

Tighten up Monitoring and Control on Use of Display Board at Idling Site

Purpose of the Paper

This paper aims to propose measures, including incorporation of appropriate new Conditions in respect of site idling in the Excavation Permit (XP) Conditions, to achieve that the use of site idling display board and the information written on it are under effective monitoring and control.

Background

2. Under the current practice, Utility Undertakings (UUs) are allowed to display the notice board of idling site provided that there is a genuine need of idling. However, based on AIT's on-site observations, the use of notice board of idling site is abused for the purpose of evading the NC in this aspect. Moreover, site idling publicity board together with the irrational information displayed on it has aggravated the image of road opening works to the public. As a result, Highways Department (HyD) has received a considerable number of complaints from the public on sites idling.

3. The public complaints mentioned above can be avoided should the UUs substantively tighten up their site supervisions on the works progress and monitoring on the use of site idling display board. Since the erection of display board on site is a direct means of conveying information to the public about the road works, measures have to be taken to tighten up the monitoring and control on use of the site idling display board as well as the information shown on the board for public's notice.

Observations on Idling Incidents of Road Opening Works

4. In order to acquire more comprehensive knowledge for improvement of site idling situation of road opening works, Audit Inspection Team (AIT) of Highways Department (HyD) has conducted an investigation on the selected idling incidents. The following observations were noted:

- (a) Non-standard reason without the authority's prior approval was used (e.g. Waiting for materials).
- (b) Notice board of idling site was displayed but the site was active.
- (c) Idling reason displayed on board was neither justifiable nor compatible with the genuine situation.
- (d) Works resumed date was not valid.
- (e) Some UUs expedited or completed the work upon receipt of HyD's enquiry.
- (f) Permittees' supervisory staff heavily relied on contractors' effort in providing the idling reason and resumed date.

Measures for Monitoring and Control

5. As the current XP Conditions have no control on idling sites as long as a display board with idling reason and works resumed date is erected, the most effective way to monitor, control and ameliorate the unsatisfactory situations is to incorporate appropriate new Conditions so that non-compliance (NC) will be given whenever any of the situations listed in paragraph 4(a), (b), (c) and (d) are identified/verified by AIT.

6. The Permittee (P) and Nominated Permittee (NP) should be vigilant in respect of the correct use of the site idling display board and the information stated on it. The P/NP should temporarily remove or cover up the display board whenever the site is active. Moreover, the P/NP have to ensure that the information, including idling reason and works resumed date etc., stated on the board must be true and valid. Supervisory staff of UUs will play an important role in avoiding display of incorrect information on site. They should closely liaise with the contractor and properly record both the idling reason and resumed date on the site diary when site idling is incurred.

7. To avoid confusion of public in reading the information, the wording of Standard Reasons commonly adopted for site idling incidents have recently been fine-tuned and circulated to UUs for comments. The updated Standard Reasons will be uploaded to HyD's website to supersede the existing set of Reasons as soon as they are finalized. P/NP should use the exact wording of the updated Standard Reasons on site whenever applicable. If the P justifies that non-standard reason has to be used for a particular case, they should submit application to the relevant Regional Office of HyD for approval in this regard.

Way Forward

8. The draft XP Conditions to tighten up monitoring and control of the use of site idling display board and the information displayed on the board will be circulated in due course.

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<p>Unanimous endorsement by UTLC members on 3 November 2009. The new XP condition for tightening control and monitoring on idle sites in respect of the use of idle site display board were implemented on 19 March 2010.</p>
