

LCQ7: Road safety involving crane lorries

Following is a question by Dr Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (June 26):

Question:

It has been reported that on the 16th of last month, the crane of a crane lorry running on the road in the Western District hooked and damaged an overhead cable of the tramway system, allegedly because the crane had not been folded properly. As a result, the tram service at the road section concerned was suspended for works personnel to repair the cable. Regarding road safety involving crane lorries, will the Government inform this Council:

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

(2) whether it reviewed and improved, in the past three years, the measures regulating the operation of crane lorries, such as raising the penalties for contravening the work safety requirements; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will discuss with members of the relevant trades ways to improve the design of crane lorries and the operational guidelines as well as enhance the training for the operators in relation to safe work practices, so as to avoid the occurrence of similar kind of accidents; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of Dr Hon Lo Wai-kwok's question is as follows:

(1) According to the records of the Transport Department (TD), during the period from January 2014 to May 2019, there were two cases of traffic accidents involving crane lorries with cranes not properly folded. One of the cases occurred in 2015 causing minor injury to a passenger, and the other occurred in 2018 causing serious injury to a driver of a crane lorry. The TD does not maintain records of traffic accidents not involving casualties.

(2) and (3) At present, the Government has put in place appropriate regulations regarding the safety requirements for crane lorries running on roads. All commercial vehicles (including crane lorries) running on roads must undergo and pass vehicle examination prior to first registration and annually thereafter in order to ensure that the vehicles are roadworthy and all 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, when a crane lorry is operated in an industrial undertaking, the crane operator must comply with the training and qualification requirements as stipulated under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59) for protection of safety of the workers.

Separately, 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.

The TD has also prescribed 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 systems 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 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 meeting with the goods vehicle trade and publication of the Goods Vehicle Trade Newsletter.

The Government will continue to monitor the safety of crane lorries running on roads with a view to examining the need to strengthen regulation in a timely manner.