

LCQ16: Arrangements for restricting vehicles of certain weight from entering designated road sections

Following is a question by the Hon Rock Chen and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

It is reported that under the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G), vehicles weighing three tonnes and above are required to apply for prior permits for entering designated road sections, failing which the persons concerned are liable to fines and imprisonment. On the other hand, there are views that electric vehicles (EVs) are a major trend of future development, and some new EV models nowadays weigh more than three tonnes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the current number of road sections in Hong Kong which are subject to the restriction that vehicles weighing three tonnes or more are required to apply for a permit before entering; the respective numbers of traffic accidents involving vehicles weighing three tonnes or above at road sections with such a restriction in each of the past five years, with a breakdown of the vehicles involved by type;

(2) of the rationale for restricting entry of vehicles weighing more than three tonnes on certain road sections; in the face of the rising popularity of EVs and the increase in vehicle weight, whether the Government has assessed if the restriction fails to align with the actual situation, and whether it has any specific plans or timetables for adjusting the existing road load restriction; if so, of the details of the implementation of such plans; and

(3) whether it has drawn on the experience and practices of other countries or regions in handling similar issues; if it has, of the details, and whether such experience and practices are applicable to Hong Kong; if it has not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Transport Department (TD), my consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Rock Chen is as follows:

(1) The TD has been considering corresponding vehicle weight limits in accordance with the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G) based on road conditions and traffic management needs of individual road sections, so that vehicles can travel safely on suitable roads. At present,

there are 17 road sections in Hong Kong with a three tonnes weight limit, prohibiting vehicles exceeding three tonnes in gross vehicle weight (GVW) from driving through. If one intends to drive a vehicle exceeding three tonnes in GVW through these road sections, he/she shall apply to the TD for relevant permits.

According to the TD's record, between January 2019 and October 2024, within the road sections with three tonnes weight limits, the number of traffic accidents involving vehicle classes with a maximum GVW exceeding three tonnes are tabulated in the Annex.

(2) and (3) The TD makes reference to regulations and experiences in places outside Hong Kong from time to time, to review and formulate road safety strategies, standards and measures based on local road conditions, traffic management needs and development of technology when appropriate. The TD also maintains close communication with the trade for feedback.

When implementing the relevant weight limits, the TD will consider factors such as narrow carriageways, numerous bends, steep gradients, to determine whether the road sections are suitable for the use by larger, heavier vehicles to ensure the safety of road users.

Considering that some electric private cars and electric taxis may exceed three tonnes in GVW but their size, occupation of road space and operation are similar to general fuel-propelled or hybrid private cars and taxis, the TD plans to exempt all private cars and taxis from the permit requirement for entering road sections with three tonnes weight limits. The TD is arranging local consultations on the proposals. Subject to the consultation outcome, the proposals are expected to be implemented in 2025.