

LCQ6: Problem of illegal parking

Following is a question by the Hon Chung Kwok-pan and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 16):

Question:

Some members of the public have pointed out that the problem of illegal parking in various districts throughout Hong Kong has become serious since the eruption of the disturbances arising from the opposition to the proposed legislative amendments in June last year. Illegal parking not only causes traffic obstruction but also jeopardizes the safety of pedestrians. Even though the Police have recently stepped up efforts in combating illegal parking, the situation has not been improved significantly. Such members of the public consider that this situation is related to the weakening of the law-abiding awareness of Hong Kong people. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of fixed penalty notices issued by the Police in each month between June and November this year in respect of illegally parked vehicles, with a breakdown by police region; how such figures compare with the relevant figures of the same periods in the past three years;

(2) of the respective numbers of complaints about illegal parking received from members of the public by the Police and the Transport Department in each month of the past three years and, among them, the numbers of those not handled immediately by the Police; whether there is a significant difference between the relevant figures of last year and the respective figures of the two years before last year; and

(3) of the new measures to be taken by the authorities to combat illegal parking and enhance the awareness of motorists of complying with traffic regulations?

Reply:

President,

Illegal parking not only causes traffic obstruction but also poses danger to other road users. Hence, the Hong Kong Police Force (the Police) all along pays much attention to the problem of illegal parking and treats violations that cause traffic congestion as one of the selected traffic enforcement priorities. For drivers who commit traffic offences and cause traffic obstruction, the Police will issue warnings or summonses, or even tow away the vehicles concerned. The Police also strives to enhance through publicity and education the awareness of road users towards the importance of complying with the traffic regulations.

After consulting the Police and the Transport Department (TD), my reply to the various parts of the Hon Chung Kwok-pan's question is as follows:

(1) On enforcement against illegal parking in accordance with the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance (Cap. 237), the Police issued a total of almost 1.2 million fixed penalty notices (FPNs) against illegal parking between June and October 2020, i.e. about 0.2 million to 0.25 million FPNs against illegal parking per month, representing an increase of 40 per cent and 200 per cent as compared with the number of FPNs issued during the same period in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The numbers of FPNs issued by the Police in 2018, 2019 and the first ten months of 2020 against illegal parking, with breakdowns by police region and by month, are tabulated at Annex 1. The Police is still compiling relevant enforcement statistics for November 2020.

(2) In 2018, 2019 and the first ten months of 2020, the Police received on average about 18 000, 17 000 and 18 000 complaints respectively from members of the public each month in respect of traffic obstruction and illegal parking. The detailed statistics, with breakdown by month, are tabulated at Annex 2. As the Police does not maintain records on the time taken for arriving at the scene to handle individual illegal parking cases, no such information can be provided. Generally speaking, the Police will endeavour to handle public complaints about illegal parking and traffic obstruction as soon as practicable in the light of the actual circumstances.

During the above-mentioned period, the TD received on average 23, 82 and 170 complaints respectively from members of the public each month about illegal parking. The detailed figures, with breakdown by month, are tabulated at Annex 3. All relevant complaints have been referred to the Police for follow-up actions as appropriate.

As identical complaints may be received by the TD and the Police at the same time, there may be double-counting in the numbers of complaints received by the two departments.

(3) In order to further combat illegal parking, in May 2019, the Police revised the guidelines on issuing FPNs against illegal parking. Enforcement officers may issue an FPN to an illegally parked vehicle every 30 minutes (instead of two hours previously) if the vehicle concerned is parked at a restricted zone and left unattended or is deliberately parked illegally causing traffic obstruction. In case there are vehicles parked on roads posing safety hazards or causing serious traffic obstruction, enforcement officers will tow away the vehicles concerned in addition to issuing FPNs.

Besides, the Police has assisted frontline enforcement officers to enhance enforcement effectiveness through application of technology. Since April 2020, the Police has launched a pilot scheme on electronic FPNs in all police districts over the territory. Under the pilot scheme, frontline enforcement officers process data on illegally parked vehicles via their mobile devices and instantly print out FPNs by portable printers in order to

reduce human errors in issuing handwritten FPNs, thereby enhancing the overall enforcement accuracy. To facilitate the pilot scheme, the TD has issued vehicle licences with encrypted QR code since April 2020. By now, there are about 0.6 million vehicle licences with encrypted QR code printed thereon so as to facilitate the frontline enforcement officers' extraction of the vehicle information. The Police is now exploring the expansion of the pilot scheme to cover also the traffic offences under the Fixed Penalty (Criminal Proceedings) Ordinance (Cap. 240) such as illegal stopping of vehicles at bus stops and picking up/setting down passengers or loading/unloading goods in restricted zone, etc.

Separately, under the Fixed Penalty (Traffic Contraventions) Ordinance, the Police should affix an FPN on the vehicle concerned or deliver the FPN personally to the person in charge of the vehicle concerned. To further enhance enforcement efficiency, we are studying in collaboration with the Police amendments to the relevant legislation so as to expand the means for serving FPNs, including by electronic means.

To strengthen motorists' law-abiding awareness, the Police will continue to collaborate with the TD and the Road Safety Council to enhance publicity and education through various channels, such as government websites, Road Safety Council's social media platform, Announcements in the Public Interest on radio, Road Safety Bulletin and posters, etc. so as to remind the public to observe traffic regulations, enhance road safety and improve the illegal parking situation.

Thank you, President.