

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

TLB011

(Question Serial No. 1710)

Head: (60) Highways Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) District and Maintenance Works

Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (YAU Kwok-ting)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

Regarding the actual number of complaints about road maintenance, the actual number of complaints in 2024 was almost 10 000 more than in 2023. Will the Government advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) What were the respective types and proportions of road maintenance works that involved complaints?
- (2) What are the specific reasons for the significant increase in the number of complaints?
- (3) How many complaints about road maintenance involved and required Government compensation to the complainants or any third parties? What were the total amount and average amount involved? And what were the natures of the maintenance works involved?

Asked by: Hon CHU Kwok-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 23)

Reply:

- (1) In 2024, the Highways Department (HyD) received about 25 000 complaints related to road maintenance, accounting for about 9 000 more cases as compared with about 16 000 cases in 2023. The complaints involved three categories of road conditions that required repair arrangements, including uneven road surfaces, potholes on road surfaces, and wear and tear of ancillary road facilities (such as road markings, railings, traffic signs, etc.). The aforesaid three categories of complaints accounted for about 69%, 7% and 24% respectively of the total number in 2024.
- (2) Road surfaces of road facilities wear and tear alongside daily use. There will also be damages of different extents (such as the existence of potholes or localised cracks, etc.) due to other unforeseen circumstances, including traffic accidents, inclement weather, etc.

Extreme weather has posed many challenges to the maintenance of public roads in recent years as climate change has intensified. The rainfall in the summer of 2024 (April to August) was over 45% higher than that in the same period in 2023. The intense and severe rainfall caused the road surfaces to be more susceptible to wear and tear, which resulted in an increase in the relevant numbers of complaints.

In addition, members of the public are having ever-rising expectations on the quality of public roads and reflect the defects of road facilities more proactively, with a view to having the HyD carry out the repair works as soon as possible. The HyD received numerous complaints about road repairs from individual complainants in 2024 (including multiple complaints about uneven road surfaces at different locations on the same road section at the same time). It was confirmed after site inspections that a majority of these complaints only involved minor wear and tear on road surfaces due to daily use which could be dealt with later concurrently when road resurfacing works on the relevant road section were carried out in order to optimise repair resources. In 2024, the HyD received thousands of this type of complaints, which were more than previous years.

No matter whether the defects of road facilities are identified after receiving the relevant reports or when carrying out regular inspections, the HyD would arrange for appropriate repairs in a timely manner with a view to maintaining the public roads in proper condition for public use. According to the records of the HyD, all repair works of potholes and traffic signs were completed within 24 hours and 36 hours respectively upon receiving reports in the past two years.

In response to the ever-rising public expectations on the conditions of public road surfaces, the HyD is proactively applying innovative technology and adopting more durable pavement materials (including fully adopting the more durable Highly Modified Asphalt to replace the existing Polymer Modified Asphalt starting from 1 April 2025) in the maintenance works of public roads, so as to enhance the efficiency and quality of the relevant works and reduce the relevant complaints.

- (3) In 2024, the HyD received a total of 128 cases of compensation claims related to road maintenance. The majority of the associated repair works were repairs of potholes or uneven road surfaces. Generally speaking, the HyD would refer the claim cases to the contractors responsible for the relevant road maintenance upon receipt of the claim applications, supervise the investigations carried out by the contractors and examine the investigation results. If the incidents have been caused by the negligence of the contractors, the contractors would contact the claimants directly and arrange for compensations according to established procedures. The relevant compensations would not involve any additional government expenditures.

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