

LCQ21: Escalators in MTR Lam Tin Station

Following is a question by the Hon Jeremy Tam and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So Wai-man, in the Legislative Council today (July 11):

Some residents in Lam Tin have relayed to me that MTR is the major external means of transport for them. They usually commute to and from the concourse of MTR Lam Tin Station using the two sets of escalator systems (escalator systems) which connect Hong Tin Court and Lei Yue Mun Road respectively with the Sceneway Plaza. However, the escalator systems are overcrowded during peak hours in recent years and their services are frequently suspended pending repairs, causing inconvenience to the residents. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows (i) the design capacity and (ii) the peak-hour loading of the escalator systems; if it does not know the peak-hour loading, whether it will compile statistics in this respect;
- (2) whether it knows (i) the manufacturers and (ii) the repair and maintenance contractors of the escalator systems;
- (3) whether it knows (i) the number of hours spent on repairing the escalator systems and (ii) the number of days on which services of the escalator systems were suspended, in each of the past three years;
- (4) whether it will follow up the problem of frequent suspension of service of the escalator systems for a prolonged period of time pending repairs, including giving advice to the persons concerned, with a view to shortening the time taken and reducing the need for repairs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (5) whether it has studied the retrofitting of escalators or lifts at the passageway connecting Kai Tin Road with Lei Yue Mun Road, so that whenever the service of any one of the aforesaid escalator systems is suspended, the residents may commute to and from the station concourse conveniently via the new facilities and the other set of escalator system; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Jeremy Tam's question is as follows:

- (1) The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been committed to providing a safe and reliable travelling environment for passengers. The Lam Tin Station was commissioned in 1989. At its Entrance/Exit A, there are a total of nine

escalators, which are divided into three groups at three sections (i.e. the upper, middle and lower sections) and connect the station's concourse with Kai Tin Road. The design capacity is around 120 commuters per minute for each escalator. While the MTRCL does not have statistics on the actual escalator throughput, it observed that the escalators had been operating smoothly and able to effectively ease passenger flow during peak and non-peak hours. In fact, at times of major refurbishment, the MTRCL will adopt appropriate passenger flow management measures to facilitate passenger movement. The escalators at the upper and middle sections were respectively refurbished under a total of three major refurbishment projects (each time for a group of two escalators) from end-2015 to early 2018. Despite so, the remaining seven escalators still managed to ease passenger flow effectively.

(2) to (4) The design, manufacture, examination, testing, operation and repairing of all escalators within the MTR network shall comply with the requirements of the Lifts and Escalators Ordinance (Cap. 618) and the Code of Practice formulated by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). Escalators should not be put in service unless they have been issued with relevant permits upon their passing safety checks conducted by the EMSD. According to the EMSD, the MTRCL is the owner of these escalators. Under section 44 of the Ordinance, the MTRCL must ensure that these escalators and all its associated equipment or machinery are kept in a proper state of repair and in safe working order. The Corporation has put in place a stringent system of repair and maintenance for escalators within the MTR network, and will conduct regular examinations and maintenance work to ensure safe and reliable escalator operation that complies with statutory requirements.

In general, escalators within the MTR network have a design lifespan of over 40 years. Apart from routine inspection and maintenance, at around their 25th year of use, the escalators will undergo a major mid-life refurbishment by the MTRCL. Contractors have to repair and maintain each component of the whole escalator thoroughly during the major refurbishment. Worn-out components will have to be replaced as well. Each major refurbishment takes around three months, with only one escalator or a group of two escalators undergoing the refurbishment at a time. During the refurbishment, the MTRCL will closely monitor the work progress and ensure smooth flow of passengers. Relevant measures will also be implemented to minimise the impact on passengers. At the same time, the MTRCL will provide to stakeholders information on the works by various means so that the latter can make corresponding arrangements.

The manufacturer and the current maintenance contractor for the escalators in Lam Tin Station are CNIM and Otis Elevator Company (HK) Limited respectively. The mid-life refurbishment for the escalators in Lam Tin Station was commenced in 2015, lasting for about three months each time. The refurbishment for the six escalators at the middle and upper sections was completed in November 2015, June 2017 and March 2018 respectively. The MTRCL is now carrying out refurbishment for an escalator at the lower section at Entrance/Exit A, which is scheduled for completion by the end of next month. Refurbishment for the remaining two escalators will be carried out at a later

time.

The MTRCL points out that in the past three years, the nine escalators at Entrance/Exit A of Lam Tin Station functioned normally in more than 99 per cent of their operational time. According to the record of the Corporation, the frequency of failure to provide service due to malfunctioning of the escalators in Lam Tin Station is comparable to that of other similar escalators within the MTR network. These malfunctioning cases were mostly caused by external factors such as foreign objects caught at the edge of the steps.

(5) At present, there are no lifts or other barrier-free facilities connecting MTR Lam Tin Station with Kai Tin Road. People with impaired mobility who wants to use the MTR or go to Lei Yue Mun Road have to take a circuitous route via a steep section of Kai Tin Road. The MTRCL appreciates the request of the local community for improving barrier-free facilities at Entrance/Exit A and strives to make suitable arrangements. Since September 2016, the MTRCL has launched barrier-free connection services at Lam Tin Station free of charge which enable wheelchair passengers to travel conveniently to the station entrances/exits on Kai Tin Road and Lei Yue Mun Road. The services are generally welcomed by the local community and people with disabilities.

To further improve the situation, the Government is considering conducting feasibility study on the provision of barrier-free pedestrian link for Lei Yue Mun Road and Kai Tin Road and will report to the District Council at appropriate time.