

Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 to take effect on November 7

The Road Traffic (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 (the Amendment Ordinance) will come into effect on November 7. Under the Amendment Ordinance, drivers are required to stop the vehicle if they hit any cat or dog.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "The number of cats and dogs kept by members of the public is on the rise in recent years. Traffic accidents involving injuries or deaths of these animals have occurred from time to time. Upon commencement of the Amendment Ordinance, drivers must stop the vehicle if they hit any cat or dog, so that the injured cats and dogs may receive timely medical treatment, with a view to safeguarding animal welfare. Naturally, drivers should ensure that it is safe before stopping, to avoid endangering oneself and other road users."

The Road Traffic Ordinance (Cap. 374) provides that the driver of a vehicle shall stop if an accident involving that vehicle occurs whereby damage is caused to animals not in the vehicle. Drivers are also required to provide particulars, including name and address, to any police officer or any person having reasonable grounds for requiring the information. Otherwise, the driver must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible and in any case no later than 24 hours after the accident. Currently, the definition of "animal" covers any horse, cattle, ass, mule, sheep, pig or goat, and will include cat and dog after the Amendment Ordinance comes into effect.

A driver failing to stop upon a relevant accident is liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and imprisonment for 12 months, whereas failing to provide particulars and report to the Police as soon as possible and within 24 hours is liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.