

## Cross-harbour traffic generally smooth after implementation of time-varying tolls at three road harbour crossings

The Transport Department (TD) said today (December 18) that the overall cross-harbour traffic at the three road harbour crossings (RHCs), namely the Western Harbour Crossing (WHC), the Cross-Harbour Tunnel (CHT) and the Eastern Harbour Crossing (EHC), was generally smooth after the implementation of time-varying tolls at 5am yesterday (December 17).

The TD has been closely monitoring the traffic situation after the implementation of time-varying tolls. On the first working day after the implementation of time-varying tolls, the overall cross-harbour vehicle flow in the morning (7am to 11am) remained at a similar level, with a two-way flow of about 64 000 vehicles, while the cross-harbour traffic was generally smooth. The traffic flow of the WHC increased by about 8 per cent, and that of the CHT and the EHC decreased by about 10 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. According to observations, the preliminary results showed that the traffic conditions of the CHT and the EHC have improved, while the traffic condition of the WHC was similar to that before. The maximum traffic queues at the CHT and the EHC were about 1 kilometre and 0.5km respectively, which were reduced by more than 1km and 0.5km as compared to those before the implementation of time-varying tolls.

"After the implementation of time-varying tolls, the time before 7.30am in the morning lies in the off-peak time slot, and the uniform tolls for private cars using the three RHCs are reduced to \$20. We initially observed that in the half hour before 7.30am, the overall cross-harbour traffic flow increased by about 6 per cent as compared to that before, while the cross-harbour traffic during the morning peak hours (i.e. 7.30am to 10.15am) decreased by about 4 per cent. This may be because some motorists choose to travel outside peak hours and cross the harbour at lower tolls. Time-varying tolls are a completely new charging arrangement. Motorists need time to adapt, including the adjustment of travel modes, travel time, route choice and other travel behaviours. Cross-harbour traffic conditions will fluctuate in the early stage and gradually stabilise over time. We will continue to closely monitor the relevant traffic conditions," a TD spokesman said.

Separately, there had been some errors for the toll charging of the WHC this morning, and the TD immediately followed up with the toll service provider. According to the toll service provider, the time-varying toll plan in operation for the WHC was found to be replaced by the obsolete 633 toll table due to human error, resulting in incorrect handling of tolls at the WHC between 10.02am and 11.04am for about 4 700 vehicles, while those at the CHT and the EHC remained unaffected. Upon rectification, the toll service provider reverted to the time-varying toll plan at 11.04am, and the operation has resumed normal.

The toll service provider has refunded about 3 400 toll transactions. As for about 1 300 pending for payment settlement, the toll service provider has issued the updated payment notifications according to the time-varying toll plan. The TD has demanded the toll service provider to conduct thorough investigation into the cause of the incident and submit a report, and will also comprehensively follow up on the findings and monitor the performance of the toll service provider.