

Ombudsman highly concerned about recent incidents of road subsidence

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, today (October 3) expressed concern about recent incidents of road subsidence, which have not only caused inconvenience to commuters, but have also posed a safety threat. In view of the wide public concern over road subsidence incidents, the Office of The Ombudsman will closely monitor developments and collect further information on this topic. Where necessary, the Office will conduct a preliminary inquiry to consider any need to launch a direct investigation operation, thereby examining this topic in detail and making proper recommendations for improvements to prevent a recurrence of similar incidents.

Road subsidence can be caused by the loss of underground soil and water, damage to underground pipes (such as water mains and drainage pipes) or improper handling of road foundation works.

On September 29, the bursting of an underground water pipe resulted in road subsidence on the Mong Kok-bound lanes off 880 Lai Chi Kok Road. During the incident, a taxi plunged into a sinkhole, causing its driver to feel unwell and require a medical examination. The Office expresses concern for the driver and passenger affected by the incident.

The Office noted that after the abovementioned incident, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) took immediate action to urgently repair the damaged pipework facilities underneath Lai Chi Kok Road, resulting in all Mong Kok-bound lanes reopening the following day. The WSD also completed ground penetration radar detections on the Tsuen Wan-bound fast lane of Lai Chi Kok Road to ensure public safety.

As regards the earlier incidents of road subsidence, relevant government departments including the WSD, the Drainage Services Department and the Highways Department carried out urgent repairs and investigations after the incidents.