

# LCQ2: Relaxing restrictions on use of deployed features of electric vehicles

Following is a question by the Hon Duncan Chiu and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (December 4):

Question:

There are views that while the Government has made efforts to promote the popularisation of electric vehicles (EVs) in recent years, the relevant legislation is outdated and restricts the use of some deployed features of many electric private cars imported into Hong Kong. This not only undermines the maximum efficiency of EVs and the convenience they bring to drivers, but may also reduce the public's desire to switch to EVs, thus hindering the progress of the extensive use of EVs. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) regarding EVs currently imported into Hong Kong, whether it has studied and consolidated the deployed features that are restricted from use in Hong Kong; if so, set out the individual features that are restricted from use by EV brands, and the legislation involved;

(2) whether it will conduct a comprehensive review on all the provisions under the Road Traffic Ordinance which involve restrictions on the use of EV features, and study the possibility of gradually relaxing the relevant restrictions, as well as formulate a specific timetable for amending the relevant legislation; and

(3) whether it will review afresh and explore ways to improve the content of the relevant policies, regulations and testing standards, etc., so as to provide a more friendly "barrier-free" space and environment for the use of imported EVs?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Transport Department (TD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, my consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Duncan Chiu is as follows:

(1) and (2) The TD has always kept an open mind to new vehicle technologies. When formulating relevant legislation and technical guidelines to promote the adoption of new technologies in Hong Kong, the TD conducts timely reviews on the advancement in technology and liaises closely with the trade for feedback, while taking road safety, local traffic conditions as well as the regulatory experience of other jurisdictions into consideration. All

vehicles, including electric vehicles (EV), should make reference to the corresponding technical guidelines, in accordance with the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) and its subsidiary regulations, to pass the TD's vehicle approval mechanism, such that the design, construction and emission of vehicles comply with the legal requirements and are fit for road use before they are registered, licensed and used on roads in Hong Kong. The Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G) also set out relevant traffic equipment, traffic regulations and traffic control matters to ensure road safety.

Considering the above factors, except for the following two functions, the TD has already approved the usage of all advanced driver assistance systems on the market including automatic parking, side collision warning, vehicle hold, automatic steer, automatic lane change, lane keeping, cruise control and automatic emergency braking system, etc. under specific driving environments in compliance with the China National Standards (GuoBiao) or relevant internationally recognised standards.

Currently, the Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374A) does not allow vehicles, not limited to EV, to display information other than driving information in visual display unit in front of the driver's seat. In addition, if a driver uses a mobile phone or mobile communication device to remotely park a vehicle, he will contravene the Road Traffic (Traffic Control) Regulations (Cap. 374G) which stipulates that a driver is prohibited from holding a mobile phone or a mobile communication device while driving a car. The Government is actively working on the legislative amendment and plans to submit the proposals to the Legislative Council within this year, such that the vehicle trade will be able to introduce the above two functions for drivers' use under the premise of ensuring road safety.

(3) The Government strives to promote the green transformation of vehicles, including offering first registration tax concessions to encourage purchase of EV. The government is also taking a multi-pronged approach to expand the EV charging network, to ensure sufficient and convenient charging facilities to cater for the needs of different types of EV.

The TD has been working closely with the Environmental Protection Department to support the policy of carbon neutrality and climate action plan that promote the use of EV. For instance, with a view to supporting the introduction of different new energy vehicles, the TD issued a guideline document titled "Vehicle Construction Approval Requirements for Electric Vehicles" in 2010 to elaborate in detail the technical and safety requirements for EV in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the TD has also reviewed and updated guidelines, including the adoption of the GuoBiao safety requirements for EV. The latest version was released in May 2023, providing further guidance and specifications on the technical and safety requirements for EV and facilitating the vehicle trades in providing relevant information on EV to the TD to simplify applications for EV approval. The TD also updated the annex to the above guidelines in June 2024 to accept applications for vehicle type approval of EV with battery swapping technology.

In fact, over the past three years, the annual number of pure EV passing vehicle type approval has generally increased from a total of 145 pure EV models in 2021 to 164 models in 2023. As of the end of October 2024, the TD approved 144 EV models from the Mainland and 400 EV models from other regions.

To promote the usage of EV and meet the needs of drivers, the Government introduced EV maintenance service to the "Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics" and the "Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Maintenance Workshops" in July 2024, so as to keep up with providing continuous professional training to related technicians. As of November 2024, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department has received approximately 400 applications from registered vehicle maintenance technicians seeking to add EV maintenance service qualifications, and the applications are being processed.

The TD will continue to maintain close communication with the trade, update technical guidelines and streamline approval process in a timely manner, to facilitate the introduction of more EV models that comply with relevant technical requirements.

Thank you.