

LCQ1: Road safety of cyclists

Following is a question by the Hon Lee Chun-keung and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (May 22):

Question:

It is learnt that public demand for food delivery services has been keen in recent years and most takeaway food couriers deliver takeaway food by bicycles, leading to a significant increase in the number of bicycles on roads. Many motorists have relayed that some cyclists have a weak awareness of obeying traffic regulations, including not wearing helmets and riding fast on roads, which affects the safety of other road users. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of summonses issued as well as the numbers of traffic accidents and casualties involving cyclists contravening traffic regulations in each of the past five years and, among such accidents, the numbers of those involving takeaway food couriers;

(2) whether it will step up training, education and publicity on cycling among takeaway food couriers, so as to enhance their road safety awareness and reduce traffic accidents involving them; and

(3) whether it will consider requiring cyclists to obtain specific licences by taking tests and wear reflective clothing when cycling, and stipulating that bicycles must be fitted with reflective markings before they can be used on roads; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to cycling safety and, where road safety considerations and circumstances permit, foster a "bicycle-friendly environment" by constructing or improving cycle tracks and related facilities in new development areas and new towns, with a view to facilitating the public to use bicycles for short-distance commuting or recreational purposes and thereby reducing the use of mechanised transport. In urban areas, the traffic is generally very heavy while the roads are narrow and crowded, and there are frequent on-street loading and unloading activities with many vehicles passing and stopping by the roadside for a brief period of time. Due to road safety considerations, the Government does not encourage the public to use bicycles as a mode of transport in urban areas. The Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) have been monitoring and analysing the statistics and situation of cycling accidents, implementing appropriate enhancement measures, and rolling out publicity and public education activities.

In consultation with the TD and the Police, I would like to reply to the question raised by the Hon Lee Chun-keung as follows:

(1) The numbers of prosecutions against cycling offences and the numbers of accidents and casualties involving bicycles (including cyclists and other road users killed/injured in the accidents) in each of the past five years are tabulated below:

Year	Number of prosecutions [^]	Number of accidents				Number of casualties			
		Fatal#	Serious#	Slight#	Total	Killed	Seriously injured	Slightly injured	Total
2019	2 350	8	183	1 547	1 738	8	186	1 605	1 799
2020	4 018	17	457	2 263	2 737	17	460	2 345	2 822
2021	6 768	8	507	2 479	2 994	8	508	2 601	3 117
2022	5 832	10	143	2 071	2 224	10	144	2 156	2 310
2023	4 094	6*	104*	1 866*	1 976*	6*	106*	1 935*	2 047*

[^] The numbers of prosecutions cover traffic offences involving the use of bicycles, including reckless or careless cycling, cycling without switching on the lights during hours of darkness, not following traffic signals or signs, carrying passengers when cycling and cycling on pavements.

A "fatal accident" is an accident in which one or more persons die within 30 days of the accident; a "serious accident" is an accident in which one or more persons are injured and stayed in hospital for more than 12 hours; and a "slight accident" is an accident in which one or more persons are injured or stayed in hospital for not more than 12 hours if necessary.

* Provisional figures

Both the TD and the Police have not maintained a breakdown of the number of traffic accidents and related casualties involving couriers of food delivery. The Police conducted a one-off thematic study in respect of traffic accidents involving bicycles (including fatal and seriously injured cases) occurred in the first six months of 2021, and collated the number of traffic accidents and casualties related to food delivery. The findings indicated that the number of cycling accidents involving food delivery with fatal and seriously injured cases accounted for about 0.1 per cent (i.e. about one of a thousand) of the total number of traffic accidents across the city during the same period, with eight people seriously injured and no fatalities. Overall speaking, the number of traffic accidents and casualties involving bicycles has shown a downward trend since 2021.

(2) The Government will continue enhancing the safety awareness of road users through publicity, education and enforcement work. The TD has been collaborating with the Road Safety Council and the Police in launching various publicity and educational activities with a view to promoting road

safety to all road users (including cyclists). Examples include publishing and distributing the Road Safety Bulletins and publicity publications, organising road safety seminars for food delivery platforms, affixing full-height publicity posters to traffic signal controllers, making and telecasting publicity video clips on the Internet, disseminating cycling safety information through social media platforms and so forth, so that cyclists understand road safety matters that require their attention, including following the traffic rules at all times and wearing personal protective gear (such as safety helmets). The Police will also visit various community centres, bicycle rental shops, cycling clubs, automobile associations and food delivery operators, etc, to promote cycling safety information and remind road users to pay attention to cycling safety.

(3) Same as the common practice in other regions, there is currently no requirement in Hong Kong for cyclists to obtain the relevant driving licenses. However, as bicycles are regarded as vehicles, cyclists have the same obligation to follow the laws and regulations applicable to drivers when cycling on the road. These include the relevant provisions of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary legislation, as well as the Road Users' Code (RUC). Among the ten chapters in the RUC, one of them is "For Cyclists". Failing to observe the RUC may be taken into account by the court when deciding the liability of a road user and whether he/she was in contravention of the laws, and to what extent it was his/her fault. Therefore, cyclists should observe the RUC to safeguard the safety of themselves and other road users.

On the requirements of reflectors, the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A) already contain the relevant mandatory requirements, specifying the standards of installation of reflectors on bicycles. Moreover, according to the RUC, cyclists are required to wear bright, light-coloured, fluorescent or reflective clothing or wear reflective belts to make themselves more visible (including in the dark and in poor light) to other road users.

The Government will closely monitor the issue of cycling safety and continue its efforts on publicity and education to encourage cyclists to pay attention to and comply with the relevant laws and regulations, thereby promoting public awareness of cycling safety and reducing traffic accidents. In addition, cycling safety is one of the "selected traffic enforcement priorities", and the Police will take enforcement actions against cycling violations.

Thank you, President.