

Franchised bus companies to enhance services next week

The Transport Department (TD) said today (August 28) that to align with the gradual resumption of more basic public services by the Government, and also the arrangements for the new school year, franchised bus companies will strengthen or gradually resume bus services next week.

The Education Bureau announced earlier that for the prevention and control of COVID-19, students would temporarily learn from home upon commencement of the new school year (generally commence schooling from September 1). Nevertheless, schools should remain open to accommodate students who have to go back to school as necessary. As such, franchised bus companies will, with effect from September 1, resume 18 bus routes and departures serving school areas (details are at the Annex) to cater for the commuting needs of passengers. The bus companies have also arranged spare buses to strengthen those bus routes serving school areas as appropriate to meet the passenger demand.

The TD has also requested the franchised bus companies to enhance the frequency of their bus routes to meet the passenger demand. The TD has approved Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB), New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB), Citybus Limited (except airport and North Lantau routes), Long Win Bus Company Limited (LWB) and New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited to adjust the peak frequencies of a total of 92 routes, and the off-peak frequencies of a total of 245 routes, from August 31 to September 6. These represent a drop by 50 per cent and 29 per cent respectively for the 183 routes and 346 routes approved from August 24 to 30. Among the routes approved for frequency adjustment, the headway will be lengthened by no more than five minutes during peak and off-peak periods while the headway after 9pm will be lengthened by no more than 10 minutes, and the extended headway will not exceed 30 minutes. Moreover, individual bus routes with extremely low patronage (KMB – four routes, NWFB – three routes, and LWB – one route) have been approved for temporary suspension.

The TD has requested the bus companies to closely monitor changes in passenger demand and consider adjusting services whenever necessary. The service adjustments of the relevant bus routes have been approved for a period of seven days. The TD will consider the actual circumstances to review the service adjustments on a weekly basis, and keep close communication with the bus companies to closely monitor the operational situation and adjust the services according to passenger demand.

In addition, the frequencies of individual bus routes mainly serving tourists, heading to land boundary control points and the airport have already been adjusted to limited service or have suspended the service due to the anti-pandemic measures on boundary control implemented earlier.

The TD's Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre (ETCC) will closely monitor the traffic situation and public transport services during the new school year. The ETCC will maintain close liaison with major public transport operators to adjust frequency flexibly and strengthen services when necessary.