

Dead pine trees to be removed along Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) (with photos)

The Highways Department (HyD) will remove some 130 dead pine trees along the Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) starting in early August to protect road users' safety. Tree removal work will be carried out at night and will last about four weeks.

There are approximately 300 pine trees (*Pinus elliottii*) along the four roadside verges and slopes within the expressway boundary. Between late March and early May this year, around 130 pine trees died within a few months, and beetles were found on the tree bark. The HyD, together with the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau, has looked into the possible cause by collecting beetle samples for DNA identification and consulting entomology and tree experts. The test results and experts' advice showed that the beetles are not the cause of tree death and they are not a medium of infestation. The actual cause has yet to be determined.

The pine trees are already dead. With continual decline in their structural stability, they will eventually collapse. In order to ensure road users' safety, the HyD will remove the dead trees. This would also avoid the spread of fungal disease, if any, to other trees in the vicinity.

The Government will examine the soil and dead branches in order to look into the cause of tree death. To restore the visual appeal of the slope landscape and prevent soil erosion, the HyD will replant with shrubs that are resistant to drought, strong wind, dust and harsh sunlight as well as effective in suppressing weed growth, including native and naturalised plant species (e.g. azalea and miniature umbrella plant).



