

LCQ3: Mandating wearing of helmets by specified road users

Following is a question by Dr the Hon David Lam and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 20):

Question:

According to a paper submitted by the Transport and Logistics Bureau to the Panel on Transport of this Council in July 2022, there had been a rising trend in the number of accidents involving bicycles across all age groups since 2020, with the increase in the numbers of killed and seriously injured persons being more significant. In the paper, the Government proposed to amend the legislation to mandate the wearing of helmets by cyclists, drivers and passengers of motor tricycles as well as passengers on the side cars of motor cycles, and set out the target of submitting the legislative amendment proposals to this Council within 2023. However, the Government has not yet submitted the relevant proposals to this Council so far. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) among the persons killed and seriously injured in accidents involving bicycles in each of the past three years, of the percentage of those who were not wearing helmets properly, and the major causes of the accidents involving deaths;
- (2) of the reasons for the Government's failure to meet the original target of submitting the legislative amendment proposals to this Council within 2023; and
- (3) whether it will expeditiously submit to this Council the legislative amendment proposals to mandate the wearing of helmets by the relevant road users; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to cycling safety and closely monitors the situation. The Transport Department (TD) and the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) have all along been keeping watch on and analysing the latest statistics and trends related to cycling accidents, studying and implementing appropriate enhancement measures, as well as continuously rolling out publicity and public education activities.

In consultation with the TD, our reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon David Lam is as follows:

- (1) Traffic accident statistics from the past three years (2021-2023) revealed that 60 per cent of cyclists killed or seriously injured in traffic

accidents were not wearing helmets. The detailed figures are as follows:

Year	No. of cyclists killed (those not wearing helmets)	No. of cyclists seriously injured (those not wearing helmets)
2021	8 (5)	482 (342)
2022	8 (7)	128 (57)
2023	6 (3)	93 (21)

Fatal cycling accidents were mainly attributable to cyclist/driver factors, including careless cycling and other motor vehicle drivers driving inattentively. Over 70 per cent of cyclists killed in such traffic accidents were involved in collisions between their bicycles and other bicycles or motor vehicles.

(2) and (3) The Government has been conducting study in good time and rolling out various initiatives, with a view to enhancing cycling safety. Following the rising trend in cycling accidents between 2019 and 2021 (which increased from around 1 700 cases in 2019 to around 2 700 and 3 000 cases in 2020 and 2021 respectively), the Government proposed to the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Transport in July 2022 to consider introducing mandatory requirement for cyclists to wear helmets and commenced studying the legislative amendments. Meanwhile, the TD has been actively working with the Road Safety Council and the Police to step up publicity and education efforts, reminding cyclists of the importance of safety and encouraging them to use personal protective gear, including bicycle helmets. This is aimed to enhance public awareness of cycling safety and reduce traffic accidents. In addition, cycling safety is one of the "selected traffic enforcement priorities", and the Police will take enforcement actions against cycling offences such as reckless or careless cycling. The above initiatives have gradually shown effectiveness with the declining number of cycling accidents in recent years from around 2 200 cases in 2022 to around 2 000 cases in 2023. According to the provisional figures for January to October 2024, the number of cycling accidents is around 1 500 cases.

The Government aims to on one hand promote cycling safety through a multi-pronged approach comprising law enforcement, publicity and education, with a view to further reducing the number of accidents; on the other hand, where road safety considerations and circumstances permit, we will also promote a "bicycle-friendly" environment to facilitate the public's use of bicycles for short-distance commuting or recreational purposes, thereby reducing the use of motor transport. We are studying legislative amendments to introduce the mandatory requirement for cyclists to wear helmets, aiming to submit the legislative amendment proposal to the LegCo in 2025. In studying the legislative amendments, we note that there are different legal requirements in various places, including whether cyclists must wear helmets in all locations or only in designated locations, and the applicable age for the mandatory requirement of wearing bicycle helmet. In addition, the Government has received suggestions from various local stakeholders regarding

the applicable locations and scope of the mandatory requirement to wear bicycle helmets. We are currently conducting a careful study and analysis of the collected information and views to refine the legislative amendment proposal. Meanwhile, the Government will continue to closely monitor the cycling safety situation, as well as encourage cyclists to pay attention to and comply with relevant regulations through publicity and education, thereby promoting cycling safety.