

Launching Ceremony of the Application of the Recognition of Prior Learning Mechanism to the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics

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2-4. Launching Ceremony of the Application of the Recognition of Prior Learning Mechanism to the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics

Promoting the Craftsmanship of Vehicle Mechanics and Embracing the Era of New Energy Vehicles

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), Qualifications Framework Secretariat (QF Secretariat), Vehicle Maintenance Technical Advisory Committee (VMTAC) and Vocational Training Council (VTC) have recently joined hands to break through the traditional registration and certification framework, removing barriers and lifting restrictions for the trade by applying the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Mechanism to the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics (VRSVM) (hereinafter referred to as the “new mechanism”). The “new mechanism” allows registered vehicle mechanics (RVMs) to obtain qualifications at Level 3, and meanwhile enables senior vehicle mechanics to become RVMs, further enhancing the professional standard of the trade to cope with the development needs of the industry. Under the “new mechanism”, four new qualifications related to the main service classes of RVMs, namely Mechanical Services, Electrical Services, Body Repair and Body Painting, have been added, so that than 8 000 existing RVMs can obtain qualification certificates at Level 3 by submission in writing while assessment tests are waived. Besides, the “new mechanism” provides a new way for senior vehicle mechanics to become RVMs, who can jointly contribute to the development of the entire vehicle maintenance industry.

The EMSD and QF Secretariat co-organised the launching ceremony of the Application of the RPL Mechanism to the VRSVM at the Skill Development Centre of the EMSD Headquarters Building on the afternoon of 17 November 2023 for the trade and the public to witness this important development. Mr Pang Yiu-hung, Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (DEMS), Mr Mak Chun-yu, Deputy Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lee Chung-sin, Deputy Secretary for Education, and Mr Lai Ying-wai, General Manager of the QF Secretariat, officiated at the ceremony, whereas Honourable Yick Chi-ming, Member of the Legislative Council for the Transport Functional Constituency, Dr Yip Chung-yin, Chairman of Steering Committee on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) and QF cum Deputy Chairman of VTC, and Dr Lee Yiu-pui, Chairman of the Automotive Industry Training Advisory Committee of the QF were also invited to the ceremony. For young people to fully understand the latest developments of the industry, teachers and students from the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (Tsing Yi), Pro-act by the VTC and Caritas Yuen Long Chan Chun Ha Secondary School were also invited to join the event. The launching ceremony was attended by a full house of more than 230 people, including 70 teachers and students, friends from the trade and guests, in a lively atmosphere.

The DEMS pointed out in his speech that after seventy years of development, national automobile brands could now compete with international automobile brands in many aspects such as technology, quality, design and comfort. From “toddling” to “stepping forward with head held high”, today’s achievements were all attributed to the craftsmanship of dedication, leanness, concentration and innovation; and this characteristic of continuous self-improving and striving for excellence could also be found in RVMs. He particularly encouraged those practitioners in the trade who had not yet participated in the voluntary registration scheme to convert their valuable work experience into qualifications at Level 3 through the “new mechanism”, by which they could become RVMs and open up broader paths to skill improvement and career development, as well as enhancing their professional image and that of the entire industry.

Mr Mak Chun-yu, Deputy Secretary for Transport and Logistics, said that this was the first time the RPL Mechanism had been applied in the government registration schemes. He hoped that this new initiative could further raise the professional standard of the trade. The rapid development of electric vehicles had presented unprecedented challenges and opportunities to the industry. With the expansion of the voluntary registration

schemes to cover electric vehicle maintenance and the implementation of the “new mechanism”, synergy would be produced that “sped up” the sustainable professional development of the industry, and “increased the efficiency” of the safe and reliable vehicle maintenance services in Hong Kong.

Mr Lee Chung-sin, Deputy Secretary for Education, mentioned that the vehicle maintenance industry was a pioneer in applying the RPL Mechanism, and that the “new mechanism” could play an important role as a model for other government departments. The QF Secretariat would continue to promote the application of the RPL Mechanism and explore with training institutions to run more courses under the Vocational Qualifications Pathway, so as to encourage practitioners to pursue continuing education, thereby giving them more career development opportunities.

Mr TANG Wing-hong, Convener of the Subcommittee on Management and Review of the VMTAC, mentioned the importance of continuous learning for vehicle mechanics, and the EMSD’s one-stop online platform VM Learning Station was an indispensable way to further learning. Through this virtual interactive training centre, vehicle mechanics could get the latest training information, apply to participate in continuing education activities held by different organisations, manage training records, and acquire vehicle maintenance knowledge anytime and anywhere, so as to continuously enhance themselves.

To let participants better understand the background and application details of the “new mechanism”, in addition to premiering a self-made promotional video at the launching ceremony, the organisers also arranged for applicants to share their personal experiences at a discussion forum, where their employers also elaborated on their thoughts about the “new mechanism” from the perspective of talent development. The two applicant representatives pointed out that the “new mechanism” allowed them to leverage their experience to become RVMs and gain recognition from society and enterprises. Enterprise management representatives said that the “new mechanism” not only provided staff with promotion opportunities in the workplace, but also elevate their standard and that of the industry.

All in all, the launching ceremony marked an important new milestone for the development of the vehicle maintenance industry. Not only was the trade encouraged to utilise more the RPL Mechanism under the VRSVM, practitioners in the trade were also encouraged to pursue continuing education and improve their skills for equipping themselves. The “new mechanism” also offered young people a clear career path “from mechanics to craftsmen”. Let us work together to promote the sustainable development of the vehicle maintenance industry and embrace the era of new energy vehicles.

QR code for the promotional video of the RPL Mechanism under the VRSVM:



5. Upcoming Technical Seminar on Vehicle Maintenance (8)

The Vehicle Maintenance Registration Unit will hold the eighth technical seminar on vehicle maintenance on the evening of 23 March 2024 (Saturday), which will cover new energy vehicles and their electric power systems. Each participant is eligible to earn three continuing professional development (CPD) hours. For details and the registration method, please refer to the information below.

6-7. Briefing on Hydrogen Development Held by the Gas Standards Office

To tie in with Hong Kong's target to attain zero vehicular emissions and carbon neutrality before 2050, we actively promote new energy vehicles. While electric private cars have started to become popular in Hong Kong, heavy vehicles such as double-deck buses and street washing vehicles require the assistance of hydrogen energy to reduce the weight of onboard traction batteries and save the charging time. The principle of hydrogen vehicles involves transporting hydrogen gas stored inside the vehicle to a hydrogen fuel cell (HFC), where hydrogen reacts with oxygen in the air to generate electrical energy that drives the vehicle.

The Gas Standards Office of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) held a briefing on hydrogen development on the morning of 22 December 2023 to introduce to the industry the latest development of hydrogen energy, safety guidelines for hydrogen fuel system of vehicles and hydrogen refuelling stations, technical guidelines for quantitative risk assessment of hydrogen refuelling stations, and the latest progress on the amendments to the Gas Safety Ordinance.

The briefing received enthusiastic support from the industry, with more than 100 trade practitioners joining, including representatives from professional bodies and the industry as well as relevant stakeholders. Members of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Using Hydrogen as Fuel (the Working Group) of the HKSAR Government, including representatives from the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Environmental Protection Department, the Fire Services Department, the Transport Department, the Planning Department, the Buildings Department and the Architectural Services Department, also attended the briefing by invitation.

Mr CHOW Hau-keung, Assistant Director/Gas and General Legislation, first gave an update on the latest development of hydrogen energy in the Mainland and Hong Kong, including the Strategy of Hydrogen Development in Hong Kong expected to be announced by the HKSAR Government in the first half of 2024. He also mentioned the legislative amendments to the Gas Safety Ordinance, which the EMSD was working on, to regulate the safety of hydrogen fuel. It was hoped that the proposed legislative amendments would be introduced to the Legislative Council in 2025.

Subsequently, representatives from two independent consultancies commissioned by the EMSD presented the key contents of three safety and technical guidelines at the briefing. The EMSD was consolidating the feedback from various stakeholders for improving the relevant guidelines, and planned to incorporate the guidelines into formal regulatory frameworks and codes of practice in the future.

Lastly, Mr WONG Chun-yin, Engineer/Gas Standards, introduced the trial projects that were given agreement-in-principle by the Working Group, including HFC double-deck buses, of which a trial was conducted at the end of November last year, as well as hydrogen fuelled light rail vehicles, hydrogen tube trailer, hydrogen refuelling facilities and hydrogen power generation equipment at construction sites, etc. More trial projects such as hydrogen street washing vehicles were expected to commence successively this year.

During the discussion session of the briefing, participants enthusiastically engaged in in-depth discussions about various aspects of the hydrogen supply chain. The discussions covered safety guideline requirements, supply of green hydrogen, import requirements for HFC heavy vehicles, requirements for HFC vehicles operating in tunnels, as well as maintenance and training arrangements. We will continue to maintain good communication with representatives from professional bodies and the industry as well as relevant stakeholders, jointly promoting hydrogen development in Hong Kong.

8-9. Fire Prevention in Vehicle Maintenance Workshops

Vehicle maintenance workshops are prone to fire as they often store flammable liquids and use high-temperature machines. Therefore, fire prevention in workshops is particularly important to protect the safety of staff and facilities, and meanwhile minimise the risk of fire. Workshops should strictly implement fire precaution measures, regularly inspect fire-fighting equipment to ensure that the equipment is in good condition, and make sure that all staff are able to take appropriate contingency measures and use fire-extinguishing equipment (such as fire extinguishers or sand buckets) correctly in case of fire through training and drills. In addition, as heat, fuel and oxygen are the three necessary conditions for the formation of fire, workshops should put in place specific preventive measures with respect to the three aspects above to minimise the chance of fire.

Below are some common causes of fire in workshops and prevention methods based on the analysis of the three aspects of heat, fuel and oxygen:

| Heat | |
|--|---|
| Common causes of fire | Prevention methods |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sparks produced during hot work (such as welding) accidentally ignite combustible materials nearby. Sparks produced during hot work may accidentally ignite combustible materials nearby. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a hot work permit system to ensure that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and necessary safety measures have been implemented before the work. Implement a hot work permit system to ensure that the relevant hot work has been approved in advance before it is carried out. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friction from poorly maintained machinery and equipment generates heat; or overheating of parts in machinery and equipment on standby for a long period of time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check the machinery and equipment regularly to ensure normal operation, and leave enough space for heat dissipation when in use; if it is expected that the machinery or equipment will be on standby for a certain period of time, turn it off to avoid overheating due to prolonged standby. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overheating caused by electrical overload. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use electrical installations safely and avoid overloading the power switches. Before using electrical tools, read the relevant operating instructions carefully to understand the correct way of using them and their voltage, and ensure that they are in good condition before use. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff smoke in the workshop and discard unextinguished cigarette butts everywhere. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strictly prohibit smoking in the workshop except in designated smoking areas; even when smoking in designated smoking areas, stay away from flammable items. |

| Oxygen | |
|---|---|
| Common causes of fire | Prevention methods |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers carry out hot work in strong winds (e.g. when the Strong Monsoon Signal is in effect) without paying attention to the wind direction, and the sparks or hot slags produced from the work are blown away by the wind, igniting combustible materials nearby. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe the wind direction and consider erecting barriers, suspending the relevant hot work, or carrying out the work in other locations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to oxygen in the air, oxygen cylinders used in the welding process or oxidising agents stored in the workshop are sources of oxygen, which are favourable to the formation of fire. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use and store oxygen cylinders properly, store only the minimum quantity of oxygen cylinders as far as possible and ensure that they are gas-tight. Minimise the quantity of oxidising agents stored and do not place them near any flammable materials. |

Fuel

| Common causes of fire | Prevention methods |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse or waste parts, especially sawdust, wood chips, cardboard, plastic bottles, packaging materials or other combustible items, are stacked in large quantities in the workshop and not regularly disposed of. A huge pile of construction materials is stacked at the fire escape, causing obstruction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt good workplace management practices and arrange materials in a neat and orderly manner. Always remove discarded flammable items such as packaging materials, sawdust, wood chips, cardboard, plastic bottles, etc. When carrying out hot work (such as welding), remove all flammable or combustible items in the vicinity and place a fire extinguisher nearby for emergencies. Manage the workshop properly by dividing it into material storage area and working area. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous goods such as paint, thinner, fuel oil and acetylene cylinders are stored in large quantities or even in excess of the exempted quantities in the workshop. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dangerous goods must always be stored in the corresponding dangerous goods stores approved by the Fire Services Department. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bamboo scaffolds and associated components such as protective screens, planks, etc., which are generally combustible materials, are erected in the workshop. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metal scaffolds should be used as far as possible and the protective screens of scaffolds should be made of fire-retardant materials. If a tarpaulin is used as protective screen, its fire-retardant characteristic should meet the requirements of BS 5867-2:2008 (Type B performance requirements) or other equivalent national or international standards or requirements. |

Operation methods of various types of fire extinguishers

| Common types of fire extinguishers | Water type extinguisher | Foam type extinguisher | Carbon dioxide type extinguisher | Dry powder type extinguisher |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Type I: Ordinary combustibles (e.g. paper, textiles, wood) | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| Type II: Flammable liquids and gases (e.g. solvents, fuel oil, liquefied petroleum gas) | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Type III: Electrical appliances (e.g. motors, power switches) | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Operation method | Spray the content directly towards the base of the fire | Cover the fire with foam from top to bottom | Spray the content towards the base of the fire as far as possible | Spray the content directly towards the base of the fire |

Keep the “P.A.S.S” tips in mind and learn how to use a fire extinguisher

The purpose of a portable fire extinguisher is for people on the scene to try putting out a small fire in the early stages of a fire under safe circumstances and at a safe distance. Before using the fire extinguisher, assess the fire and your own safety.

The tips on how to use the fire extinguisher are as follows:

P - Pull the pin

A - Aim at the base of the fire

S - Squeeze the lever

S - Sweep the fire extinguisher from side to side at the base of the fire

Please note that dry powder discharged from a dry powder type extinguisher may reduce visibility, so check the escape route before using. If the fire is out of control, evacuate to a safe place immediately and call the police.

10. Latest Developments of the Registration Schemes

- 1 Registered vehicle mechanics who have switched to work in another vehicle maintenance workshop should notify the Vehicle Maintenance Registration Unit (VMRU) by e-mail (vmru@emsd.gov.hk) or fax (3968 7646) the name, address and telephone number of the new workshop.
- 2 If there is any change in the information of the vehicle maintenance workshop (such as name of the workshop, registration number of the workshop, address, contact number and business registration certificate, etc.) or alteration in the type of workshop being registered, the person-in-charge of the workshop must, **within 14 working days** of such change, notify the VMRU of the change in writing, and submit the relevant documents for processing.

Information on the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Mechanics:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Total number of vehicle mechanics | 10 303 ^{Note 1} |
| Number of registered vehicle mechanics (as at end-January 2024) | 7 869 |

Information on the Voluntary Registration Scheme for Vehicle Maintenance Workshops

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Total number of vehicle maintenance workshops | 2 668 ^{Note 2} |
| Number of registered workshops (as at end-January 2024) | 1 982 |

Note1: 2019 Manpower Survey Report (updated on 13 January 2020) by the Vocational Training Council and the Automobile Training Board

Note2: Database of the VMRU (updated in August 2023)

If you wish to help protect our environment by receiving electronic copies of the RVM Newsletter and other relevant leaflets, please send us the completed reply slip by e-mail (vmru@emsd.gov.hk) or WhatsApp (9016 3185). We will contact you by e-mail or mobile communication as far as possible.

Reply Slip

I/My company would like to receive the RVM Newsletter and other information leaflets by
 e-mail / WhatsApp. Please provide the relevant contact details for the above selected means of communication:



Name: _____ Vehicle Mechanic Registration No.: VM _____
E-mail address: _____ WhatsApp: _____

The electronic version of RVM Newsletters is also available on the EMSD website:

https://www.emsd.gov.hk/en/supporting_government_initiatives/registration_scheme_for_vehicle_maintenance/publications_and_circulars/rvm_newsletter/index.html

Note

1. Starting from 15 July 2018, new application for registration as Type Four workshop (i.e. a workshop situated at a residential building or a composite building with domestic part) is no longer accepted. Furthermore, requests for conversion from a registered Type One, Type Two or Type Three workshop to a Type Four workshop will not be entertained.
2. Applicants should affix sufficient postage and provide a return address when posting renewal application forms with envelopes not provided by the EMSD. If the postage is insufficient, the EMSD will not pay for any outstanding postage or accept the mail item concerned, which will be returned to the sender (if a return address is provided) or disposed of by the Hongkong Post.

11. Prize Quiz Issue No. 44

- Q1. Which organisation(s) did the EMSD and the VMTAC recently collaborate with to apply the RPL Mechanism to the VRSVM, so as to further enhance the professional standard of the trade to meet the development needs of the industry?
- A** The QF Secretariat **B** The VTC **C** All of the above **D** None of the above
- Q2. As electric private cars have started to become popular in Hong Kong, what is/are the purpose(s) of assisting heavy vehicles such as double-deck buses and street washing vehicles with hydrogen energy?
- A** Reducing the weight of onboard traction batteries **B** Saving the charging time
C All of the above **D** None of the above
- Q3. According to the principle of hydrogen vehicles, what reacts with the hydrogen gas stored in the vehicle and delivered to its hydrogen fuel cell to generate electrical energy that drives the vehicle?
- A** Water **B** Oxygen in the air **C** Fire **D** Sunlight
- Q4. To serve the purpose of the Briefing on Hydrogen Development, what were introduced to the trade apart from the latest development of hydrogen energy?
- A** Safety guidelines for hydrogen fuel system of vehicles and hydrogen refuelling stations
B Technical guidelines for quantitative risk assessment of hydrogen refueling stations
C Latest progress on the amendments to the Gas Safety Ordinance
D All of the above
- Q5. Which of the following factor(s), coupled with a series of chemical reactions, is/are the necessary condition(s) for the formation of fire?
- A** Heat **B** Fuel
C Oxygen **D** All of the above

How to participate (Issue No.44)

Let's protect the environment and submit the answers online! Please scan the QR code or click on the link (<https://vmcpd.emsd.gov.hk>) to log into the VM Learning Station to submit the answers. Vehicle mechanics may also complete the form below, circle the correct answers, and send it to the VMRU by post, fax (3968 7646) or e-mail (vmru@emsd.gov.hk).

Deadline: 30 April 2024

| Question | Answer | | | |
|----------|--------|---|---|---|
| Q1 | A | B | C | D |
| Q2 | A | B | C | D |
| Q3 | A | B | C | D |
| Q4 | A | B | C | D |
| Q5 | A | B | C | D |



Name: _____

Vehicle Mechanic Registration No.: VM _____

E-mail Address: _____

Contact Tel. No.: _____









- Participants who answer all the questions correctly will earn one CPD hour and be notified by the VMRU individually.
- Only registered vehicle mechanics with valid registration may participate, each not more than once in each quiz. If you have already submitted your answers at the VM Learning Station, submission by post, fax or email is not necessary.
- If there are duplicate submissions, only the last answers submitted before the deadline will be accepted.
- The decision of the VMRU on the quiz will be final.
- The correct answers will be announced in the next issue of the RVM Newsletter.

The answers for RVM Newsletter Issue No. 43 are as follows:

| Question | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Answer | C | D | B | C | C |

12. Training Institutes

Providing Continuing Professional Development Courses for Vehicle Mechanics (in random order)

| Name of Training Institute | Website/Content | Enquiry Tel. No. | QR Code |
|---|--|------------------|---|
| Traffic Services Employees Association | http://www.facebook.com/tseahk | 2575 5544 |  |
| Pro-Act Training and Development Centre (Automobile) | <p>http://www.proact.edu.hk/automobile Certificate in Vehicle Mechanical Repair#, a programme run by the Pro-Act Training and Development Centre (Automobile), may serve as another means for qualifying as registered vehicle mechanics. Mechanics who are interested in enrolling in the above programme may visit the website of the Centre.</p> <p># For details and latest developments of the programme, the information issued by the Pro-Act Training and Development Centre shall prevail.</p> | 2449 1310 |  |
| The Institute of the Motor Industry Hong Kong | <p>http://www.hkimi.org.hk The Institute of the Motor Industry Hong Kong (IMIHK), formerly known as the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) - Hong Kong Branch, brings the mission and vision of the IMI to the Hong Kong automobile industry. After the reunification in 1997, the IMI - Hong Kong Branch applied to be renamed the IMIHK in Hong Kong. Eligible members of the trade are welcome to join the IMIHK or enroll in its courses or talks.</p> | 2625 5903 |  |
| Hong Kong Vehicle Repair Merchants Association Limited | https://www.facebook.com/HKVRMA/ | 2399 7977 |  |
| Hong Kong Vehicle Repairing Industry Employee General Union | http://www.vrunion.hk | 2393 9955 |  |
| Occupational Safety and Health Council | <p>http://www.oshc.org.hk The Safety Handling of Chemicals course aims to provide employees with basic knowledge of the safe handling of chemicals. The course content includes hazards of chemicals, labelling of chemicals, safety precautions, personal protective equipment, emergency procedures, etc. For more course details, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre.</p> | 2311 3322 |  |
| The Society of Operation Engineers (Hong Kong Region) | http://www.soe.org.hk | 2617 0311 |  |
| Qualifications Framework recognised courses | http://www.hkqr.gov.hk | 2836 1700 |  |

Gentle Reminder

The content in each issue helps you catch up on the development of the registration schemes and enhance the quality of service. Please stay tuned!

Each issue is available for downloading on the EMSD website:

https://www.emsd.gov.hk/en/supporting_government_initiatives/registration_scheme_for_vehicle_maintenance/publications_and_circulars/rvm_newsletter/index.html



For enquiries on the content of the RVM Newsletter, please contact the VMRU of the EMSD.

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