



## Road Safety Concerns

The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport in Hong Kong (CILTHK) writes in to give our views on road safety issues in Hong Kong.

In 2018, there were a total of 15 653 accidents, with the number of casualties being 19 217. The figures appear to be not much different from that of 2017. Despite so, there are several areas of concerns which we would like to highlight here :

- The number of fatalities in 2018 increased by 16.7% as compared with that in 2017;
- The number of passengers killed in 2018 was 27, which is the total number of passengers killed from 2015 to 2017;
- There are increases in the number of involvements in respect of light goods vehicles, motor cycles, and public bus. Of these, involvements of both franchised buses and RMBs increased by over 20%;
- Major contributory factors for traffic accidents and casualties include driving too close to vehicle in front, careless lane changing, negligent driving, not observing traffic signals / signs, driving inattentively, passenger losing balance, pedestrian inattentiveness, etc.

The CILTHK notes the government's call for "zero accidents on roads" but regrettably the reality is that Hong Kong is far from reaching this target.

The CILTHK appreciates that in response to a series of traffic crashes involving franchised buses, the Chief Executive set up an Independent Review Committee (IRC) to examine the operation and management of franchised buses to recommend safety related measures with a view to sustaining a safe and reliable franchised bus service in Hong Kong. The IRC recommended 45 measures to enhance bus safety. The Council is in full support of these safety related measures, in particular those related to the installation of additional safety devices on buses, fatigue management of franchised bus drivers, manner and behaviour of drivers and pedestrians, and route risk assessments. While noting the above, the CILTHK considers these safety related measures should be expanded to cover other transport modes as well.

In addition, the CILTHK considers that a holistic approach be adopted in tackling road safety, comprising aspects relating to road/vehicle designs and related facilities, human factors, regulation and enforcement. Our views are elaborated below for consideration :

### Road/Vehicle designs and related facilities

- Roads should be designed in such manner as to eliminate potential traffic safety hazards. Safety audits should be conducted in the design stage as well as before road commissioning to identify road safety concerns and introduce remedial measures if needed before opening to public use.
- Traffic signals, signs and street furniture should be installed and traffic management measures should be introduced to provide clear indications to road users of their respective priority in using the roads. They should be clear and not confusing to road users.



- Road markings and street furniture should be audited from the all road safety aspects before erection. Irregularities causing safety concerns should be rectified as soon as possible. For instance,
  - The arrow markings associated with the LOOK LEFT/RIGHT markings for pedestrians are sometimes too big as to confuse motorists of their traffic direction.
  - Railings to channelise pedestrians should be audited before installation as some, in particular those on steep roads, may create a wall effect affecting the vision of motorists.
- Safety audits should be conducted for all the traffic crashes black spots every year.
- New technology should be adopted to eliminate potential human errors/risks as far as possible. For instance, technological devices should be adopted to channelise vehicles to use different traffic lanes, toll booths or tubes on highways and tunnels, instead of relying on human labor.
- Vehicles should be designed to improve driver visions on other road users, to facilitate easy boarding and alighting activities and to give adequate safety protection to drivers and passengers. We note that quite a number of accidents relate to passengers losing balance inside vehicles. In addition to installing railings for passengers to hold onto, consideration should be given to such installation as to give some cushion effect to passengers.
- We support the installation of updated safety devices on franchised buses as recommended by the IRC. We suggest that such installations should be expanded to cover other types of vehicles as far as possible.
- Data collected by safety devices such as black boxes should be followed up and analysed to monitor driver behaviour and identify areas of safety concerns.

#### Human Aspects

- Drivers are the spirit of vehicles. For professional drivers, attention should be given to their working conditions, health and training.
- We support the recommendations in the IRC to study into the issue of driver fatigue and consider that this should be expanded to cover other professional drivers as well.
- Consideration should also be given to introduce compulsory medical check-up for all professional drivers for their own concerns as well as other road users.
- Attitudes and behavior of drivers are also important issues in relation to road safety. Sometimes the driving habits of drivers causing sudden acceleration and deceleration movements would not only lead to passenger losing balance inside vehicles but may also affect other road users. Driver training should focus also on driving manners in addition to skills.
- Passengers should be educated to give due respect to drivers to form a harmonious riding environment.

#### Regulation and Enforcement

- The current Road Traffic Ordinance should be reviewed to address issues including but not limited to :
  - Mandatory GIVE WAY to buses from stops and laybys,
  - Mandatory GIVE WAY to pedestrians at marked crossings,
  - To lower traffic speeds in dense urban areas,



- To designate bus priority lanes for buses. They can be shared use by emergency vehicles,
- To review regulations for commercial drivers in the same manner as bus drivers.
- While it is important to provide legislative measures to regulate road traffic and safety, regulation without enforcement would not work. We note that in many cases traffic malpractices such as illegal parking on roads obstructing other traffic and affecting driving moods, speeding, etc. would lead to road safety concerns. The government should allocate more resources including manpower and new technology to enforce against traffic malpractices causing traffic and road safety concerns.

Road safety is a multi-dimensional topic and has to be looked at from all aspects of road safety, vehicle safety, passenger safety, operator safety and system safety. The CILTHK hopes that the government would take note of our suggestions. Hopefully with the concerted efforts of all parties, we would not be too far away from our vision of Zero Accident on Roads.

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