

Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2021 to be gazetted on Friday

The Road Traffic (Construction and Maintenance of Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulation 2021 will be gazetted on Friday (August 20). The amendment regulation seeks to allow the use of the driver's door (with the provision of at least one emergency window and at least one escape hatch) as an emergency exit on light buses.

The existing legislation in Hong Kong stipulates emergency doors as the only acceptable means of escape in light buses. With the advancement of technology in the automobile industry, a number of jurisdictions have adopted, in addition to emergency doors, various alternative escape means for light buses, including driver's door, emergency window and escape hatch.

The Transport Department has earlier conducted a consultancy study on emergency exits of light buses and concluded that with the use of the above alternative means of escape in light buses, passenger safety during emergency situations would be equally upheld.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said, "Allowing alternative means of escape for light buses would enable more flexibility in the design of the vehicles, such that manufacturers could adopt other means of emergency escape applicable to light buses to cater for the Hong Kong market. This will facilitate the introduction of more vehicle models into Hong Kong, allowing more choices for the transport trades."

The amendment regulation will be tabled at the Legislative Council on August 25 for negative vetting. If the amendment regulation is passed by the Legislative Council, it will be effective from October 15 this year. The Transport Department will work closely with the trade and issue relevant guidelines, as well as arrange briefing sessions to ensure smooth implementation of the new requirements.