

Gazettal of Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2021

â€‹The Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2021 (the Bill) will be published in the Gazette on February 19. The Bill seeks to include "cat" and "dog" in the definition of "animal" in section 56 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) (the Ordinance).

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The number of cats and dogs kept by the public has been increasing in recent years. Concomitant with the increase, the risk of these animals going astray and getting injured in traffic accidents has gone up. Accidents involving injuries or deaths of these animals after being hit by vehicles occur from time to time. After conducting a public consultation, the Government proposes to amend the Ordinance to expand the definition of 'animal' and require drivers to stop the vehicle if they hit cats or dogs, so that cats and dogs injured in traffic accidents may receive timely medical treatment. This will help further safeguard animal welfare."

At present, the definition of "animal" under the Ordinance covers any horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig or goat, but does not include a cat or dog. The Ordinance currently provides that the driver of a vehicle shall stop if an accident involving that vehicle occurs whereby damage is caused to an animal other than one in or on that vehicle or a trailer drawn by it. Drivers are also required to provide particulars, including a name and address, to any police officer or any person having reasonable grounds for requiring them, otherwise the driver must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible and in any case not later than 24 hours after the accident. A driver failing to stop after a relevant accident is liable to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for 12 months, whereas a driver failing to provide particulars and report to the Police as soon as possible and within 24 hours is liable to a fine of \$15,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for scrutiny on February 24.