collected and consult the ACE and the EA Panel on the way forward. If the AQOs are to be tightened, we shall submit an amendment bill to the LegCo with a view to implementing the new AQOs as soon as possible.

My responses to the questions raised by the Hon Chu Hoi-dick are as follows:

(1) and (2) As I mentioned earlier, the WHO AQGs do not provide recommendations on the number of allowable exceedances of the 24-hour particulate matter (PM) guideline values. In fact, the number of allowable exceedances of the 24-hour PM standards varies among places. For example, the EU and the United Kingdom allow 35 exceedances per year for the 24-hour PM10 (respirable suspended particulates) standards. They have set an annual PM2.5 (fine suspended particulates) standard but not any 24-hour PM2.5 standard.

The assessment results of the AQOs review reveal that there is scope for tightening the AQO for annual PM2.5 from IT-1 to IT-2. If the AQO for 24-hour PM2.5 is to be tightened concurrently to IT-2, there could be more than 30 days on which the 24-hour PM2.5 concentrations at the north-western and northern parts of the New Territories would exceed the IT-2 level due to unfavourable meteorological conditions or regional air pollution influence. Therefore, according to WHO AQGs, setting a number of allowable exceedance of 35 is appropriate and in line with international practices (including EU and United States). The air science and health experts of the Working Group also consider that the above approach to tighten the AQOs of PM2.5 can help enhance public health protection.

Therefore, the approach of progressively tightening the air quality standards through the adoption of ITs and setting the number of allowable exceedances for determining compliance with the standards according to AQGs is fully in line with section 7A of the APCO.

(3) The review of AQOs is based on WHO AQGs and scientific grounds. The assessment approaches adopted and the findings have been thoroughly discussed among air scientists and health experts. As aforesaid, we are going to report the review findings to the ACE and embark on the public consultation. If the AQOs are to be tightened, we shall submit an amendment bill to the LegCo.

Thank you, Acting President.

LCQ2: Hung Hom Station Extension works under Shatin to Central Link project

Following is a question by Hon Tanya Chan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

On the 10th of last month, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) commenced the work to open up the concrete according to the holistic assessment strategy regarding the platform slabs and diaphragm walls of the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project (the assessment strategy), so as to verify the works quality of the coupler connections. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether the contractor concerned was required under the law to obtain prior approval from the authorities for deviating, during construction, from the requirements for proper installation of couplers specified by the coupler supplier; if so, of the relevant procedure and stipulations, and whether the authorities have received such applications; if there were deviations but no application has been received, of the authorities' follow-up actions;

(2) given that Table 6.3 of the assessment strategy merely sets out the maximum percentages of the coupler population with improper connections corresponding to the scenarios in which the 0 to 5 failures are found in the 84 samples (estimated under a 95 per cent confidence level), whether the Government can set out one by one the relevant percentages corresponding to the scenarios in which 0 to 84 failures are found in the samples; of the respective test results under which the Government will require the MTRCL to carry out reinforcement works, demolish and rebuild the relevant structures, and reduce the project management fee charged; and

(3) given that Remark 2 in the coupler test results as at the 7th of this month, published on a Highways Department webpage, read as follows: "On the testing location at the bottom of Area C3 of the East West Line slab near the western diaphragm wall, one re-bar and a coupler were found to be unconnected on January 4, 2019 and could not be tested. Details are being investigated", but the sentence "Details are being investigated" was no longer included in Remark 2 published on the webpage updated two days later, whether the relevant investigation had been completed during the interim; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons why that sentence was no longer included?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the three parts of the Hon Tanya Chan's question is as follows:

(1) The Government has always attached great importance to the safety and quality of construction works. As the Hung Hom Station (HUH) Extension of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project falls within leased land owned by the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation and is governed by the Buildings Ordinance, the construction and quality of the HUH Extension works shall comply with the requirements specified by the Buildings Department (BD).

The BD has specified the relevant requirements about the proposed use of threaded reinforcement bars (rebars) and couplers in the HUH Extension project, including compliance with the structural material standards, technical specification and quality assurance plan of coupler manufacturer, as well as material tests via on-site sampling.

According to the manufacturer's technical specification, a conforming splicing assembly of threaded rebar and coupler of the type used in the HUH Extension Project should satisfy the following criteria:

- (i) there shall be a maximum of two full threads exposed; and
- (ii) the embedded length of the threaded rebar screwed into the coupler shall be at least 40 millimetres.

Apart from the above criteria set by the manufacturer, the assemblies shall comply with the various strength and ductility test requirements specified by the BD. If the contractor has complied with the manufacturer's technical specification, the BD's requirements for on-site material sampling and testing, and supervision and recording of the splicing assembly works etc., the safety and quality standards of the connections between the threaded rebars and couplers can be assured.

In anticipation of the need of amending the technical specification during the course of the works, the contractor should consult the BD and obtain its prior acceptance. In case where the contractor deviates from the technical specification during the course of the works, the concerned competent person shall submit to the BD an investigation report and, when necessary, a remedial proposal on the deviations concerned. So far, the Government has not received any application made by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) or contractor on the necessary amendments to or deviations from the technical specification for coupler used in the HUH Extension Project.

(2) Being the Project Manager of the SCL project, the MTRCL is responsible for proposing and carrying out all sorts of feasible options to clarify and resolve the problems of the HUH Extension works. After several rounds of discussion with the Government, the MTRCL proposed a three-stage approach for the holistic assessment. The first stage is for the MTRCL to check relevant

construction records and to review the latest amended design drawings. In the second stage, it is required for the MTRCL to open up part of the platform slabs at the East West Corridor (EWC) and the North South Corridor (NSC) for confirming the as-constructed connection details of the rebars, and whether the couplers and rebars were properly connected. There are two purposes for the opening up exercise in the second stage: (i) opening up the areas without complete construction documentations to verify the as-constructed conditions of the connection between the platform slabs and diaphragm walls of the HUH Extension. This involves 24 locations at the platform slabs of the EWC; and (ii) in view of the allegation of bar-cutting, the MTRCL has to open up part of connections between platform slabs and diaphragm walls for detailed inspection and make use of non-destructive tests for verification of the workmanship of the coupler connections. This involves opening up 28 random locations each in the platform slabs of the EWC and the NSC, i.e. 56 locations in total, to expose at least 168 rebars/couplers for inspection. In the third stage, the MTRCL will consolidate the test results of the first two stages, including the verified construction details, works quality information, and the technical data provided by the manufacturers; and conduct a detailed structural analysis of the HUH Extension to ascertain whether the overall structural integrity of the works is acceptable, and determine if it is necessary to conduct remedial or strengthening works. Relevant government departments have been strictly monitoring the process.

Table 6.3 of the holistic assessment strategy mainly illustrates the relationship between the number of failures in the samples and the maximum failure rate in the population based on statistical inference. The "failure" here means that individual coupler and rebars are not installed according to the technical specification. Whether it is required to strengthen or even rebuild the platform slabs due to a certain number of coupler and rebars are not connected in accordance with the technical specification has to be determined after conducting a detailed structural analysis in the third stage.

(3) The Government has been highly concerned about the second stage opening up works under the holistic assessment strategy. To enhance transparency, upon receipt of the new test results, the Government will publish them on the SCL project webpage of the Highways Department (HyD) for reference of the public.

On January 4, 2019, the HyD found that a coupler and a steel bar at the test point in Area C3 of the bottom of the EWC slab near the western diaphragm wall were not connected and could not be tested. As it takes time to complete a detailed investigation, but in order to announce the latest test results on the same day, the HyD added Note 2 to the webpage on the same day giving a brief account of the findings and indicating that the details would be subject to further investigation. The BD, the HyD and the MTRCL conducted on-site investigations in the following few days; and confirmed the situation on January 9. The phrase "details are being investigated" in Note 2 was thus deleted on the same day. Meanwhile, given that the number of notes has increased as the opening up works proceed and in order to improve

the format of the Notes, the HyD has presented by table form the information verified and other findings during the opening up process (including the abovementioned information and findings verified on January 9). The new format has been effective from January 19 for perusal by the public.

LCQ7: Combatting speeding

Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (January 30):

Question:

It is learnt that some road sections are unsuitable for installing speed enforcement cameras (SECs). Even at those road sections installed with SECs, speeding drivers can get away without punishment by driving in such a way that makes their vehicles slow down before, and accelerate after, passing an SEC. As a result, SECs have lost deterrent effects on speeding and are virtually useless. Speeding vehicles not only pose danger to other road users, but also generate noise (which is particularly serious when a vehicle is driven at the aforesaid uneven speeds as a vehicle generates greater noise when accelerating), thereby causing great nuisance to nearby residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it will conduct a study on adopting the approach of detecting the average vehicular speed (i.e. calculating the average speed of a vehicle when it passes through a road section) to combat speeding, so as to provide greater flexibility in the locations for installing SECs and to eliminate drivers' circumvention of speed limits by driving in the aforesaid manner; if so, of the details and the implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the Hon Michael Tien's question is as follows:

The Government attaches great importance to road safety. To this end, the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) have been combatting speeding offences. Apart from using fixed speed enforcement cameras for regular traffic enforcement, the Police also deploy mobile instruments such as laser guns, mobile radar and in-car video recording systems for ad hoc enforcement operations. These allow greater flexibility in anti-speeding operations and make motorists remain alert at all times, thereby reducing the risk of traffic accidents and enhancing road safety.

As regards the average speed camera system, the Government previously consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Transport in May 2013 on a trial

scheme of such system. Some Panel members were of the view that, at that juncture, such a system had not proven to be cost effective or perform better than the existing speed enforcement cameras at that time. Hence, they had reservations on the trial scheme. Given that the trial scheme was not supported by the majority of the Panel members, the Government did not pursue it then.

In view of technological advancements, the Transport Department is currently discussing with the Police about testing cameras featuring different speed enforcement technologies so as to ascertain the technical feasibility of such camera systems and their suitability for use in Hong Kong. The Government will keep close track of technological developments, make reference to overseas experience in and examples of speed detection, and conduct timely reviews of the features of the technologies concerned and their suitability for use in Hong Kong.

[HKETO Sydney participates in Chatswood Year of the Pig Festival \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney (HKETO) is participating in the three-week-long Chatswood Year of the Pig Festival 2019 in the Chatswood district of Sydney, Australia, to share the joy of the Lunar New Year with the public in Sydney.

Two giant photo walls featuring magnificent day and night views of Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour with new year greeting messages have been set up at the Golden Market in the Chatswood Mall for visitors to take photos to promote Asia's world city.

The Festival, hosted by the Willoughby City Council of Sydney from January 29 to February 19, includes a variety of cultural events and performances that will connect visitors to celebrations across China and other Asian destinations. The event brings Sydney into the Chinese New Year in true Chinese style, and its programme includes performers and musicians from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts performing the Chinese opera "Piggy's Wedding", to be presented by Australasian Art and Stageworks at the Theatre at the Concourse in Chatswood on February 9.

Speaking at a lunch yesterday (January 29) to launch the Festival, the Director of the HKETO, Mr Raymond Fan, said that every year Hong Kong has lots of arts and cultural activities to celebrate the Lunar New Year.

"We are therefore excited that Chatswood is hosting the cultural festival so that we can continue our close connection with this community," Mr Fan said.

"Following the commissioning of mega transportation infrastructure, ie Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail, I am pleased to report that various cultural projects in Hong Kong will be completed one after another over the next few years.

"The West Kowloon Cultural District is one of the largest cultural projects in the world. Its first landmark venue, the Xiqu Centre, was officially opened 10 days ago. This world-class venue is designed for the conservation, promotion and development of Chinese opera.

"So please visit Hong Kong in the Year of the Pig. Apart from enjoying the incredible cuisine, exciting shopping, fantastic arts and culture, and photogenic skyline, please do take a ride to explore the surrounding Greater Bay Area through our well-connected new infrastructure and unlock unlimited opportunities in this year of fortune," Mr Fan added.

