

Monitoring and announcement mechanism for impact of Shatin to Central Link works on nearby structures and public facilities

The Government promulgated today (September 28) on the mechanism to monitor and make announcements on the impact of the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) project on nearby structures and public facilities.

A Government spokesman said that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), as the project manager of the SCL project, had all along set up different types of monitoring points and recording relevant data for the project to safeguard the safety of structures and public facilities near the works. In view of the fact that the announcement arrangement for several recent cases on settlement in the vicinity of works sites has aroused public attention, the Highways Department (HyD), Buildings Department (BD) and MTRCL have reviewed the existing arrangement and followed the advice from the Expert Adviser Team engaged by the Transport and Housing Bureau to set up an announcement mechanism for the SCL works.

Under the mechanism, the MTRCL shall prepare and keep updating a stakeholder list of the public facilities and structures related to the monitoring points under the SCL project for timely communication and notification by the MTRCL. The MTRCL shall temporarily suspend the part of works which may contribute to the problems when the extent of settlement or other monitoring data reaches the pre-set trigger levels for suspension of works, or when the MTRCL, HyD or BD considers the magnitude of change (including settlement, tilting and angular distortion, etc) measured at settlement monitoring points indicates a situation that may affect the structural safety of structures and safe operation of public facilities in the vicinity. Even if suspension of some procedures of works for alleviating the extent of settlement, for example the installation of lateral supports for excavation works, has to be deferred in order to avoid posing a possible greater risk to the works, utilities or structures, or worsening the settlement situation (i.e. temporary deferment of suspension of works), the MTRCL shall temporarily suspend that part of works immediately once the measures concerned have effectively stabilised the extent of settlement and ensure that the situation is not posing a greater risk.

When the above situation happens, the MTRCL shall notify immediately the BD or HyD and submit relevant information. Whilst the BD and HyD will complete the inspection of the affected private buildings within the following 48 hours, the HyD will inspect the public facilities such as gas pipes and water supply pipes within the same period to confirm if they are structurally safe and in safe operation. If other public facilities or Government structures are involved, the MTRCL will contact the relevant

stakeholders to conduct the inspection or checking. Upon completion of the inspection, the BD or HyD and the MTRCL will issue press releases, reporting the situation of works suspension or temporary deferment of suspension of works, together with the reasons and the monitoring data.

Furthermore, the MTRCL shall immediately deploy their Registered Structural Engineers, and notify the relevant stakeholders or Government departments, to inspect the structures and public facilities near the works site which may be affected. The MTRCL shall at the same time assess the conditions of the structures and public facilities, including whether any damage has been caused by the SCL construction works. The MTRCL shall also formulate suitable mitigation measures to ensure public safety. The MTRCL, BD and HyD will continue close monitoring of the situation to ensure the affected structures are structurally safe and the public facilities remain in normal operation.

During the construction or temporary suspension of works, the MTRCL shall consult relevant public utility undertakers, the BD or HyD if the MTRCL, after their detailed analysis, considers it necessary to update the pre-set trigger levels for temporary suspension of works. The BD or HyD, together with other relevant Government departments, will vigorously scrutinise the MTRCL's proposal of updating the pre-set trigger levels. Only when it is confirmed that the MTRCL has sufficient justifications, consent will be given to the MTRCL to make the relevant update.

After the MTRCL considers that the conditions to resume works are ready and submits a proposal, the BD or HyD shall scrutinise the proposal in detail. If the arrangement of works resumption is agreed, the BD or HyD and the MTRCL will issue press releases. If updating of pre-set trigger levels for temporary suspension of works is involved, the details will be announced together.

The MTRCL will report the monitoring levels and data of monitoring points where the pre-set trigger levels for suspension of works have been reached or exceeded, and where pre-set trigger levels for temporary suspension of works have been updated, during the reporting period in the progress reports of SCL works to be submitted to the Subcommittee on Matters Relating to Railways of the Legislative Council. Besides, the latest situation of arrangement of works resumption will also be reported.

As some parts of the settlement monitoring points installed in the vicinity of the works sites of SCL Exhibition Centre Station exceeded the pre-set trigger level, the MTRCL has consequently suspended the relevant excavation works since August 10, 2018. The MTRCL has completed detailed analysis on the settlement of structures in the vicinity arising from the works, and proposed to the HyD (with justifications provided) to resume excavation works at Exhibition Centre Station.

Whilst the BD and HyD have confirmed that the relevant private buildings are structurally safe, the HyD has also confirmed that the other structures, public facilities and roads are now structurally safe and in safe operation.

Taking into account the relevant comments from stakeholders, including the relevant departments and utility undertakers and the MTRCL's confirmation that the works resumption and updating of the pre-set trigger levels would not compromise public safety, the HyD has agreed to the MTRCL's proposal of works resumption and updating of trigger levels. The updated trigger levels and their latest data are attached at Annex.

"The safety and quality of railway projects are always the prime consideration of the Government. We will closely monitor the settlement condition of structures and public facilities in the vicinity of works to ensure the safety of the public, construction personnel on sites, as well as structures and public facilities in the vicinity," the spokesman emphasised.