

LCQ10: Electric mobility devices

Following is a question by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (June 5):

Question:

The Government indicated in its paper (the paper) submitted to the Panel on Transport of this Council in June last year that it planned to commence a legislative amendment exercise on electric mobility devices (EMDs) in the second half of last year with a view to submitting the amendments to this Council as soon as possible. Yet, one year has passed, and the amendments have yet to be submitted to this Council for scrutiny. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will commence a legislative exercise for the regulation of various EMDs, including but not limited to electric unicycles, self-balancing scooters, electric scooters, motorised skateboards and electric bicycles; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; how it will tighten regulation over EMDs prior to the completion of legislation, such as whether it will step up enforcement to ensure the safety of EMD users and other road users;

(2) whether it has plans to enact corresponding legislation for the regulation of relevant equipment of various EMDs (such as headlamps and braking systems); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that the Government indicated in the paper that it proposed to open a number of designated cycle tracks for use of relevant EMDs in the first phase, of the cycle tracks to be opened in the first phase, and the timetable for opening other cycle tracks in the next phase; and

(4) whether it has plans to refurbish cycle tracks over the territory, so that all of them can meet the safety requirements for shared use by conventional bicycles and various types of EMDs; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

After consulting the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Yung Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) As electric mobility devices (EMDs) are mechanically propelled, they fall within the definition of "motor vehicles" under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) (Ordinance) and must therefore be licensed before use on roads or private roads. From the road safety or accessibility perspective, EMDs are not suitable for sharing road space with ordinary vehicles or being used on

footpaths. Moreover, the quality of unregulated EMDs varies and they pose potential safety hazards in various aspects. It is the long-standing policy of the Government not to register or license EMDs under the existing Ordinance. Therefore, the use of EMDs on roads or private roads (including footpaths) will be regarded as driving unlicensed "motor vehicles" and hence contravene relevant laws.

On law enforcement, "road safety" is one of the Police's operational priorities, with combating the illegal use of EMDs being one of its selected traffic enforcement priorities. The Police will continue to tackle the illegal use of EMDs through its publicity and educational efforts as well as enforcement actions, with a view to ensuring road safety.

The number of persons arrested by the Police for illegal use of EMDs from 2021 to March 2024 is set out in the table below:

2021	2022	2023	2024 (from January to March)
207	236	267	57

With the rising prevalence of EMDs, the Government is currently formulating proper regulatory arrangements for EMDs so as to ensure their safe and effective uses while allowing more room for the adoption of new technologies and innovation. The EMDs planned to be regulated can be classified mainly into two categories, including motorised personal mobility devices (PMDs) (such as electric scooters, motorised skateboards, electric unicycles and electric hoverboards) and power assisted pedal cycles (PAPCs) (i.e. bicycles or tricycles that are equipped with an auxiliary electric motor and motorised assistance will only be provided when the riders are pedalling. Such motorised assistance will be cut out once a certain speed is reached). As for electric bicycles propelled by a throttle button, as the operation mode of such electric bicycles is similar to that of electric motor cycles, they should be regulated in accordance with the existing legislation relating to motor cycles.

The establishment of a regulatory framework for EMDs will necessitate amendments to the legislation. We are currently considering the views of relevant government departments and stakeholders and drafting the legislative amendments, with a view to ensuring the effective regulation of the use of EMDs. The proposed legislative amendments will be submitted to the Legislative Council in due course.

(2) Under the proposed regulatory arrangements, EMDs should meet relevant technical requirements, including those on headlamps and braking systems, with details listed in the table below:

Proposed technical and safety requirements for motorised PMDs and PAPCs

	Motorised PMDs	PAPCs
--	----------------	-------

Maximum net weight	20 kg	25 kg
Maximum design speed	25 km/h	Up to 25 km/h with auxiliary power
Maximum width	650 mm	
Maximum length	1 250 mm	1 800 mm
Maximum number of wheels	1-2 (wheel set(s)*)	2-3
Safety requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fitted with a front white lamp and a rear red lamp • fitted with a rear red reflector • fitted with an effective braking/stopping system • fitted with a warning device • complying with relevant international standards • no passengers allowed 	

*If the distance between two centre points of the wheel-to-ground contact areas is less than 300 mm, the two wheels can be regarded as being in one wheel set.

(3) and (4) Our proposed technical and safety requirements for EMDs are intended to enable compliant EMDs to be used on cycle tracks to be similar to that of conventional bicycles in terms of operating speed, space required and manoeuvres. Since the operation mode of PAPCs is quite similar to that of conventional pedal bicycles, we propose allowing PAPCs to be used on all cycle tracks. As regards motorised PMDs, given that these devices are a new mode of personal mobility and that the questionnaire survey conducted earlier on the trial schemes indicated that some respondents had reservations about the use of EMDs, we propose adopting a prudent approach by opening cycle tracks for use of motorised PMDs by the public in phases under suitable circumstances. For the initial phase, the cycle track sections being considered to be opened for use have to be at least 3.5 metres wide with high connectivity (such as the cycle tracks in Tseung Kwan O South and near the Pak Shek Kok Promenade). We will review whether more suitable cycle tracks will be opened for use taking into account the effectiveness in due course. In addition, the TD will continue to conduct review from time to time and where the road environment permits, improve existing cycle tracks and relevant facilities in new towns. In planning for the provision of cycle tracks in new towns and new development areas, the Government will consider how the shared use of cycle tracks by bicycles and compliant EMDs can be achieved.