

## LCQ19: Traffic safety of crane lorries

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 23):

Question:

It has been reported that a total of three traffic accidents occurred in March and May this year in which the not-properly-folded cranes of crane lorries in motion struck the undersides of flyovers, causing damages to the latter. Regarding traffic safety of crane lorries, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of traffic accidents caused by the cranes of crane lorries not having been folded properly and the resultant casualties, in each of the past three years;

(2) given that the Transport Department (TD) currently maintains records of only those traffic accidents involving casualties, but traffic accidents involving cranes of crane lorries (irrespective of whether or not casualties are involved) often seriously affect traffic and jeopardise road safety as well as cause damages to flyovers/footbridges, whether the TD will separately collect the statistics on all traffic accidents involving cranes of crane lorries, so as to grasp the trend of such accidents; if not, of the reasons for that;

(3) of the number of persons prosecuted in the past three years for operating the cranes of crane lorries improperly, and what penalties were imposed on those convicted; whether it has reviewed if the current regulation and training requirements for drivers of crane lorries and for crane operators need to be tightened, and if the penalties for irregularities in operating such cranes have sufficient deterrent effect; and

(4) as the TD's Code of Practice for the Loading of Vehicles recommends that warning systems be installed on crane lorries to alert drivers in case the cranes are out of their stowed positions when the vehicles are in motion, whether it knows the current number and percentage of crane lorries that have been installed with those systems; whether it will consider amending the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A) to stipulate such systems to be standard devices for newly registered crane lorries, so as to reduce the aforesaid traffic accidents; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government all along attaches great importance to the safety of crane lorries running on roads, and reviews the prevailing arrangements from time to time, with a view to preventing cranes that have not been folded

properly from posing risks to road safety.

Having consulted the Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police), my reply to the Hon Tony Tse's question is as follows:

(1) According to the records of the Police, the number of traffic accidents involving crane lorries with cranes not properly folded and the related casualties between January 2018 and May 2021 is tabulated below:

Year	Number of accidents involving casualty	Number of casualties
2018	1	1
2019	1	1
2020	2	3
2021* (January to May)	2	2

\*Provisional figures

Remark: In addition, on March 10, 2021, there was a traffic accident involving a crane lorry with its crane not properly folded, which did not involve any casualty.

(2) and (3) At present, the Government has put in place appropriate measures to regulate the safety requirements for crane lorries running on roads. All commercial vehicles (including crane lorries) must undergo vehicle examination prior to first registration and annually thereafter in order to ensure that the vehicles are roadworthy and the on-board mobile industrial equipment is securely installed. As stipulated under regulation 6 of the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A), the overall height of a crane lorry (including the load and equipment it carries) must not exceed 4.6 metres when running on roads. Also, regulation 58 of the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G) provides that the driver of a motor vehicle on a road shall ensure that the motor vehicle, all its parts and accessories, and its load shall be such that no danger is caused or is likely to be caused to any person; or no damage is caused or is likely to be caused to a road or to public or private property. Otherwise, the driver commits an offence, and is liable to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for three months on first conviction.

When driving a crane lorry, if a height limit traffic sign is present at the road section concerned (such as imposing a prohibition on vehicle with an overall height of 4.6 metres or above from entering), any person who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with the requirement indicated by the relevant traffic sign or road marking will commit an offence under regulation 59 of Cap. 374G and is liable on first conviction to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for three months; and on second or subsequent conviction to a fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for six months. Besides, depending on the actual circumstances, the driver may have committed the offence of "dangerous driving" or "careless driving" under the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374),

irrespective of whether a traffic accident has been caused, and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for 10 years.

The Police does not maintain a breakdown of relevant enforcement or prosecution figure. According to the existing legislation, only traffic accidents under specific conditions, such as accidents involving personal injuries, must be reported to the police station or police officers as soon as possible. If the accident only involves slight damage to the vehicles or property without causing personal injury, the drivers concerned could discuss with each other as well as the third party involved on the compensation liability. It is not necessary to report such accident to the Police. Thus, the Police does not possess the records of traffic incidents with no casualties involved.

To provide guidelines to crane lorry drivers and crane operators, the TD has formulated the Code of Practice for the Loading of Vehicles, which reminds crane operators to have the crane lowered and returned to its stowed position after operating the crane attached to the vehicle. The Code of Practice also recommends the installation of warning system on vehicles to alert drivers if the cranes are out of their stowed position when the vehicles are in motion. The TD will continue its publicity and education efforts through various channels (such as social media platforms, leaflets, Road Safety Bulletins and variable message signs) to remind crane lorry owners, drivers and crane operators to take greater heed of and observe the safety regulations on the use of lorries running on roads. The TD will also seek to raise the trade's awareness of safe driving of crane lorries through its regular meetings with the goods vehicle trade and publication of the Goods Vehicle Trade Newsletter.

(4) At present, the TD has been reminding drivers to fold the crane properly through variable message signs installed at trunk roads. The TD will also study the feasibility of imposing mandatory requirement for installing warning systems on newly registered crane lorries, and will consult relevant stakeholders in due course.

The TD does not maintain the number of vehicles which have been installed with the warning system of crane lorries as recommended in the Code of Practice for the Loading of Vehicles.

The Government will continue to enhance the safety of crane lorries running on the roads on various fronts, including law enforcement, improvement measures, publicity and education.