

LCQ17: Promoting the development of the automotive parts market

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Johnny Ng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

There are views pointing out that the Mainland's automotive parts market has become increasingly mature and that the field of automotive aftermarket driven by vehicle modification is a new area of growth for the Mainland's automotive market. However, Hong Kong's market for automotive parts and modification supplies is not vibrant, and Hong Kong's legislation related to vehicle modification is more stringent than that of other regions. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the Police's law enforcement action and prosecution in respect of illegal vehicle modification (including figures on vehicles detained for examination and ticketed), and (ii) the numbers of serious traffic accidents and incidents relating to vehicle modification in each of the past three years, together with a breakdown by cause of accident; whether it has studied whether vehicle modification is the cause of the aforesaid traffic accidents;

(2) as there are views that Hong Kong's existing legislation related to vehicle modification is more stringent than that of other countries, which has in effect stifled the development of the automotive parts market, whether the Government will strike a balance between road safety and modest vehicle modification by considering amending the relevant legislation (including section 53 of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374)), as well as relaxing the regulation and allowing vehicle modification with reference to the practices of advanced regions, such as Europe, the United States and Japan; and

(3) whether it has assessed the contribution to be made to Hong Kong's economy and trade annually by the development of the market for automotive parts and modification supplies; whether it will study the promotion and development of Hong Kong's automotive parts market in order to increase the volume of trade of relevant products and dovetail with the development of the country's automotive market?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau, Hong Kong Police Force (Police), the Transport Department (TD) and the Census and Statistics Department, my consolidated reply to questions raised by Dr

Hon Ng is as follows:

(1) The Police and the TD have been exchanging information on the suspected illegal vehicle modification cases, with a view to further combating illegal modification of vehicles through regulatory works, including strengthening the existing reporting mechanism and enforcement actions on the roads by the Police.

In fact, the Police has been taking stringent enforcement actions against illegal modification of vehicles from time to time. The numbers of suspected illegally modified vehicles detained for examination by the Police in the past three years are as follows:

Year	No. of suspected illegally modified vehicles detained and examined
2021	2 177
2022	2 449
2023	1 951

The Police has been examining and analysing the major contributory factors of the overall traffic accidents, but does not keep any statistical breakdown of the figures of traffic accidents involving modified vehicles. The Police will continue to take enforcement actions against illegally modified vehicles in a professional, prudent and responsible manner to safeguard road safety.

(2) All vehicles registered and licensed in Hong Kong must comply with the requirements of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) (the Ordinance) and its subsidiary legislation. Both the design and construction of a vehicle must comply with the regulatory requirements to substantiate that the vehicle is roadworthy before it can be registered and licensed.

According to section 53(2) of the Ordinance, no person shall alter or cause or permit to be altered a motor vehicle so as to render its condition such that the use thereof on a road would contravene any provision of this Ordinance as to the construction, weight, equipment, brakes, steering gear or tyres thereof. Additionally, according to section 5 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A), every vehicle, including all body work and fittings, shall be soundly and properly constructed of suitable materials and in a good and serviceable condition. The provision also requires that the design and construction methods of the vehicle should enable it to be capable of withstanding the loads and stresses likely to be encountered in operation. The objective of the relevant provisions is to ensure that every vehicle is roadworthy to safeguard road safety.

In accordance with the aforementioned provisions, the TD has issued

clear guidelines for vehicle modification, such as "Alterations and Modifications to Vehicle – Do's and Don'ts" and "Guide to Notifiable Alteration – Motor Vehicle", setting out clear requirements and instructions of vehicle modification and providing information required to be considered by the registered vehicle owners prior to any modification of vehicles.

The TD has been closely monitoring the development of the automotive parts market and will consider the safety hazards associated with different kinds of modification and update the guidelines in a timely manner. Prior to any alterations or modifications to a vehicle, the vehicle owner should refer to the aforementioned guidelines and seek professional advice from, for example, vehicle manufacturers/ dealers, automotive parts agents, insurance companies etc. In view of the dense population, as well as the comparatively narrow and complex road environment in Hong Kong, it is incumbent upon the Government to carefully consider the safety risks of relaxing the regulatory requirements of vehicle modification.

(3) Hong Kong's total trade in automotive parts amounted to \$12.8 billion in 2023, representing 0.15 per cent of Hong Kong's total trade for the year. It is stated in the National 14th Five-Year Plan that our country will be committed to the new development philosophy of innovation and green development, and focus on such emerging industries of strategic importance such as green environmental protection and new energy vehicles. Hong Kong has a solid research and development (R&D) foundation in new energy technology, with considerable R&D capacities of local research institutes in fields such as new energy vehicles and related products, laying a solid foundation for the development of new energy vehicles industry in Hong Kong. In the future, the Government will proactively promote the development of such industries by supporting relevant quality and representative enterprises to set up R&D and advanced manufacturing production bases in Hong Kong to foster economic diversification.