

Public views invited for consultation on requiring drivers to stop after road accidents involving injury to dogs or cats

The Food and Health Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) jointly launched a public consultation on July 3, 2018, to invite views from the public on the proposed amendment to section 56(4) of the Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap 374) to require drivers to stop in the case of a road accident which causes injury to a dog or a cat. The Consultation will end on September 30, 2018. Public views are welcomed.

At present, the Ordinance provides that a driver of a vehicle shall stop if an accident involving that vehicle occurs whereby damage is caused to, amongst others, an animal other than an animal in or on that vehicle or a trailer drawn thereby, and provide his or her particulars to any police officer or any person having reasonable grounds. If the driver for any reason does not give the particulars mentioned above, the driver must report the accident in person at the nearest police station or to any police officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case not later than 24 hours after the accident. "Animal" is currently defined as any horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig or goat.

A spokesperson for the AFCD said, "The number of dogs and cats kept by the public has been increasing in recent years, and therefore the risk of dogs and cats getting injured in traffic accidents has also gone up. However, since dogs and cats are not covered by the Ordinance, drivers are not legally required to stop when they hit such animals. Public concern about animal welfare and health has been raised for cases in which the vehicle driver did not stop after an incident and left the scene without letting the animals receive attention.

"To better protect the health and welfare of cats and dogs, it is proposed that they shall be included in the definition of 'animal' in section 56 of the Ordinance."

Apart from cats and dogs, the Government also noted that there was opinion that wild animals, such as monkeys and wild pigs, should also be included in the legislation concerned to step up protection for them. The Government is open to this proposal and will take into account the comments received from this consultation exercise when making the final legislative proposal.

The consultation paper can be downloaded from the websites of the AFCD (www.pets.gov.hk/english/highlights/highlights.html) or the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/residents/government/publication/consultation/current.htm). Views on the consultation paper should be sent by post to the Office of the

AFCD, 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Hong Kong, by fax to 2728 3182, or by email to amdd_aws@afcd.gov.hk on or before September 30, 2018.