

Taxi-Driver-Offence Points Ordinance to come into operation on September 22

The Transport Department (TD) today (September 12) reminded the taxi trade that the Taxi-Driver-Offence Points (TDOP) Ordinance will come into operation on September 22 to introduce the TDOP system.

A spokesman for the TD said, "The quality of taxi services has been an issue of concern in recent years. Considering the public's strong demand for enhancing the quality of taxi services, the Government modelled on the existing driving-offence points system and introduced the TDOP system. The TDOP system aims to strengthen the deterrent effect against malpractices by taxi drivers for combating the black sheep in the taxi industry and enhancing the service quality and overall image of the trade."

The TDOP system covers 11 taxi-driver-related offences that affect taxi service quality and carry higher penalties under the existing legislation, including overcharging, wilfully refusing or neglecting to accept a hire and driving to a destination other than by the most direct practicable route. These 11 offences are categorised into three layers based on their seriousness and assigned with 10, five and three points respectively (see Annex). If a person is convicted of, or becomes liable to, a fixed penalty for a related offence, a respective number of points will be incurred.

Under the TDOP system, for any taxi driver who has accumulated points incurred to a specified level within any two-year period, a respective action or penalty will be triggered. Specifically, an Advice of Taxi-Driver-Offence Points will be served by the Commissioner for Transport to any person incurring eight to 14 points; and a Notice of Obligatory Attendance of Taxi Service Improvement Course (TSIC) will also be served to any person incurring 10 points or more, requiring the person to attend and complete a TSIC at his/her own cost within a specified period of time. Failure to comply with such requirement without reasonable excuse is an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for one month. All taxi drivers who have incurred points (including those who have not been served with a Notice of Obligatory Attendance) can attend a TSIC, and three points will be deducted from the total number of points previously incurred by that person after completing a TSIC and passing its examination. Furthermore, any person incurring 15 points or more is liable to be disqualified from driving a taxi. The disqualification period will be three months for the first disqualification and six months for each subsequent disqualification.

Following the passage of the TDOP Bill by the Legislative Council in mid-December and the publication in the gazette on December 22, 2023, the TD has been maintaining close liaison with the taxi trade, including briefing the taxi trade on the operation of the TDOP system, and reminding them to get prepared for it. The TD has again briefed the taxi trade on details and requirements of the TDOP system and the Ordinance through regular taxi trade

conferences and letters from early September onwards, to enable the trade to familiarise themselves with the operation of the TDOP system.