

EMSD's response to MTR Corporation Limited's investigation report on incidents during testing of new signalling system of East Rail Line

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) completed the investigation related to the Automatic Train Supervision System (ATS) blackout and signal passed at danger (SPAD) incidents in the early morning non-traffic hours of May 23 this year and the shutdown of the interlocking system in the early morning non-traffic hours of May 25 during the testing of the new signalling system of the East Rail Line. The MTRCL today (August 17) submitted a report to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) detailing the causes of the incidents and recommendations for improvement.

The EMSD has reviewed the report and accepted the investigation findings on the causes of the incidents. Recommendations made by the EMSD on the incidents have been agreed on and completed by the MTRCL as reflected in the report.

While the incidents did not involve damage of equipment nor injury, the Government was concerned about the incidents of May 23 and 25, and requested the MTRCL to conduct in-depth investigation. The EMSD had been monitoring the MTRCL's investigation including reviewing the data records of the signalling system at the time of the incidents, witnessing simulation tests and site verification tests conducted by the MTRCL and the signalling system supplier, checking software update versions and verifying related system operation and maintenance documents.

Investigation revealed that the three incidents on May 23 and 25 were independent events and not related to system safety. The automatic train protection system of the signalling system was functioning normally during the ATS blackout on May 23 and the interlocking system shutdown on May 25. There was sufficient safety distance between all the trains. The SPAD incident on May 23 was caused by mishandling by the train captain and was not related to the safety of the signalling system.

The East Rail Line will be extended across the harbour from Hung Hom to Admiralty under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project to form the North South Corridor (NSC). Since the East Rail Line is part of the NSC, its signalling system has to be upgraded under the SCL project. The EMSD will closely monitor the MTRCL in implementing the improvement measures recommended in the report and their effectiveness, in order to avoid recurrence of the incidents and to ensure railway safety.