

Hong Kong Taxi Drivers "Spot and Report" Campaign

The Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) launched a territory-wide publicity drive for the Hong Kong Taxi Drivers "Spot and Report" Campaign today (August 1) which features activities like making appeals via radio broadcasts, displaying posters and banners at gas filling stations and entrances to tunnels, with a view to building a safe community in collaboration with the public.

According to government statistics, there are over 18,000 taxis and about 46,000 active taxi drivers in Hong Kong. Driving around different districts in Hong Kong every day, taxi drivers come into contact with a wide range of people and activities, and may even come across terrorism and violence related, or other crime information. It reflects that the taxi sector plays an important role as a gatekeeper of the safety of the community.

In view of this, the taxi sector is the ICTU's key engagement target. Through the Transport Department (TD), the ICTU has reached out to over 40 taxi associations and companies, covering major ones in Hong Kong. While introducing to them the Campaign, the ICTU also promoted counter-terrorism (CT) and anti-crime information including how to identify suspicious persons, objects or activities and encouraged members of the sector to report crime information in a timely manner. The ICTU will also disseminate important information to all taxi drivers in Hong Kong through sector representatives so as to safeguard the community and ensure safety during the journeys.

An opening ceremony for the Hong Kong Taxi Drivers "Spot and Report" Campaign was held at West Kowloon Government Offices on July 25. It was officiated by the Senior Superintendent of the ICTU, Mr Leung Wai-ki, with active support from the representatives of taxi associations. Apart from distributing leaflets and souvenirs, the ICTU together with the representatives affixed promotional stickers on the theme of "Safe Journey, Spot and Report" in taxi compartments. Following the ceremony, the ICTU delivered a briefing at the TD's Taxi Trade Conference to enhance the sector's CT and anti-crime awareness as well as their emergency response capabilities.

With increasing public awareness of CT, the Police have recently received several proactive reports from zealous taxi drivers which led to the arrest of offenders. There were two such cases in June alone this year. During the month, a taxi driver saw several people holding weapons on a street in Tuen Mun, while another witnessed similar situation in Sheung Shui. Both of them immediately called the Police, resulting in the effective prevention of two criminal gang fights with a total of seven arrests. In July this year, a taxi driver also spotted and reported a suspicious passenger in Tai Wai, which led to the swift arrest of a male suspect for

“Trafficking in Dangerous Drugs”.

Besides, the ICTU granted a “CT Reward” for the first time to the informant of a bomb hoax case in March this year. The informant, who was a professional driver, noticed that his passengers were plotting a violent attack. His report eventually led to the conviction of two suspects. The above cases indicate that reports from drivers are absolutely crucial to crime and terrorism prevention.

In the future, the ICTU will continue to work with the taxi sector in disseminating important CT and anti-crime messages to taxi drivers and sector representatives through various promotional campaigns. The ICTU will join hands with taxi drivers and the sector in combatting terrorism and building a safe community.

To effectively promote “Whole-of-Community” participation in CT, the ICTU launched the “CT Reporting Hotline” 63-666-999 and “CT Reward” in June last year. As at mid-July, over 20,000 reporting messages had been received by the Hotline, involving more than 5,000 informants.