Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2025-26 | Reply Serial No. TLB003

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2276)

Head: (42) Electrical and Mechanical Services Department

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

Programme: (2) Mechanical Installations Safety

Controlling Officer: Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (POON Kwok-ying)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

The Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 under Programme (2) in the Controlling Officer's Report of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) include monitoring the safety performance of railway service provided by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL). In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of:

(a) the numbers of service disruption incidents on various railway lines of the MTRCL in the past three years and, for such incidents, (i) the causes, (ii) the duration of disruption, (iii) the numbers of passengers affected and (iv) the amounts required to be set aside under the Service Performance Rebate;

(b) (i) the establishment, (ii) the grades, ranks and posts, and (iii) the salaries, and operating and equipment expenses involved in monitoring the safety of the MTRCL's operation by the Railways Branch (RB) of the EMSD in 2024-25 and the estimated figures for 2025-26;

(c) the respective numbers of (i) inspections conducted on the MTRCL and (ii) issues identified by the EMSD in 2024; and the follow-up measures taken by the EMSD in respect of the issues identified during inspections; and

(d) whether the EMSD has identified issues relating to the concerns raised by a trade union regarding the introduction of outsourced, contract and term workers by the MTRCL for maintenance work in recent years, and that such workers might not be as professional as full-time MTRCL staff, which might affect the quality of maintenance and indirectly increase the likelihood of incidents; if yes, the measures in place to urge the MTRCL to make improvements; if no, the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LUK Chung-hung (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

(a) The numbers of incidents which caused service disruption due to factors under the control of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), the causes and the amounts set aside under the Service Performance-Linked Arrangement and the enhanced Service Performance Rebate for the incidents in the past three years are set out in **Annex 1**.

According to the MTRCL, there are no relevant statistics regarding the number of passengers affected by each of the service disruption incidents.

(b) The Railways Branch (RB) of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD), in accordance with the ordinances on railway safety, is responsible for regulating and monitoring the safe operation of railway systems, including those operated by the MTRCL, the Automated People Mover at the Hong Kong International Airport, the tramway system operated by the Hong Kong Tramways Limited and the peak tramway system operated by the Peak Tramways Company Limited. The establishment of the RB of the EMSD in 2024-25 and its estimated establishment in 2025-26 are set out below:

Rank	2024-25	2025-26 (Estimate)
Assistant Director	1	1
Chief Engineer	4*	4*
Senior Engineer	15	15
Engineer	28	28
Inspector	4	4

* Two Chief Engineer posts are time-limited supernumerary directorate posts created on July 2021 for four years.

The estimated total expenditures of the RB of the EMSD in 2024-25 and 2025-26 are set out in the following table:

	2024-25 (Estimate)	2025-26 (Estimate)
Salaries	75.6	72.8
Other operating expenses	14.0	11.9
Expenditure ($ million)	89.6	84.7^

^ The decrease in the estimated total expenditure in 2025-26 is mainly due to the expiry of the time-limited posts.

(c) In 2024, the EMSD conducted 455 inspections of railway facilities/systems, including 419 inspections of the MTRCL. The inspections conducted by the EMSD include the "risk-based" inspections, i.e., inspecting, checking and assessing areas that may pose a higher risk to the safe operation of the railway based on past records; as well as the "comprehensive and direct assessment" exercises, i.e., taking the initiative to audit the MTRCL's railway assets, and the asset and safety management systems of operating railway lines, with a view to identifying potential problems at an early stage. In 2024, the EMSD made 57 improvement recommendations on 51 items to the MTRCL during the "comprehensive and direct assessment" exercises.

If any problems or improvement areas are identified during inspections and audits, the EMSD will immediately request the MTRCL to follow up and make improvement recommendations, and will monitor the progress of the MTRCL in implementing the improvement recommendations.

(d) According to the information provided by the MTRCL, it has all along adopted a maintenance regime that meets international standards, and made its human resources arrangements based on maintenance needs. The MTRCL's outsourced workers are generally responsible for repetitive and less technically-demanding tasks. Additionally, the MTRCL arranges for qualified outsourced personnel possessing necessary licences or registration to perform relevant work in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. These workers must undergo specific maintenance procedures and standard training provided by the MTRCL, and must follow the same procedures and guidelines like the MTRCL staff when carrying out maintenance work. The MTRCL internal staff are also responsible for supervising the contractors to ensure that the maintenance work performed by outsourced workers and term workers complies with the safety and quality standards set by the MTRCL.

The EMSD is responsible for regulating the safety of railway operations. Regardless of whether the railway systems and equipment are maintained by the MTRCL or its outsourced contractors, the EMSD will monitor them with the same standards. According to records, the EMSD did not identify any issues in the maintenance works carried out by outsourced contractors that led to incidents.

Annex 1

Numbers of Incidents which Caused Service Disruption of Eight Minutes or Above due to Factors under the MTRCL's Control

Kwun Tong Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	16	14	2	13	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
2023	17	17	0	15	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2024	12	11	1	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Tsuen Wan Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	5	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	40
2023	8	8	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	10	10	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Island Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	7	7	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2023	5	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	10	8	2	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Tseung Kwan O Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	11	10	1	8	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	15.4
2023	6	6	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
2024	12	10	2	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

South Island Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

East Rail Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	29	28	1	27	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1.2
2023	13	13	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	11	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Tuen Ma Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	12	12	0	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2.4
2023	18	18	0	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	6	6	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Tung Chung Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	7	4	3	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	10	8	2	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2024	11	10	1	9	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1.2

Disneyland Resort Line

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	40
2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Airport Express

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	4	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	5	4	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2024	7	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Light Rail

Year	Number	Cause		Duration of disruption								Amount set aside ($ million) Note 3
				Half an hour or less Note 1		31 minutes to 3 hours		3 to 4 hours		Over 4 hours		
		Equipment failure Note 2	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	Equipment failure	Human factors	
2022	18	16	2	16	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	18	14	4	13	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	17
2024	10	9	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note 1： According to the existing railway incident reporting mechanism, the MTRCL is required to notify the Transport Department (TD) within eight minutes of any railway incident which has caused train service disruption of eight minutes or is expected to cause disruption of eight minutes or more. For service disruption of less than eight minutes, the impact on passengers is comparatively minimal and the MTRCL is not required to notify the TD. Hence, the TD does not have the number of incidents with service disruption of less than eight minutes.

Note 2： Equipment failure includes station equipment failure, infrastructure failure, rolling stock failure, etc.

Note 3： After the review of 2023 Fare Adjustment Mechanism, there is an increase in the amount to be set aside for incidents that cause disruptions of more than three hours and the maximum amount to be set aside per incident, as well as an introduction of a peak hour multiplier under the Service Performance Rebate.

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